

# THE ECONOMIC FORTUNES OF A LONDON HOSPITAL: ELSYNGSPITAL 1330–1536<sup>1</sup>

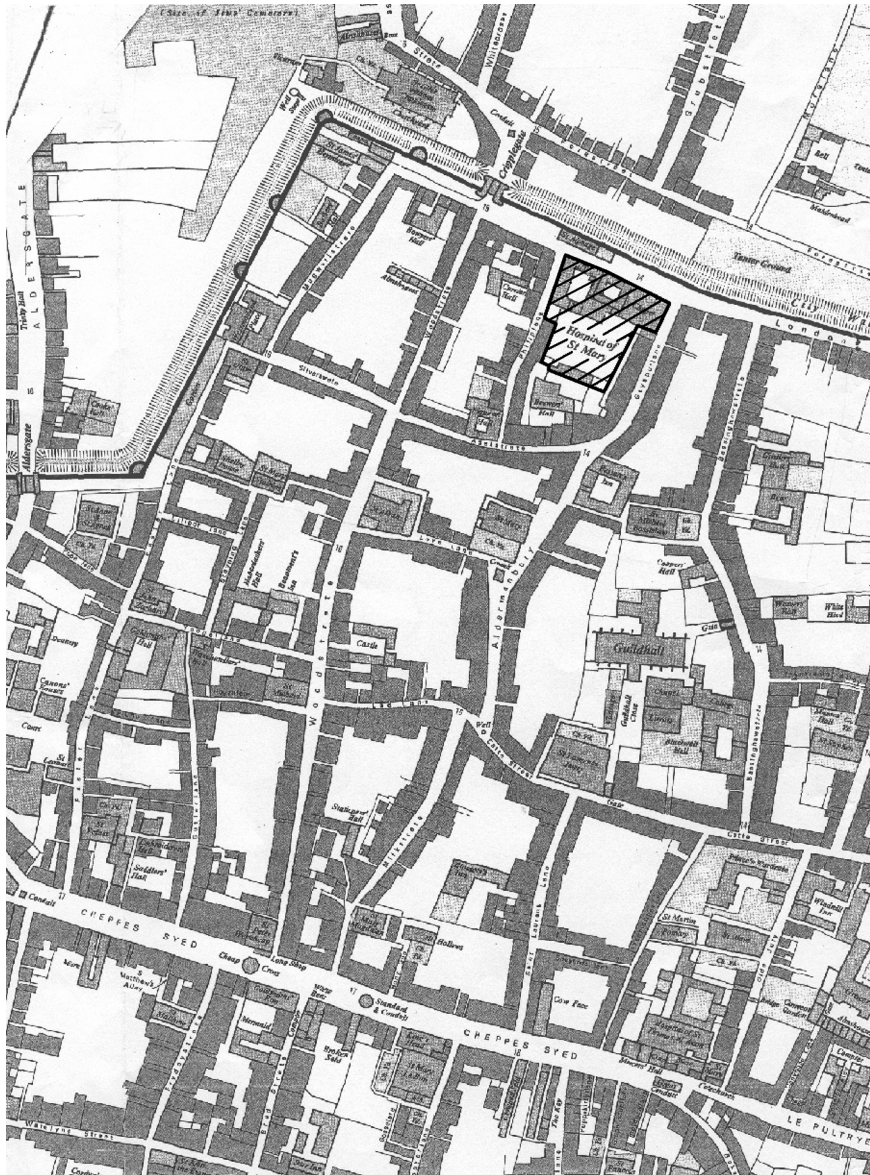
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## SUMMARY

*The hospital of Elsyngspital was founded in 1330 by William Elsyng, a London mercer. It stood just inside the walls of London, just to the south and east of Cripplegate. The foundation was for a college of priests and a large hospital with a hundred beds for the poor infirm with priority for the blind and blind and paralysed priests. After William Elsyng's death in 1349, the college and hospital became an Augustinian priory, the intention being that the provision for the poor and infirm should remain unchanged. Over the years, however, the numbers fell and mention of the blind ceases: by the time the hospital was suppressed at the Dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, the priory was maintaining simply an almshouse for twelve elderly women. This paper assembles information from a considerable number of sources to follow the economic fortunes of the hospital from the time of the founder's death to the Dissolution. Initially the hospital continued to attract bequests of property from Londoners but these fell off in the 15th century, rents were depressed and the hospital fell into debt. It was rescued by the transfer by the Bishop of London of the lands of a failing college in Hertfordshire and a substantial gift of property from a London mercer. Elsyngspital was never as wealthy as other London hospitals such as St Mary without Bishopsgate or St Bartholomew's, though maintaining a reasonable standard of living, but like them it attracted alms from London citizens anxious for their souls. It continued to do so and to maintain its income right up until the time it was suppressed.*

In May 1536 the gates of Elsyngspital, the hospital of St Mary within Cripplegate, closed behind the prior and his nine canons, early victims of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the monasteries.<sup>2</sup> It had survived for more than 200 years from its foundation in 1330 by the London mercer William Elsyng. Elsyng had set up the hospital to provide shelter for the infirm and blind on the streets, who could get food from the distribution of alms but had nowhere to sleep.<sup>3</sup> The second and third decades of the 14th century when William must have been conceiving his plan were harsh ones, with harvest failures, appalling weather and epidemics among sheep and cattle, and it would not be surprising if the existing hospitals in London had been unable to cope.<sup>4</sup> He planned a large hospital for up to 100 men and women, with preference for blind and paralysed priests and other blind people, and the initial foundation was for a college of secular priests and a hospital. It was located just within the City walls in the north-west corner of London, where the remains of the lower part of the tower of the hospital's church, which became the parish church of St Alphage after the Dissolution, can still be seen near the Museum of London (see Figs 1–2).<sup>5</sup>

William Elsyng was a wealthy mercer, probably a first generation immigrant from the small town of Elsing in East Anglia. He is first recorded in 1312 when he was already in business in London. His brother Richard, also a mercer, and sister Alice, who married



*Fig 1. The neighbourhood of Elsyngspital in the City of London c.1520 (Source: M D Lobel and W H Johns *The City of London from Prehistoric Times to 1520s* (1989)). The hatched area marked 'The Hospital of St Mary', shows the limit of the hospital based on a sketch map by Marjorie Honeybourne 'The Extent and Value of the Property in London and Southwark occupied by the Religious Houses (including the Prebends of St Paul's and St Martin's-le-Grand), the Inns of the Bishops and Abbots, and the Churches and Churchyards, before the Dissolution of the Monasteries' unpub MA thesis, University of London (1929), pl v.*

a very wealthy mercer, appear in the records a little later.<sup>6</sup> William never held high office in the City of London, was never mayor, alderman or sheriff. He did his duties as a

citizen of Cheap ward, for example acting as one of the assessors for a loan to the king in 1342, and must have continued his business career, though there is no evidence that he was



*Fig 2. The base of the tower of St Alphage church on London Wall, previously the church of Elsyngspital*

particularly prominent among the mercers.<sup>7</sup> He seems rather to have been wholly taken up with the establishment of the hospital, especially with securing its endowment and probably also with its management. William died in the Black Death in 1349, leaving only one son, Robert, who seems not to have taken any particular interest in the hospital and who died the year after his father.<sup>8</sup> But some time before William had made provision for the future of the hospital. In 1338, recognising the insecure position it would be in after his death, he petitioned Stephen Gravesend, Bishop of London, for the hospital to be converted into an Augustinian priory.<sup>9</sup> He had completed all the paperwork by the early 1340s but the change was probably not made until after his death in 1349: no prior is known before 1350 and William's will implies that the priory had yet to be established.<sup>10</sup> But from 1349–50 onwards Elsyngspital, like another much older London hospital, that of St Mary without Bishopsgate, was both an

Augustinian priory and a hospital, and in this paper the terms 'priory' and 'hospital' are used interchangeably.

Even by the time of William's death the hospital was not exclusively for the blind or priests, but was taking in the old and infirm. And probably quite soon afterwards it was not dealing in the kind of numbers he had envisaged: it became, eventually, more like an almshouse. It was never a more general hospital taking in the sick, pregnant women or travellers. And although it survived for over 200 years, it was never as wealthy as the other London foundations with which contemporaries often bracketed it, like the hospitals of St Mary without Bishopsgate and St Bartholomew's.

Information about Elsyngspital's economic position has to be gathered from many different sources. There are the deeds and wills of Londoners of course throughout the period.<sup>11</sup> Among the early deeds are the foundation charters, mortmain licences,



and William's will, the founder's last word on the hospital.<sup>12</sup> There are some scattered documents from the 15th century, including a rent collector's account from 1403–4, a kitchener's account in 1408–9, an inventory and rental in 1448, and a rent collector's account and a brief statement of income and expenditure in 1461.<sup>13</sup> There are also leases and other documents, mainly concerned with property, among the hospital's papers taken by the Court of Augmentations when it was dissolved and the documents surrounding the Dissolution itself: the 1535 valuation, the inventory made in 1535–6 when the house was dissolved, and accounts kept for the Court of Augmentations afterwards.<sup>14</sup> The information is patchy and lends itself to a number of different interpretations, and comparisons over time are always difficult to make: this paper aims to make the best use possible of this rather scattered data.

Because this paper covers the whole life of the hospital, it deals only briefly with the process of foundation in the founder's lifetime, which would warrant a paper in its own right. The first real test of a foundation was the period after the founder's death when it lost his protection, care and support, and the focus of this paper is from that point onwards. It looks first at the hospital's income over its lifetime, shown in Table 1, the evidence about debts and mismanagement, the distinctive features of Elsyngspital's position, and lastly at its outgoings and what is known about the standards at which the occupants seemed to live.

### ELSYNGSPITAL'S INCOME

It was the business of the founder to provide the house with an endowment of property sufficient to provide an income to meet its future needs. This was quite a tall order except for the really wealthy. By the time he died William Elsyng had acquired around 40 parcels of property and quitrents in London, some of which he bought himself and some he had persuaded others to donate. The hospital was built in some of these properties: the rest were let to provide income. Most of them were either in the immediate vicinity of the hospital or they were grouped around Cheapside in the neighbourhood where William himself lived and had his shop. In

1340 the endowment was judged sufficient by the bishop of London to support a prior and four canons, which was the size of college for which William had originally planned.<sup>15</sup>

Estimating what this initial endowment was worth presents quite a problem. There is information only on about half of the properties, where mortmain valuations and known rents suggest an income from those properties of about £60 a year. This is likely to be an understatement for these properties as on the basis of later rents some mortmain valuations look very low. What the total was can only really be guessed from this, but as an illustration, if the rest of the properties were to have brought in a *pro rata* income, the total would have been about £120 gross a year. Another way of looking at it is on the basis of the values in the rental of 1403–4. Confident identification in that rental of properties which were in the estate in 1349 is very difficult but those properties which can be broadly identified as being so were bringing in around £150 a year.<sup>16</sup> The difference between the two figures may lie in the mortmain valuations and the speculative assumptions about rents in the first calculation or some increase in rents in the period between the two. The latter, however, would be unlikely to be very great: Derek Keene's work on Cheapside suggests that from 1370 rents were declining slowly.<sup>17</sup> Overall a reasonable assumption may be that the figure is unlikely to be less than £120 a year or more than £150.

