

INSIDE A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CHURCH OR CHAPEL

Many people left vestments, books or ornaments, or the money to buy these, to chapels, parish churches or religious houses. From these bequests we can imagine the visual splendours inside these places of worship, with their images, plate and gorgeous vestments.

I bequeth for to serve in the same church [*St John, Croydon*] my cope of blak with garters, my vestyment of blue silke, my myssale, my graile and my chalice havynge the armes of the bisshope of Wynchestre ... I biqueth to the saide priour and convent my tablett of the coronation of our ladie made of moder of perle garnysshed and sett in silvere and gilte and with a fote therto of silvere and gilte ... To the chauntry auter of Saint Anne in the parish chirch of Clehunger ... a pair of vestiments of blew velvett enbrowdered with my lordis armys and mine ... a cope of blak velvett enbrowdered with floweres of gold and silver with an ymage enbrowdered of the resurrection in the cape ... *Item* he yave and bequethid to the parish church of Alhalowen in Newland within the forest of Deane a chales of silver and gilt which was his awntes to pray for his soule, the soule of his seid awnte and all cristen soules ...

Some testators asked for the making of objects by which they might be remembered:

I biqueth to the making of ij candilstikkis of silvere to the same church [*Lambeth parish church, Surrey*] x marc [£6 13s.4d.]. And I wolle that the names of all myn husbondes and my name and Alison Underhille, Johanne Spaldyng and