The Black Death cost Elsyngspital its founder but there is no evidence to show what other effect it may have had on the hospital. There must have been many deaths among the inmates, probably poor and priests alike, and London must have been a very disturbed place with many empty properties and a shortage of labour. Also the hospital had to bring about a major change from secular hospital to priory. The years following William Elsyng's death must have been crucial ones with all this to contend with and the hospital without his guiding hand for the first time. There is some evidence of difficulties in these early years. William's son Robert had left an infant grandson, an orphan, Thomas, who was under the guardianship of his uncle Jordan Elsyng and probably lived with him in Enfield.<sup>18</sup> There

Table 1. *Income of Elsyngspital 1349–1535*

Year	Gross London rents	Gross country rents <sup>1</sup>	Spiritual income <sup>2</sup>	Total gross income	Net income
1349	£120–150 <sup>3</sup>	none	not included	not known	not known
1403–4	£186 10s 8d <sup>4</sup>	none	not included	not known	not known
1448	£136 9s 10d <sup>5</sup>	not included	not included	not known	not known
1461	included but not known	probably not included	included but not known	£198 16s 4d <sup>6</sup>	not known.
1461–2	£177 2s <sup>7</sup>	probably not included	not included	not known	not known
1535 <sup>8</sup>	£190 18s 2d	£32 15s 9½d	£16	£239 13s 11½d	£193 15s 6½d

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Elsyngspital had no country property until 1431. No value can be set on it until 1535. It is not clear whether it was included in the two 1461 accounts, on balance, it probably was not.

<sup>2</sup> The church of St Mary Aldermanbury, next to the hospital, was appropriated to it in 1331, Guildhall Library (GL), MS 25121/1226 m.1. No value exists for it until 1535 when it was worth £16 p.a. Two small country churches, Thele and Aldham, were appropriated in 1431 but no value is ever attached to these, *Calendar of Patent Rolls (CPR)* 1429–36, p 146. Some property may have been attached to the rectories of St Mary Aldermanbury and Thele as the prior, who was granted the rectories at the Dissolution, got property in the parishes worth over £10 a year, The National Archives (TNA), E315/232 f.14v, SC6/HENVIII/2347. This property is included in the table in the appropriate gross rent figure.

<sup>3</sup> Estimated. The range is explained by the use of two alternative methods: mortmain values and rents at the time of acquisition for some properties but having to make *pro rata* assumptions for others, alternatively working back from the 1403–4 rents, TNA, SC6/1304/8, which gives a higher figure.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, SC6/1304/8. This is a rent collector's account and all the locations where property is known to have been acquired are included. But it is possible that the hospital had a small amount of other income, because some other rents not otherwise known, before or afterwards, are shown in a schedule of ecclesiastical property in London in 1392, A K McHardy *The Church in London* (1977), 39–77. Most, if not all, of the rent collector's net proceeds went to the kitchener; his accounts covered most categories of expenditure but a few were missing, again indicating the possibility of another income source, TNA, SC6/1257/3.

<sup>5</sup> British Library (BL), Cotton Charters xiii 10. This is an inventory and rental probably completed on the arrival of a new prior. The rental is for one

term and has been multiplied up to give the full year. The roll looks complete but the rents are not totalled, a few known London locations are not there and one, possibly two, rents acquired after 1405 are missing. The understatement of London property is unlikely to amount to more than between £10 and £13 a year on identifiable possible omissions. The property the hospital had by then acquired in Essex and Hertfordshire is not included, see note 1. There is nothing to indicate whether the rents are gross or net: the former would be more usual and that has been assumed.

<sup>6</sup> BL, Cotton Charters ix 68. This is a short document giving an assessment of the state of Elsyngspital, probably on the arrival of a new prior. It gives a total figure for income and identifies some major items of expenditure. The document gives the impression of being a comprehensive statement but there must be doubt whether it includes the country property: the difference between it and the 1448 rental would be more than covered by new London acquisitions. It does include the property given by William Flete as the expenditure from the bequest is listed.

<sup>7</sup> TNA, SC6/915/25. This is a rent collector's account but covers most of the hospital's expenditure as well. Rental income is very little broken down so it is not clear what is included. Only the rents from two recent bequests are separately quoted from the overall total and since only some of the rents from Flete's bequest are so identified, it seems likely that the rest were separately accounted for along with the expenditure required by the bequest which is also missing. The country property must also be missing if it is not in the other 1461 account above, given the relatively small difference between them. This account shows signs of having been retrospectively constructed for the benefit of a court case between the prior and the rent collector so may be less reliable than the other 1461 account above, TNA, C1/27/259.

<sup>8</sup> J Caley & J Hunter (eds) *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1810), vol 1, 389–90.

is no evidence of any connection between Jordan and the hospital but there is for Robert's former apprentice, John Edmund, who had been given charge of the grandson Thomas's inheritance to trade, to make money for himself and the boy.<sup>19</sup> Edmund seems to have been able to use his position to infiltrate himself into the hospital. He was said to have built chambers at the hospital and taken land belonging to it; he also had a tenement from the hospital on a lifetime lease plus 60 years for his executors.<sup>20</sup> All this was forfeit in 1357 after he had been arrested for debt, and it took years for the hospital to get its property back.<sup>21</sup> And then a second property was lost completely through legal action by the descendants of an earlier owner despite the considerable care William had taken to establish title when he bought it.<sup>22</sup>

Fortunately bequests of property began to come in, six bequests in perpetuity, in the years up to 1400, see Table 2. Some of the donors had connections to William Elsyng himself or to his family and so this could be seen as a continuation of the original foundation. For example, the first donor was John Brian, the parish clerk of the church of St Mary Aldermanbury. The church stood just south of the hospital and was appropriated to it, with one of the canons acting as vicar.<sup>23</sup> John Brian died in 1361 so he would have been a contemporary of William's and probably a friend and very much part of the original foundation. It is only through his will that William's burial place in the north part of the hospital's church in front of the altar of St Cross is known, as Brian asked to be buried near him.<sup>24</sup>

Another donor was Henry Frowyk, a mercer from the well known City family. He must also have been a contemporary of William's: he died in 1377 in old age, was buried in the church of the hospital, and his chantry was held at the altar of St Cross near William's grave.<sup>25</sup> He also knew William's grandson, Thomas: the two of them acted together in 1371 as mainpernors for one of the supporters of John of Northampton who had been imprisoned with John for creating disturbances.<sup>26</sup> John of Northampton was, of course, to become mayor in 1381 and to suffer imprisonment again and subsequently exile. He himself became a substantial bene-

factor of the hospital and was buried in the church.<sup>27</sup> The bequests which came in the second half of the 14th century represented a very substantial addition to the original endowment. Valuations do not exist for all the properties but, on the basis of those that do, they look to have been worth at least £45 a year on top of the original endowment of between £120 and £150.

The actual gross income from rents shown in the 1403–4 rental was £186 10s 8d.<sup>28</sup> The sum actually collected in rent would, of course, have been less than that because not all rents would be paid in full. About £10 was lost because of vacancies and over £5 written off because the rent was excused for various reasons: Thomas Crutche, smith, for example was in Ludgate prison. And of course, there were sometimes difficulties in collecting rents: in that year, 1403–4, nine tenants were sued in the sheriff's court. The construction of the accounts makes it difficult to see exactly what rent remained still to be collected for the year: arrears were about £26 at the beginning of the year and £32 at the end, over £2 of arrears having been written off because tenants were too poor to pay. But no deductions about the financial health of the hospital can really be drawn from a relatively small increase in arrears in a single year and the whole account suggests a well-run, actively-managed estate.

About 40 years later, in 1448, there is a rental included in an inventory of the hospital's goods and chattels.<sup>29</sup> This was drawn up for the Dean of St Paul's, Thomas of Lisieux. St Paul's was the hospital's patron and the inventory may have been drawn up to assess the financial position on the appointment of a new prior. There are problems with this rental, discussed below, but the catastrophic fall of about £50 in the London rental income to only £136 9s 10d, as shown in Table 1, makes it worth trying to struggle with the difficulties.

The rental is incomplete for it does not appear to include any property acquired after a property in Watlyng Street in 1405, although further acquisitions are known, mostly outside London, of which more below.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that even some of the property in the 1403–4 rental is missing, see Table 1, note 5, but it is unlikely that the missing London property amounted in

Table 2. *Rents and property acquired by Elsyngspital 1350–1536*

Date	Donor	Parish/location	Value when given or as indicated
1361	John Brian, parish clerk <sup>1</sup>	St Michael Bassishaw, St Alphage	£7 5s p.a. in 1406
1374	William Bristowe, cordwainer <sup>2</sup>	St Mary Aldermanbury, St Sepulchre, St Mary le Bow	4s beyond value of chantry. In 1403–4 St Mary le Bow rent £2 p.a.
1378	Henry Frowyk, mercer <sup>3</sup>	Rents and property in St Lawrence Jewry, St Sepulchre, St Martin le Grand, St Martin within Ludgate, St Vedast, Old Change	£10 10s 6d p.a. in will. Old Change property let for £8 p.a. in 1403–4. Rest worth £3 17s in 1378.
1387	Katherine de la Pole <sup>4</sup>	St Alphage	Not known
1392	Robert Lepere, vicar of St Lawrence Jewry and four others <sup>5</sup>	St Mary Aldermanbury	13s 4d net p.a. after repairs
1398	John of Northampton, draper <sup>6</sup>	All Hallows the Great (Ropery)	£19 5s p.a. in 1403–4
1405	Richard Arnold, goldsmith <sup>7</sup>	Watlyng Street	Let for £5 p.a. in 1448
1408	Nicholas Glover, glover <sup>8</sup>	Rent in St Sepulchre	£1 3s 4d p.a.
1431	William Gray, Bishop of London <sup>9</sup>	College of Thele's land and rents in Hertfordshire and Essex	Property in these two counties, most of which came from the College, valued at £29 9s 1½d in 1535
1436	Henry Barton, skinner <sup>10</sup>	Rent from hospital's own land	6s 8d p.a.
1443	Thomas Moysaunt, carpenter <sup>11</sup>	All Hallows, Barking	With several other properties worth £7 17s 4d p.a. in 1536
1456–58	William Flete, mercer <sup>12</sup>	All Hallows the Great, St Michael Paternoster, St Dunstan in the East, Gracechurch St, rent in St Lawrence Lane. Hendon, Middx	London property mortmain £25 6s 8d p.a. net, £49 p.a. in executors' rental. Hendon mortmain £2 16s 4d p.a. net, rental £2 6s 8d p.a.
1457	William Stokes, vintner <sup>13</sup>	St Botolph without Bishopsgate, St Michael Bassishaw, St Sepulchre	'Stokes rents' £1 15s 8d p.a. in 1461–2 but only two tenants named. St Botolph property let for £1 12s p.a. in 1536. Total property in St Michael Bassishaw £1 p.a. and St Sepulchre £3 10s 10d p.a. in 1536 but not all likely to be Stokes'
1467	John Wade, son of John Wade, fishmonger <sup>14</sup>	St Sepulchre	Property here in 1536 worth £3 10s 10d p.a. but not all likely to be Wade's
1499	John Porter, vintner <sup>15</sup>	Rent to be paid by the Charterhouse	3s 4d p.a. for the poor
1511	John Braibroke, haberdasher <sup>16</sup>	St Lawrence Lane	Not known
1520	William Brown and Thomas Hynde, mercers <sup>17</sup>	Stanstead Abbots in Hertfordshire	Property here in 1536 worth £3 8s 8d p.a. but not all this donation
Before 1522	Richard Plommer, gentleman of Essex <sup>18</sup>	Rent to be paid by the Crutched Friars	£2 p.a. to the sisters

Table 2 (cont.). Rents and property acquired by *Elsyngspital 1350–1536*

Date	Donor	Parish/location	Value when given or as indicated
1533	Purchase of 99 years lease by Prior, possibly from £100 given by Alice Lupsett <sup>19</sup>	St Mary Aldermanbury	Rent of assize to St Paul's for the property, £2 6s 8d p.a.
?	Henry VIII and his progenitors <sup>20</sup>	Rent of assize in All Hallows the Great	£13 6s 8d p.a. in 1536, paid by sheriff from fee farm of London. Described in 1541/2 as 'elemosina' of king but could be in return for one of hospital's properties

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> London Metropolitan Archive (LMA), Husting Roll of Wills and Deeds (HR)89/99; *CCR 1405–9*, p 171.

<sup>2</sup> LMA, HR95/152; TNA, LR14/7, LR14/286, LR 14/526, C143/385/3, SC6/1304/8; D Keene & V Harding *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire* (1987), 104/41.

<sup>3</sup> LMA, HR106/142; TNA, SC6/1304/8.

<sup>4</sup> LMA, HR116/29.

<sup>5</sup> LMA, HR121/50; TNA, C143/420/25; *CPR 1392–6*, p 158. The others were all London citizens: William Cressewyk, William Evote and John Barley, drapers, and Robert Dalyngregge, carpenter.

<sup>6</sup> LMA, HR126/117; GL, MS 09171/1 f.406; TNA, SC6/1304/8.

<sup>7</sup> LMA, HR133/62; BL, Cotton Charters xiii10.

<sup>8</sup> LMA, HR136/6.

<sup>9</sup> TNA, E28/52/8; *CPR 1429–36*, p 146; J Caley & J Hunter (eds) *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1810), vol 1, 389.

<sup>10</sup> TNA, LR14/343.

<sup>11</sup> LMA, TNA, LR14/92 and LMA, HR172/7; TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345.

<sup>12</sup> TNA, C143/452/2, C143/452/7; *CPR 1452–61*, pp 283–5, 473; LMA, HR184/12; TNA, SC12/36/32A.

<sup>13</sup> LMA, HR170/59, HR185/18; TNA, SC6/915/25, SC6/HENVIII/2345.

<sup>14</sup> TNA, PROB11/5, SC6/HENVIII/2345.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, E327/782 copied into the Court of Husting, LMA, HR226/17.

<sup>16</sup> LMA, HR236/34.

<sup>17</sup> A Sutton, *The Mercery of London* (2005), 524–5 from the records of the Mercers' Company, Chalgrave Estate Box 4/F1/1866; TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345.

<sup>18</sup> TNA, C1/654/44.

<sup>19</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xi 2; Goldsmith's Company, register of deeds, vol 2, f.313–313v. I am grateful to Dr Jessica Lutkin for the latter reference.

<sup>20</sup> TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345, 2351, E314/54. Likely to be earlier than Henry VIII's reign in view of reference to progenitors, probably Henry VII as it is not mentioned in any earlier rentals.

annual value to more than £10–£13, and it certainly could not of itself have been the explanation for what had happened to London rental income. There is also the question of whether these are rents due or rents collected: the former would be more usual and that is what has been assumed. But if, on either count, the 1448 rental income from the London property was in fact much higher than the figure shown on the rental, one has to explain how the income in 1461, shown in Table 1, was very little higher than in 1403–4, despite the by then quite considerable acquisition of property in London in the mean time, see Table 2.

The brunt of the fall was taken by the properties round the hospital, where the total rent due and the number of tenants

halved. On the evidence of the rental many of the cheapest houses in Gayspore Lane and Philip Lane running down the east and west sides of the hospital had disappeared altogether. Perhaps the hospital was unable any longer to let such poor properties, as the demand had slackened so much over the years. Or it may be that some of them had been absorbed into the hospital precinct: there is a suggestion in a later lawsuit with the local parish church, St Alphage, that the precinct had been enlarged, depriving the parish of revenue.<sup>31</sup> In other districts, around Cheapside and to the south and west of it, the fall in rents between 1403–4 and 1448, though still substantial, was much less, at under 20% (25% limiting the comparison to the properties known to be owned in



1403–4) and the number of tenants fell only slightly from 38 to 34 (32). Times were hard in the 15th century with rents depressed and the 1430s was a decade of poor harvests and high prices followed by a deep depression in the following two decades.<sup>32</sup> But the evidence of this rental suggests that the situation at Elsyngspital was extreme, and that something more must have gone wrong, exacerbating the general economic malaise.

For there are other indications that the hospital had hit bad times. It appears to have been trying to raise money by corrodies, a time honoured practice among religious houses. In 1429 it obtained £40 from Walter Herberde, a king's valet, and a benefactor of the hospital, in return for paying him 20d a week for life, payable every Saturday at the church of St Peter Cornhill: a bad bargain as it turned out as Herberde lived for another 26 years, and if the hospital kept to the agreement, it must have paid him well over £100.<sup>33</sup>

By 1438 the hospital was over £400 in debt, more than twice its gross annual income; indeed the figure may well at one time have been higher than this as this is the first record of the debts and from then on they began to fall.<sup>34</sup> In the inventory in 1448 the debts still owed are set out in detail, showing how the hospital was trying to get by. Clearly it was not meeting all its obligations: there were debts to other religious houses, most probably quirents, which Elsyngspital had allowed to fall into arrears. Other debts were to tradesmen, although those were not unusual in religious houses. But the largest sums look like loans from friends and supporters of the hospital as some are recognisable as benefactors or tenants, or their relatives. It looks as though the prior may have gone cap in hand to everyone he knew. For example, the largest amount was owed to Master John Stokes, doctor of law and commissary to the bishop of London who had presided over the elections of the prior in both 1427 and 1438 (this could be John Stokes, canon of St Paul's from 1431 to 1440 and also in royal service as a diplomat).<sup>35</sup> Walter Herberde, already mentioned, was owed £10, as was Geoffrey Boleyn, mercer and later mayor, one of the hospital's wealthy tenants.

Some of the debts were clearly due to mismanagement. One of the canons, John

Fuller, was said to have cost the hospital £30 by his laxity and extravagant behaviour. Fuller must have been in quite a responsible position to have the opportunity to do this but the fact that he was, suggests some weakness on the part of the prior. Later another canon, John Wood, incurred another debt of £10. There may also have been problems with rent collectors in the middle years of the century: Prior Henry Hoddesdon sued his rent collector for walking out in 1435 in the middle of his annual contract and Gilbert Sharpe, prior from 1462 to at least 1483, who seems to have followed quite an aggressive policy, was later to accuse two of his predecessors' rent collectors of dishonesty.<sup>36</sup> If there was this degree of laxity in the house, the decay of rents and build up of debts are even less surprising. But mismanagement was not uncommon in religious houses, either through deliberate maladministration or, more likely, sheer incompetence, and Elsyngspital's problems were mild compared with some.<sup>37</sup> At St Bartholomew's priory, for example, in 1433 the bishop of London took the financial management of the house out of the hands of the prior and convent and put in his own commissary instead, and Holy Trinity Aldgate had to be taken into the king's hand in 1439 because its administration was so inefficient.<sup>38</sup>

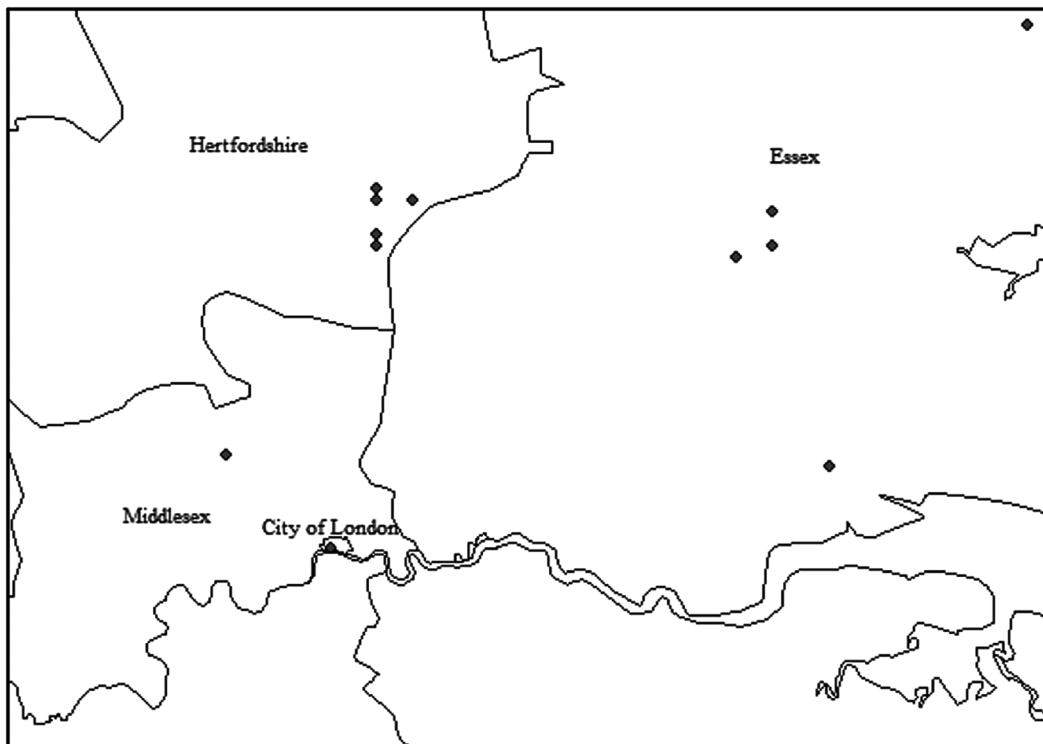
Debts in religious houses were also sometimes the result of lavish spending on buildings. The difficulties of St Bartholomew's priory, for example, may have stemmed to some extent from the debts incurred in 1409 because it rebuilt its chapter house, bell tower and cloister.<sup>39</sup> Elsyngspital was being built in stone when William Elsyng died in 1349, so the building was relatively new but it is not known how much was already built by then.<sup>40</sup> The church was eventually quite a good size for it was large enough to serve as the parish church after the Reformation even after one aisle had been pulled down.<sup>41</sup> It is possible that, encouraged by the growth in its income in the 50 years after the founder's death, the hospital had begun to build again.<sup>42</sup> This would also explain the need to enlarge the precinct by enclosing or pulling down the small houses around it. There is just a hint of rebuilding in the archaeological survey of the standing remains of the tower of the church. There is evidence of building on

earlier walls which may be explained by the 1349 church being on the site of an older building: John Stow says that the hospital was built on the site of an old nunnery, but there was no evidence of this in the deeds of purchase of the site at the time. But the alternative explanation, though this fits less well with the archaeological evidence, was that there had been some 14th- or 15th-century rebuilding.<sup>43</sup> If the hospital did embark on a major rebuilding and expansion, it was taking a considerable risk since it would have lost rents at the same time as spending a great deal of money.

The difficulties would have been fewer had the hospital still been attracting bequests on the same scale as before, but new bequests of property had all but dried up. There was one significant bequest, of a property in Watlyng Street, in 1405, but after that the hospital received only one modest quitrent and no other property in the whole of the first three

decades of the 15th century.<sup>44</sup> Donors who could be linked to William Elsyng or his grandson who had provided so substantially in the first 50 years would now be thin on the ground and the hospital does not seem to have managed to find a new source of donors

Elsyngspital probably only pulled through because of the support of the Bishop of London, William Gray. In 1430, after a visitation to the college of Stanstead Thele, now St Margaret's, in Hertfordshire, he petitioned the king for the transfer of all its lands and property to Elsyngspital and the licence was granted in March 1431.<sup>45</sup> The actual transfer may, however, have happened later as it was to take effect on the death or resignation of the master, and had not apparently happened by 1435 when Elsyngspital was assessed only for London property for the subsidy of that year.<sup>46</sup> The Thele house was said to have been badly run and reduced to only the master,



*Fig 3. Elsyngspital's country properties: Middlesex Hendon; Hertfordshire Stanstead Abbots, Stanstead Thele, Hoddesdon, Amwell, Broxbourne; Essex Chelmsford, Bowers Gifford, Writtle, Broomfield, Aldham (Created by GenMap UK, December 2008. The author would like to thank Dr Stephanie Hovland for her assistance. Source: CPR 1429–36, p 146 and CPR 1452–61, p 473)*

so this was a piece of good management by Gray, who was responsible for both houses. But he may have been helped to this decision by his own commissary, Master John Stokes already mentioned, who would have known the Elsyngspital situation well, and by Elsyngspital's own prior, Henry Hoddesdon, whose name suggests he came from a village only just south of Thele and would therefore have known of the college. There was no valuation at the time but the estate transferred included land, meadow, wood, pasture, rents, a mill and two small churches and lay in five villages in Hertfordshire and five in Essex. In 1535 the annual value of Elsyngspital's property in those counties, most of which came from the Thele college, was nearly £30.<sup>47</sup> If it was worth anything like that at the time it was transferred in the 15th century, it would have gone a good way to offsetting the losses on the London property and must have been a significant factor in bringing the debts under control. And the debts did fall steadily, halving in the ten years between 1438 and 1448 to just over £200, down to £160 in 1454, and to just under £80 in 1461.<sup>48</sup>

In the middle years of the century the hospital also found some new donors, chief among them William Flete of Rickmansworth, a Hertfordshire gentleman, an MP and a member of the Mercers' Company, who had made a very considerable fortune out of overseas trade and financial dealings, including substantial loans to the Crown.<sup>49</sup> Only the most tenuous of connections can be established between him and the hospital: why he should have chosen Elsyngspital for his burial place and chantry is not known. But if his executors, one of whom was John Fray, baron of the Exchequer and former recorder of London, were looking for somewhere where a bequest would really make a difference they picked the right place. Flete died in 1444 but there is no will and the property was not made over to the hospital until 1456, followed by another smaller tranche in 1458.<sup>50</sup> There were five lots of property in London assessed at £25 6s 8d for mortmain, after deduction of quitrents and an allowance for repairs, and some in Hendon in Middlesex at £2 16s 4d, but gross they were worth a good deal more than that. An undated rental of Flete's executors put

the gross value of the London property at £49 and a couple of these high rents are identified in another rental, apparently confirming them.<sup>51</sup> At all events it was a very substantial bequest and must, with one other much smaller bequest of property received at about the same time from William Stokes, vintner, have completed the restoration of the hospital's fortunes.

And indeed it did, for the next record of the hospital's income, a brief statement of account in 1461, puts the hospital's gross income at £198 16s 4d (see Table 1).<sup>52</sup> This includes ecclesiastical benefices so the rental income was probably between £180 and £190 a year, about the same as in 1403–4 and fully making up the lost ground. Indeed it is surprising that the figure was not higher, especially if the 1448 London property was in fact worth more than the £136 in the rental of that year, since the London acquisitions alone should have brought it to this level. Either rents must have continued to fall, or the Thele property, which was said in 1430 to have been neglected, was not worth anything like its 1535 value of nearly £30. Alternatively it is possible that this 1461 account, despite appearances, is not fully comprehensive, in which case the most likely exclusion would be the Thele property, see Table 1, note 6. This view could be supported by the 1461 rent collector's account, which gives some rather broad figures for income and expenditure for this same year and similarly does not seem to have room for the Thele rents, see Table 1, note 7.<sup>53</sup> If the Thele property was being held in a separate account over and above the £198 16s 4d reported in the statement of account, the hospital's income was already at this stage was well above £200 a year.

Information from now until the Dissolution is quite sparse and only two small bequests of property have been found for the rest of the 15th century. But at some point, probably in the reign of Henry VII, the hospital acquired for the first and only time what seems to have been a gift from the king: £13 6s 8d a year paid to the hospital through the sheriffs of London from property in the parish of All Hallows the Great. This is described as alms for the support of the priory in a rental of 1541–2, but elsewhere as a rent of assize, and it is possible that it was a payment for one of the hospital's properties in the parish, see



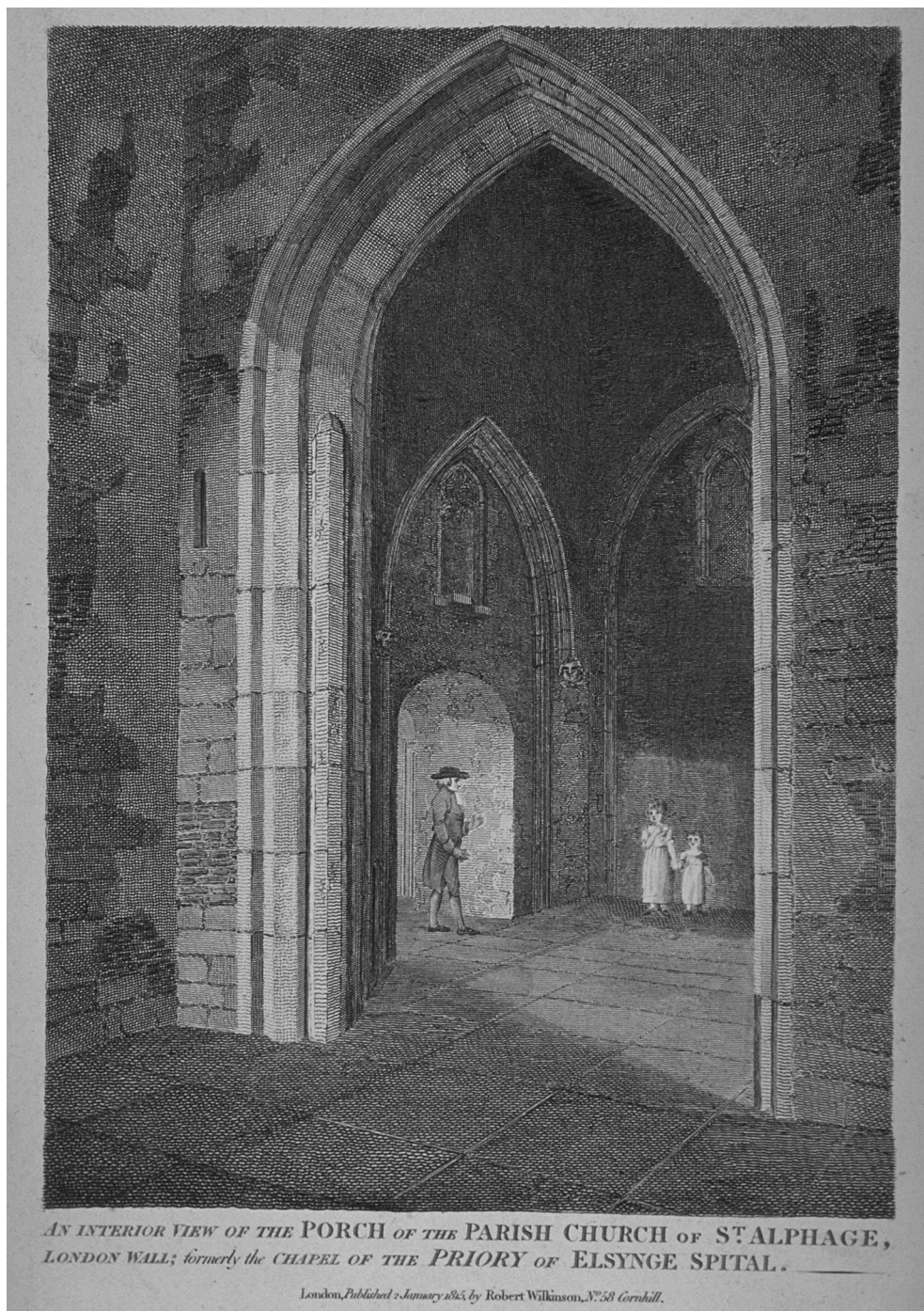


Fig 4. The porch of St Alphage church, once the church of Elsyngspital (Guildhall Library)

Table 2, note 18.<sup>54</sup> Bequests began to arrive in the 16th century. There was, for example, a tenement in old Jewry from John Braibroke,

haberdasher, in 1511, property in Stanstead Abbots in Hertfordshire in 1520 to support the chantry of William Browne, mercer and



mayor, in the hospital's church of St Mary Aldermanbury, and a cash bequest of £100 from Alice Lupsett, widow of Thomas Lupsett, who had been warden of the Goldsmiths' Company.<sup>55</sup> These three all seem to have had local connections which may explain how they came to be benefactors. Browne was a parishioner of St Mary Aldermanbury and Alice Lupsett of St Alphage; Braibroke's widow Joan was a parishioner of Elsyngspital so she may have lived in the close.<sup>56</sup> The prior bought a property rounding off the hospital precinct in 1533, perhaps with the Lupsett money.<sup>57</sup> The additional income from all the properties known to have been acquired since the 1461 account, assuming the Lupsett money was invested to bring in rents and that the payment from the king was not a substitute for an earlier rent, could have been around £20 to £30 a year.

By 1535, just before the hospital was suppressed, its gross income had reached nearly £240.<sup>58</sup> Part of this 20% increase over the 1461 account figure of £198 16s 4d would be accounted for by the new property acquired. If the Thele property was indeed not included in the 1461 account that could account for all of the rest. Alternatively there could have been an improvement in the value of the property already owned. This could have been because the property market was picking up more generally or because the hospital had improved its properties and was able to charge more for them. The evidence on the former is mixed: the significant 16th-century rise in rents in Cheapside came after the 1530s but the economy generally may have been picking up from the late 15th century providing opportunities for enterprising landlords.<sup>59</sup>

In 1535 Elsyngspital's annual income consisted of nearly £33 in rent from the country properties, £16 from the rectory of St Mary Aldermanbury, and the rest, nearly £191, from the London properties (see Table 1). Unfortunately the uncertainty over how the 1461 valuation was made up makes overall comparisons as to how the town and country property had performed impossible. But for individual locations a tentative comparison can be attempted between the London property as listed in the first minister's account after the Dissolution in 1536 and that in the 1448 rental, or in the case of

the Flete properties with their value in his executors' rental.<sup>60</sup>

The property in the area round the hospital, which had fallen so much in value in 1448, had now increased very substantially, by over 70%. A good deal of this is plainly due to new lettings: there was, of course, the new property, probably bought with the Lupsett money, which would have contributed to the rise in rent in the parish of St Mary Aldermanbury, but there were also three tenements let out in the precinct when only one was known before, and one of the hospital's tenants had built six small new messuages within his capital messuage.<sup>61</sup> There was even a rise of over 20% in the rental income from the small houses along Philip Lane on the west side of the hospital. Perhaps what had been a rather outlying area had become newly fashionable and the hospital had taken the opportunity to improve its property. The experience in the other areas of London where the hospital held property was much more mixed. Flete's properties were all lower than their values in the executors' rental, some very substantially so: the properties in Gracechurch Street, then said to be let at £16, were being let for £11 in 1536. In St Lawrence Lane and Honey Lane, areas in which the hospital had held substantial property from the beginning, rental income had also fallen slightly and one property further south had disappeared altogether. The Watlyng Street property was bringing in the same income as in 1448, but all the other areas in the 1448 rental where comparisons can be made had seen increases, though by very different amounts: the long-held property in Bow Lane had increased very little, but in Ironmonger Lane and Old Change rent was up by 30% or more.

By the time it was dissolved, Elsyngspital's income was probably the highest it had ever been. The falls in the bad times of the 15th century had been more than restored. But this income now came from a very much larger property base. Whereas the hospital had begun with all its rental income derived from London, 15% now came from country properties. And although the rental of the London property was now slightly above its 1403–4 level, this too was coming from many more properties and fewer tenants. Overall the income of the house when it

was suppressed was probably nearly double what it had been at the founder's death, but a good deal of that increase had been achieved before 1400 and a large part of later acquisitions were needed to make good the fall in value of the existing rental properties. Nevertheless thanks largely to the foresight of William Gray and the generosity of William Flete and other London citizens, Elsyngspital had been able to improve its income still further.

How Elsyngspital compared to other London houses is not easy to tell, partly because of the difficulty of being sure like is being compared with like. Most London hospitals seem to have struggled in the 15th century.<sup>62</sup> At the hospital of St Mary without Bishopsgate difficulties began even earlier, in the last part of the 14th century, partly because of flooding on its property and falling land values in its country estates, and its buildings were in a poor state of repair in the 15th century. But under good management, it increased its income very considerably in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.<sup>63</sup>

Some idea of the changing fortunes of the London hospitals can be gained by comparisons in 1379 and 1535, though the data for the former year are based on tax records whose use is always fraught with difficulty because of exemptions and varying definitions. For the 1379 poll tax the London houses seem to have been placed in bands. Elsyngspital was assessed at £66 13s 4d, St Mary without Bishopsgate 50% higher at £100, and St Bartholomew's hospital at £133 6s 8d, twice the Elsyngspital level.<sup>64</sup> In 1535 Elsyngspital still had the smallest net income of the three at £193 15s 6½d, St Bartholomew's at £305 6s 5d was now only about 60% larger, but St Mary without Bishopsgate at £504 12s 11½d enjoyed considerably more than twice the income of Elsyngspital.<sup>65</sup>

There are a number of distinctive features about Elsyngspital which might have affected its fortunes as compared to other houses. It was a much later foundation than most other London priories and hospitals, for example St Bartholomew's was founded in 1123 and St Mary without Bishopsgate in 1197.<sup>66</sup> Most London religious houses had been founded in the 12th or 13th centuries and therefore had much longer in which to establish

themselves and already had substantial estates when Elsyngspital was founded.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps because of this, Elsyngspital had an extremely high proportion of urban property. There is no evidence that William Elsyng ever possessed any property outside London and his endowment consisted entirely of London property, heavily concentrated in the areas around the hospital and around Cheapside. Although the spread widened with later donations, the first, and only substantial, donation of country property was that belonging to the college at Stanstead Thele in 1431.<sup>68</sup> Even at the Dissolution Elsyngspital still had 85% of its property in London. London houses understandably tended to have more urban property than most; but only St Helen's priory matched Elsyngspital's position.<sup>69</sup> At times this may well have been an advantage to the hospital. From 1370 to 1420 urban property was a better investment than rural property and the location of the property so near the hospital would have made it easier to manage efficiently.<sup>70</sup> But the concentration of property obviously had risks and might have contributed to the hospital's difficulties in the mid-15th century.

Elsyngspital's estate carried a very heavy burden of quitrents, charges on a property paid to a third party. This may also have been a feature of its late foundation, for the accumulation of charges over the years, which were often payments to other religious houses, meant that properties were frequently heavily encumbered when the hospital acquired them. Such rents remained fixed in cash terms and so were much more stable than rents from tenants, which were subject to supply and demand. In times of falling rents, quitrents due to a house could form a valuable buffer because they remained unchanged. On the other hand quitrents it had to pay out could become a heavy burden. When rents were tending to fall, as they were through most of the hospital's life, the advantage lay with houses which had collected many quitrents but paid out few.

Unfortunately Elsyngspital's portfolio of quitrents in its early years was unbalanced in the wrong direction. In 1408–9 quitrents charged on its property which had to be paid out were about £29 a year, taking approximately 15% of total income.<sup>71</sup> Quitrents being paid to the hospital on the

other hand in 1403–4 were only about £7, which would have been a serious handicap in the 15th century when its rents from tenants began to fall.<sup>72</sup> Other houses had a different pattern: in 1535 Elsyngspital's quitrents paid out were taking 11% of its gross income, whereas at St Bartholomew's hospital the figure was only 5%.<sup>73</sup> Fortunately, although the high level of quitrents out persisted, the hospital collected some fixed rate payments with which to offset them, £10 a year from a manor in Essex as part of the Thele property and the £13 6s 8d a year acquired from the king, referred to above.<sup>74</sup>

Aside from this payment, Elsyngspital had no royal or aristocratic assistance, although it had at some stage acquired relief from the lay tenths and fifteenths to which it would otherwise have been subject, for the prior fought and won a case in Chancery against the London tax collectors in 1405–6.<sup>75</sup> It did have help from the Church: the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's had given the hospital the rectory of St Mary Aldermanbury in 1331, worth £16 in 1536, and, of course, there was William Gray's grant of the college of Stanstead Thele.<sup>76</sup> But the bedrock of support came, as it had done when the hospital was first founded, from the citizens of London, starting with the friends and connections of William Elsyng who survived him.

Over the whole period from the founder's death to the Dissolution 17 individuals gave property or rents in perpetuity. It was probably to these relatively few individuals that the survival of the hospital was due: William Elsyng's endowment had been perfectly adequate at the time, but it would not have been enough to withstand the troubles of the 15th century. Eight others gave significant cash sums, Alice Lupsett's £100 standing out as by far the largest, but there were others of £10 or £12, sufficient to fund a chantry for a period. In all 17 chantries or obits are known, 11 of them in perpetuity. 29 people asked to be buried at the hospital and there were a dozen monuments in the church.<sup>77</sup> Others gave expensive gifts: service books, cups and vestments. These groups, of course, all overlap but there were around 60 people, including 16 women, who demonstrated strong support for the hospital in one or other of these ways. They have, however, few characteristics in common. They range

from those known to have given substantial property, buried in prominent places in the hospital church where their chantries were celebrated, like John of Northampton and William Flete, to Robert Leuton, hermit of Tottenham, buried in the church in 1396, leaving his goods to the prior, who acted as his executor, and to the widow Elizabeth Hall, buried in the church in 1521, who left the prior her best featherbed.<sup>78</sup> Among them were six mercers (including William Elsyng's son and grandson), six members of the clergy, four described as esquires or gentlemen, and a variety of others — a draper, an apothecary, a herald, and a couple of vintners and goldsmiths.

But there were also many London citizens and others who were much more casual supporters, who gave small sums to the hospital, usually in return for prayers. There are over 100 people who have been identified as supporting the hospital in this more modest way. These names are drawn mostly from wills: it is not an exhaustive list, not every London will has been read and there will be some bias in the information.<sup>79</sup> Mercers again were by far the largest group after the end of the 14th century. They were, of course, becoming increasingly wealthy, so might be expected to feature prominently in any charitable giving; the hospital was situated close to the parishes in which mercers tended to live so there might be a location factor and maybe, though there is no other evidence for this, some attachment because the founder was a mercer.<sup>80</sup> Otherwise the main characteristic of these more casual supporters, as with the strong supporters, seems to be their variety. Among the generality of donors the wealthy trades were well represented, fishmongers in the earlier period, drapers, goldsmiths, skimmers, and a lawyer; but there were also a carpenter, a poulterer, a bellfounder, and a number of members of the clergy, including Thomas of Lisieux, Dean of St Paul's, who died in 1456.<sup>81</sup> There were a few described as esquires, knights or gentlemen, and a solitary aristocrat, Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, who in 1427 left 1s each to the aged sick in Elsyngspital and in a number of other London hospitals.<sup>82</sup> The numbers of donors appear to be highest in the late 14th century, though that may simply reflect a bias in the evidence, but the late 15th century also has

quite large numbers of smaller donors, and by then women and gentlemen were more strongly represented among them.<sup>83</sup>

Of all those (including the larger donors) leaving money to Elsyngspital, about 60% left it specifically to the poor in the hospital, though this was rather more common in the 14th century than later. Generally these were long wills leaving many bequests to many institutions. In only about one quarter of the cases is Elsyngspital obviously being singled out and most of these are the larger donors. The amounts given for the poor were usually only a few shillings, though they could be as high as 40s or 60s. Around one third of wills left money specifically to the prior and canons of the hospital, usually in return for prayers. Again the amounts are not large: 12d to each canon is common. Although the numbers are very small, members of the clergy were rather more likely to leave money to the canons and rather less likely to give it to the poor.

In some cases there is clearly a local link which might draw the donor to the hospital but that has been identified in only 13% of all cases. But groups of individuals *are* clearly connected. For example Marjorie Crofton, who was a parishioner of the hospital, made her will in 1498 leaving money to the prior and canons.<sup>84</sup> Her executor was John Plommer, a priest who also left money to Elsyngspital.<sup>85</sup> He was also the executor of John Porter, vintner, also a benefactor, who had left a bequest to Marjorie and asked for Robert Elderbek, whose executor had been Marjorie's husband William, to be remembered in prayers.<sup>86</sup> Elderbek asked to be buried in the hospital and his monument there was noted by John Stow a hundred years later.<sup>87</sup>

Doubtless there were other bequests and gifts. But it is unlikely that these smaller legacies can have added a great deal to the hospital's income. In 1408–9, the only year for which there are accounts recording legacies and gifts, the receipts from these sources came to only £4.<sup>88</sup> In some years no legacies at all have been found in wills. So although these smaller bequests would have provided welcome relief to the individuals, whether the poor or the canons, the hospital's well-being must still have depended primarily on its income from property.

## LIFE IN ELSYNGSPITAL

So far this analysis has been in terms of income, but what mattered to the hospital was how that income matched up to its obligations and aspirations. Was there, for example, any evidence of economies in the mid-15th century when the debts were being brought under control, or any evidence of a change in how the hospital was being managed? One factor was obviously the number of canons being supported: when the hospital was converted into a priory, the bishop of London would only allow four canons plus a prior because he did not regard the endowment as sufficient to support any more.<sup>89</sup> As the endowment grew in the later 14th century the numbers increased: by 1379 there were five canons, by 1408–9, supported by John of Northampton's bequest, seven, and in 1427 and 1438, when debts were at their height, there were eight.<sup>90</sup> There is no information on total numbers for the next 40 years, though the hospital continued to recruit, so there may have been a dip, but the numbers were at eight canons in 1480 and up to ten by 1534.<sup>91</sup> So Elsyngspital was one of the few religious houses in London to see a substantial increase in numbers between the 14th century and the Dissolution and the reaction to difficult times, on the evidence available, seems to have been to halt the expansion rather than for numbers to be reduced.<sup>92</sup>

Of the major items of expenditure, the burden of the quitrents paid out, and the fact that they had fallen a little into arrears in 1448, has already been noted. Another large item would be repairs to the properties on which nearly £32 was spent in ten months in 1408–9, possibly a rather higher expenditure than usual because substantial rebuilding work was having to be done on the Watlyng Street property newly bequeathed to the hospital.<sup>93</sup> In 1461 £30 was being spent on repairs on a rather larger estate, but the difference in the circumstances does not seem sufficient to suggest there was any neglect.<sup>94</sup> In addition there were obligations for chantries and anniversaries involving payments to the canons or to the poor inmates. Only a little more than £3 was being spent on this in 1408–9 so there was not much scope for economy.<sup>95</sup>



The hospital could, of course, have cut back on the poor inmates by taking in fewer or supporting them less well. But very little is known about the poor in the hospital, though the signs are that the number of inmates did not continue at the original level. William Elsyng intended there should be 100 poor infirm and blind people in the hospital: 32 were already there in 1330 and over 60 beds were available in 1331.<sup>96</sup> Probably after the Black Death fewer places would have been required: the disease itself may have killed many of the potential inmates and, as shortage of labour made itself felt, the scenes of distress which so moved William Elsyng no longer appeared in the London records. There is no further mention of blind people after the Black Death and it is possible that in 1408–9 there may have been only a dozen poor people in the hospital. This was the number who received payments at two anniversaries where the donors had asked for all the poor to be present, though it is of course possible that the prior was economizing and limiting to twelve the numbers allowed to take part.<sup>97</sup> There is a little evidence that Elsyngspital gave doles to the casual poor: the prior did spend 10s 5d on alms in 1408–9, though some of that may have gone to the poor resident in the hospital.<sup>98</sup> But the hospital's late foundation and the founder's emphasis on the provision of long-term accommodation (beds were allocated to individuals for life) may have meant that the tradition was never established.<sup>99</sup> Clearly, however, there continued to be enough provision for the poor and infirm in Elsyngspital in the 14th and 15th centuries for the citizens of London to regard Elsyngspital in the same light as the other hospitals, St Bartholomew's, St Mary without Bishopsgate and St Thomas's, with which they bracketed it in giving bequests in their wills.

After the Black Death there first occur references to 'sisters' in the hospital, suggesting that it was by then following the usual pattern of the more able bodied, poor women looking after the rest, both men and women. Under the Flete bequest, which pulled the hospital out of trouble in 1456, payments were to be made of 8d a week to each of 12 poor almsmen, but by 1535 the bequest was being used to support

12 sisters, though at two thirds the level at which it had originally been paid to men.<sup>100</sup> Specific references to men disappear in the later 15th century and by the 16th century references are only to sisters rather than to the poor in general. So it would seem that William Elsyng's original vision was already being modified within 50 years of his death. The large numbers of blind homeless and infirm poor were, over the years, replaced by a limited number of poor people, men and women, who lived in the hospital rather as almspeople. By the 16th century, if not earlier, this number had been fixed at 12 and by then they were women only.

One way in which some religious houses responded to hard times was to cut back on food and drink, one of the major items of expenditure. For example the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds set strict weekly limits for each monk in 1434–5 when the finances were in trouble.<sup>101</sup> In 1408–9, when there is the only detailed set of food and drink accounts, the standard of living at Elsyngspital was good but not luxurious, which may not have left much scope for cutting back. There was enough for the standard daily allowance of a two-pound loaf of bread for each canon and a gallon of ale, and dried peas and oat flour for potage. But there was also wine as well as ale, fresh fish as well as salted, beef, mutton, pork and poultry, and some sugar, figs and dates, although a good deal of this may have been for the prior's table. But there were not many eggs, no milk and butter with which to make rich puddings, and no venison or game birds.<sup>102</sup> The standard of living was certainly nothing like a wealthy house such as Westminster Abbey, but must have had much more in common with St Mary without Bishopsgate where the meat bones found suggested a diet of moderate quality.<sup>103</sup> In 1461–2 the rent collector's account has some food entries but they are very broad and only a limited number of categories of food are included. But for what they are worth, the figures suggest that about 20% more than in 1403–4 might have been being spent on meat and fish, while the amount spent on bread was about the same.<sup>104</sup> By this time the hospital was over the worst of the hard times and could presumably afford the rather better diet.

As to furnishings, the 1448 inventory does

not suggest very luxurious furnishings, even in the prior's chamber, although the kitchen had a good supply of brass and iron pots and other utensils.<sup>105</sup> The situation appears rather more comfortable in 1536 when there is the next inventory but no more than one would expect with the change in the times.<sup>106</sup> The overall impression, in so far as it can be gleaned from these fragments of information, is again of a decent comfortable standard but not a luxurious one.

The impression given in 1448 of the hospital's liturgical and spiritual possessions suggests rather more affluence. Elsyngspital had a proper library, not just a cupboard on the cloister as smaller houses had. Over 60 books are listed in the inventory, mainly, as might be expected, religious works, which would be prescribed reading for the canons, but also some books on canon law and a few medical books.<sup>107</sup> Few inventories for Augustinian houses have survived and those that have are for large, prosperous houses like Leicester Abbey with over 900 books, but for a modest hospital Elsyngspital's seems a good collection.<sup>108</sup> The acquisition of books had begun early, for the first gift, of a set of Decretals, is recorded in 1361, from John Brian, already mentioned as a benefactor and the parish clerk of St Mary Aldermanbury. At the same time he returned a book he had borrowed, so the practice of lending books out, common in religious houses, had obviously already begun.<sup>109</sup> Two canons of the house gave the other three known gifts of books, one was a breviary but the other two books were given for the library and, remarkably, these two have survived.<sup>110</sup> They were given by John Dye, described as canon and recluse, in memory of his parents.<sup>111</sup> One of the books is an early 15th-century *Secretum Secretorum*, now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and the other a 12th-century sermon of Odo of Cluny on St Mary Magdalene, which carries the inscription of the Dye gift, bound with an 11th-century *De Penitentia* of Ambrose and two treatises of Isidore of Seville, *De fide Catholica contra Iudeos* and *Chronica*, also 11th-century, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.<sup>112</sup>

The church too was well furnished by 1448 with eight full sets of vestments, including nineteen copes, many of rich fabrics, nine other copes and thirteen single vestments.

It had five chalices, three of them silver gilt, three silver gilt book covers, a silver censer and incense bowl, a gilt brass cross, and other precious items and relics. Also in the treasury was a collection of tableware, two cups decorated with silver gilt, a number of pieces of silver plate, silver spoons, ewers, salt cellars, and a number of large mazers. There were no fewer than 35 service books in the sacristy, well above the minimum required.<sup>113</sup>

In 1536 when the inventory was taken when the hospital was suppressed in the Dissolution of the monasteries and the hospital's goods sold, the list of valuable items is much less impressive than this. The library, perhaps not surprisingly in view of the well known disregard for books on the part of the commissioners who carried out the suppressions, is dismissed as 'boks of diverse sorts to the number of liii books of diverse matters', and the whole collection together with others of 'small value' priced at £2. The list of vestments is about the same in length as in 1448 but the descriptions do not sound any finer, if anything less so. And the plate had virtually disappeared: only three chalices were left, and most of the other church plate and nearly all the tableware had gone. It is unfortunate that the 1448 inventory had no valuations to enable proper comparisons to be made, but on the basis of the goods listed in the 1536 inventory, the library was slightly smaller, the vestments no better, and the silverware hugely depleted.<sup>114</sup> The fate of the plate is really puzzling. By comparison with the two Middlesex nunneries dissolved at the same time as Elsyngspital, and by the same commissioners, Elsyngspital's plate was valued at far less than that of Stratford, a house with only half of its gross income, and at about the same level as Kilburn Priory, whose income was only one third of that of Elsyngspital.<sup>115</sup>

The prior may, of course, have taken deliberate evasive action and removed the best of the valuables before the commissioners arrived. But although that may have happened later on in the Dissolution, when it had become obvious that all precious objects were going to be taken, there seems to be very little evidence of hiding or disposing of goods at the beginning.<sup>116</sup> What is more, it would surely have been very obvious if Elsyngspital had disposed of goods. It was

not tucked away in the countryside but within the walls of London. The treasures it had must surely have been well known and the disparity with Stratford and Kilburn very striking, but no questions seem to have been raised. Alternative explanations might be that there had been a robbery or that the prior had been forced to dispose of the treasures earlier to raise money, leaving only enough to carry out services. There are records of religious houses pawning their silver, for example St Mary without Bishopsgate had pawned a silver censer in 1399 when it was seriously in debt, but no disposals on this scale have been found.<sup>117</sup>

The prior and canons left Elsyngspital in May 1536. The prior, Roger Pottyn, received the rectories of the hospital's churches of St Mary Aldermanbury in London and St Margaret's, Stanstead Thele in Hertfordshire, which, with the associated property, provided him with a comfortable income of over £20 a year. He was also given his bed and other furnishings from the hospital to set up home and a cash sum of £6 13s 4d.<sup>118</sup> At this stage in the Dissolution only heads of houses were provided with a regular income: others got only a small cash sum and were expected to work as secular priests, or they could go to another religious house. Six of the nine canons still in the hospital in 1536 are known to have elected to go out into the world and four to have got jobs, all of them in London, two in the hospital's church of St Mary Aldermanbury.<sup>119</sup> Of those who stayed in the religious life, one is known to have gone to St Bartholomew's priory, only to be ejected again in 1539, though he did then get a pension of £5 a year.<sup>120</sup> The sisters, however, were allowed to stay on at the hospital and are known to have been still living there when it was sold to Sir John Williams, the king's jeweller, in 1540.<sup>121</sup> He must have left them undisturbed for they continue to be recorded as serving God in the hospital.<sup>122</sup> The Crown paid them, as the hospital had done, from the Flete bequest, but only at the rate of £10 a year between them rather than the £13 6s 8d they received in Elsyngspital's last year: this was not enough to live on, so they must also have been getting some charitable support.<sup>123</sup> The numbers supported fell over the years, presumably through death, and by 1545–6 only three were left.<sup>124</sup>

## CONCLUSION

When William Elsyng founded his hospital, he had two purposes: to establish a college of priests to worship God and the Virgin Mary and with it a hospital to provide shelter for the blind and infirm. By the Dissolution the first of these functions was still being fulfilled at Elsyngspital but the second only in a modest way, by the provision of a home for 12 poor women. If not quite what the founder intended, this was still a useful social function, and as has been shown, more than the Crown was prepared to do. In economic terms Elsyngspital was probably better off when it was suppressed than it had ever been before, with a larger income and more canons. After a good start in what would be a critical period after the founder's death, when it continued to attract endowments which probably increased that left by the founder by one third, the hospital had hung on during the difficult first half of the 15th century, when donations dried up and the rental income fell heavily. At that time it went seriously into debt and there were clearly problems with its management. But at no stage did it require the drastic action seen in some other houses, either being merged with another house as happened to the college at Thele, or being taken over temporarily by the bishop or the king as in St Bartholomew's Priory and Holy Trinity Priory. It does not seem to deserve the kind of castigations of bad management made of hospitals. Nor is there evidence of over-indulgent conspicuous consumption nor of immoral living of the kind religious houses were accused of, though one charge of incontinent living with one Alice Lightfoot was made in 1503 against a master John Glover, perhaps a priest at the hospital.<sup>125</sup> After the middle of the 15th century the position was improving again thanks to the foresight of William Gray, Bishop of London, and the endowment from William Flete. From then on the hospital seems to have prospered, attracting bequests again until its untimely demise.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Among the few brief published accounts of Elsyngspital, *Transactions* in 1890 published 'Some account of Sion College in the City of

London and of its Library' by W H Milman, which includes material on Elyngspital on whose site Sion College was built (pp 53–122). *The Victoria History of London* (ed W Page, 1909), 535–7, has an account by M Reddan, which is updated with other references in C Barron and M Davies *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex* (2007), 165–8. There is also an account by Sir John Baddeley *Cripplegate* (1921), 22–31 and 200–1. There have been no excavations of the hospital but a standing buildings' survey of the lower part of the tower, which is all that remains, is reported in G Milne, *Excavations at Medieval Cripplegate, London* (2001), 100–18.

<sup>2</sup> The National Archives (TNA), SC6/HENVIII/2424.

<sup>3</sup> The foundation was spread over a number of years, but the first version of the founding charter proper was sealed by William Elyng in August 1330 and received the king's approval in December 1330, TNA, C66/174 f.6, calendared in *Calendar of Patent Rolls (CPR) 1330–34*, p 49.

<sup>4</sup> See I Kershaw 'The Great Famine and agrarian crisis in England 1315–22' *Past and Present* 59 (1973), 3–50.

<sup>5</sup> For the modern history of the preservation of the remains, see C A Stokes 'St Alphage's Tower, Cripplegate's monument to tenacity' *London Archaeologist* 12 no. 2 (2008), 35–9.

<sup>6</sup> *Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London (LB) B* (ed R Sharpe, 1900), 46; Guildhall Library (GL), MS25121/1648; D Keene & V Harding *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire* (1987), 105/3.

<sup>7</sup> *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls vol 1, 1326–64* (ed A H Thomas, 1926), 200. William is mentioned by A Sutton in the *Mercery of London* (2005), but primarily as the founder of the hospital (p 530).

<sup>8</sup> William's will is TNA, LR15/163, copied into the Court of Husting, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), Husting Roll of Wills and Deeds (HR)76/242; Robert's will is LMA, HR78/201.

<sup>9</sup> British Library (BL), Cotton Charters xi 33.

<sup>10</sup> The king's approval to the transfer of property was given in 1343, *CPR 1343–5*, p 113.

<sup>11</sup> These are to be found mainly in the Husting rolls of wills and deeds at the London Metropolitan Archives, the records of the Archdeacon's court and the Commissary court at the Guildhall Library, and those of the Prerogative court of Canterbury in the National Archives.

<sup>12</sup> There are five versions of the foundation charter, two of them in the National Archives, TNA, C66/174 f.6 and C66/176 f.17, calendared in *CPR 1330–34*, pp 49 and 173; one in BL,

Cotton Charters v 2 printed in W Dugdale *Monasticon Anglicanum* (ed J Caley, H Ellis & B Bardinel), vol 6, part 2 (1830), 704–7; one in the St Paul's archive, GL, MS 25121/1226 m.2–3, and one printed from a lost original in W Reading, 'The History of the Ancient and Present State of Sion College and of the London Clergy's Library there' in his *Bibliothecae Cleri Londinensis in Collegio Sionensi Catalogus* (1724), 2–6. There are four copies of the revised version drawn up when the hospital was converted into a priory, BL, Cotton Charters v 10 printed in Dugdale *Monasticon*, 707–8; GL, MS 25121/1207; TNA, C66/206, calendared in *CPR 1340–43*, pp 415–16, and TNA, PRO 31/9/60 pp 362–81, calendared in *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Register relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters, vol 5* (1904), pp 10–11. The mortmain inquests are in the series C143 at the National Archives.

<sup>13</sup> The rent collector's and kitchener's accounts are TNA, SC6/1304/8 and TNA, SC6/1257/3, the 1448 inventory BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10, the 1461–2 rent collector's account TNA, SC6/915/25, and the 1461 income and expenditure summary BL, Cotton Charters xi 68.

<sup>14</sup> The bulk of the hospital's papers taken by the Court are in the LR14 series at the National Archives mixed up with the papers from a couple of other houses. The 1535 valuation is printed in J Caley & J Hunter (eds) *Valor Ecclesiasticus, vol 1* (1810), 389–90, the inventory is TNA, E117/12/28, and the minister's and receiver's accounts for 1535–6 TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345 and TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2424 respectively.

<sup>15</sup> BL, Cotton Charters v 10.

<sup>16</sup> TNA, SC6/1304/8.

<sup>17</sup> D Keene 'Landlords, the property market and urban development in medieval England' in Finn Einar Eliassen and Geir Atle Ermland (eds) *Power Profit and Urban Land: Land Ownership in Medieval and Early Modern Northern European Towns* (1996), 107.

<sup>18</sup> *LBG*, p 18.

<sup>19</sup> LMA, HR78/201.

<sup>20</sup> *Calendar of Close Rolls (CCR), 1369–74* (1911), p 295.

<sup>21</sup> TNA, C131/10/24.

<sup>22</sup> TNA, LR14/1169 and 1171; *LBH*, pp 143–4; Keene & Harding *op cit* (n 6), 11/6.

<sup>23</sup> GL, MS 25121/1226 m.1.

<sup>24</sup> LMA, HR 89/99.

<sup>25</sup> S Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (1948; paperback edn 1996), 342; LMA, HR 106/142.

<sup>26</sup> *CCR, 1369–74*, p 323.

<sup>27</sup> LMA, HR 126/117 and GL, MS 09171/1 f.406 (copies of the same will).



- <sup>28</sup> TNA, SC6/1304/8.
- <sup>29</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10.
- <sup>30</sup> LMA, HR133/2.
- <sup>31</sup> TNA, C1/1/101–5, all but the last of which are printed in *Calendars of the Proceedings in Chancery in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth Volume 1, to which are prefixed examples of earlier proceedings in that Court, namely from the reign of Richard II to that of Queen Elizabeth inclusive* (Record Commission, 1827), lxiii–lxvii. I am grateful to Dr Jessica Freeman for bringing the printed version to my attention.
- <sup>32</sup> See J Hatcher ‘The great slump of the mid-fifteenth century’ in R Britnell & J Hatcher (eds) *Progress and Problems in Medieval England* (1996), 237–72.
- <sup>33</sup> *CCR*, 1429–35, p 24; GL, MS 09171/5 f.216.
- <sup>34</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10.
- <sup>35</sup> GL, MS 09531/3 ff.205v–206v and MS 09531/6 ff.111v–113v; A B Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (1963), 558.
- <sup>36</sup> TNA, CP40/699 m.106, C1/27/259, C1/67/81 and 84.
- <sup>37</sup> M Seymour *The Organisation, Personnel and Functions of the Medieval Hospital in the Later Middle Ages* unpub MA thesis, University of London (1946), 136–220; R H Snape *English Monastic Finances in the Later Middle Ages* (1926), 129–36.
- <sup>38</sup> Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 93 and 86.
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid*, 93.
- <sup>40</sup> TNA, LR 15/163.
- <sup>41</sup> J Stow *A Survey of London* (ed C L Kingsford, 1908), vol 1, 294.
- <sup>42</sup> Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 167.
- <sup>43</sup> Milne *op cit* (note 1), 109; Stow *op cit* (note 41), 293–4.
- <sup>44</sup> LMA, HR133/62 and 136/6.
- <sup>45</sup> TNA, E28/52/8 and *CPR*, 1429–36, p 146.
- <sup>46</sup> TNA, E179/238/90 printed by Thrupp *op cit* (note 25), 378–88.
- <sup>47</sup> Caley & Hunter *op cit* (note 14), vol 1, 389–90.
- <sup>48</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10 and xi 68.
- <sup>49</sup> For details of Flete’s life see J S Roskell, L Clark & C Rawcliffe *The History of Parliament, The House of Commons 1386–1421* (1992), vol 3, 88–91. There is also a biography in the forthcoming volume for the period 1422–1509 by Charles Moreton, and I am grateful to the History of Parliament for allowing me a sight of it.
- <sup>50</sup> LMA, HR 184/12; TNA, C143/452/2 and C143/452/7 (inquests) and *CPR*, 1452–61, pp 283–5 and 473 (licences). Moreton’s biography makes it clear that no will for Flete exists, contrary to note 1 of the article in the earlier volume: that will belongs to another William Flete.
- <sup>51</sup> TNA, SC12/36/32A and SC6/915/25.
- <sup>52</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xi 68.
- <sup>53</sup> TNA, SC6/915/25.
- <sup>54</sup> TNA, SC6/HENVIII/ 2351, E314/54.
- <sup>55</sup> For Braibroke see LMA, HR 236/34; for Browne, Sutton *op cit* (note 7), 524–5; for Lupsett, Goldsmiths’ Company, Register of Deeds, vol 2, f.313.
- <sup>56</sup> GL, MS 09171/10 f.165.
- <sup>57</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xi 2, transcribed by M Honeybourne, *The Extent and Value of the Property in London and Southwark Occupied by the Religious Houses (including the Prebends of St. Paul’s and St. Martin’s-le-Grand), the Inns of the Bishops and Abbots, and the Churches and Churchyards, before the Dissolution of the Monasteries* unpub MA thesis, University of London (1929), Appendix 1C, 462–5.
- <sup>58</sup> Caley & Hunter *op cit* (note 14), vol 1, 389–90.
- <sup>59</sup> Keene *op cit* (note 17), 107 and D Keene ‘A new study of London before the Great Fire’ *Urban History Yearbook 1984*, 11–21. For the economy generally see J L Bolton *The Medieval English Economy 1150–1500* (1980), 258.
- <sup>60</sup> TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345; BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10; TNA, SC12/36/23A.
- <sup>61</sup> TNA, SC6/195/25.
- <sup>62</sup> Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 12.
- <sup>63</sup> C Thomas, B Sloane & C Phillpotts *Excavations at the Priory and Hospital of St. Mary Spital, London* (1997), 68, 80–1; Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 163.
- <sup>64</sup> A K McHardy *The Church in London 1375–9* (1977), 1–2.
- <sup>65</sup> Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 167, 153, 163.
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid*, 149, 160.
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid*, 5–6.
- <sup>68</sup> *CPR*, 1429–36, p 146.
- <sup>69</sup> Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 11.
- <sup>70</sup> Keene *op cit* (note 17), 105, 109.
- <sup>71</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3. The actual figure in the accounts is only just over £10 but this was for a 10-month period and many payments had only been made for one or two terms. The £29 has been estimated from the rents per term given and the total is plausible compared with later figures, *eg* total quitrents due in 1461 apart from the Flete bequest (but probably including the Thele property) were £30 6s 8d, BL, Cotton Charters xi 68.
- <sup>72</sup> TNA, SC6/1304/8.
- <sup>73</sup> Caley & Hunter *op cit* (note 14), vol 1, 388–90.
- <sup>74</sup> In the valor dated 25 December 1535, TNA, E314/54, both of these are shown as rents of assize. The acquisition of the manor of Bowers Gifford is shown as part of the Thele property,

*CPR*, 1429–36, p 146. The payment from the king is first identified as such in TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345.

<sup>75</sup> GL, MS 25121/1297.

<sup>76</sup> GL, MS 25121/1226 m.1; *CPR*, 1429–36, p 146.

<sup>77</sup> *Stow op cit* (note 41), vol 1, 294. There is a clearly related but not identical list in the College of Arms, Ms. A17. I am grateful to Christian Steer for information about the latter.

<sup>78</sup> For John of Northampton, see LMA, HR126/117 and GL, MS 09171/1 f.406; for William Flete, LMA, HR 184/12; for Leuton, GL, MS 09171/1 f.371 and for Elizabeth Hall, GL, MS 09171/9 f.191v.

<sup>79</sup> This is not just from the accident of survival but because people with special interests have kindly supplied me with references.

<sup>80</sup> It is also the case that the medieval London mercers have attracted much scholarly attention, and my thanks are due to Dr Anne Sutton for kindly supplying me with her references.

<sup>81</sup> TNA, PROB 11/4.

<sup>82</sup> E L Jacob (ed) *The Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury 1414–1443* (1937), vol 2, 357.

<sup>83</sup> The fact that the Husting wills are calendared makes them easy to search and there are far fewer of them after the end of the 14th century.

<sup>84</sup> GL, MS 09171/8 f.172v.

<sup>85</sup> GL, MS 09531/9 f.196v.

<sup>86</sup> TNA, E327/782; LMA, HR 226/17.

<sup>87</sup> GL, MS 9171/5 f.306 and TNA, PROB11/4 (copies of the same will); *Stow op cit* (note 41), vol 1, 294.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3.

<sup>89</sup> BL, Cotton Charters v 10.

<sup>90</sup> McHardy *op cit* (note 64), 2; TNA, SC6/1257/3; LMA, HR126/117; GL, MS 09531/3 ff.205v–206v, MS 09531/6 ff.111v–113v.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, PROB11/7, will of John Don; TNA, E25/47, printed in *Seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* (1832), Appendix II, 292.

<sup>92</sup> Barron & Davies *op cit* (note 1), 10.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3.

<sup>94</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xi 68.

<sup>95</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3.

<sup>96</sup> BL, Cotton Charters v 2; TNA, SC8/16/1678.

<sup>97</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3. The anniversaries were for Katherine de la Pole, LMA, HR 116/28 and 29 and John of Northampton, LMA, HR 126/117.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3.

<sup>99</sup> BL, Cotton Charters v 2.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, C143/452/2, E314/54.

<sup>101</sup> C Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (1989, rev edn 1998), 98.

<sup>102</sup> TNA, SC6/1257/3.

<sup>103</sup> For diet at Westminster Abbey see B Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540* (1993, paperback edn 1995), 34–71. For St Mary without Bishopsgate see Thomas *et al op cit* (note 63), 113–14.

<sup>104</sup> TNA, SC6/915/25.

<sup>105</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10.

<sup>106</sup> TNA, E117/12/28.

<sup>107</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10. The list of books has been transcribed by J P Malcolm, *London Redivivum* (1802), vol 1, 29–30. See also C Rawcliffe ‘“Written in the Book of Life”; Building the libraries of medieval English hospitals and almshouses’ *The Library* 3 (2002), 127–62, esp 139.

<sup>108</sup> T Webber and A G Watson (eds) *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons* (1998), xxii–xxvii and 104.

<sup>109</sup> LMA, HR89/99.

<sup>110</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10.

<sup>111</sup> N R Ker *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (1964), 280.

<sup>112</sup> The Trinity College Dublin reference is 436 and the Bodleian eMus127.

<sup>113</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10.

<sup>114</sup> BL, Cotton Charters xiii 10 and TNA, E117/12/28.

<sup>115</sup> Caley & Hunter *op cit* (note 14), vol 1, 409 and 432; TNA, E117/12/28.

<sup>116</sup> S Jack ‘The last days of the smaller monasteries in England’ *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (1970), 107.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas *et al op cit* (note 63), 68.

<sup>118</sup> *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII (LP)*, vol 13 part 1 (1892), 1520; TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345; TNA, E117/12/28.

<sup>119</sup> D S Chambers (ed) *Faculty Office Registers 1534–1549* (1966), 57 and 65; G Hennessy (ed) *Novum Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense* (1898), 298 (Robert Cople); GL, MS 09063A/1, ff.12v–13 (Robert Byggyne); C Kitching (ed) *London and Middlesex Chantry Certificate 1548* (1980), 40 (Richard Conygrave); GL, MS 01432/1, f.56v (Richard Chase).

<sup>120</sup> *LP*, vol 14 part 2, 137.

<sup>121</sup> *LP*, vol 15, 292.

<sup>122</sup> TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345–2355.

<sup>123</sup> TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2345, E314/54.

<sup>124</sup> TNA, SC6/HENVIII/2355.

<sup>125</sup> GL, MS 09064/9 f.98. For a discussion of the accusations levied against religious houses see D Knowles *The Religious Orders in England* (1971), vol 3, 291–303.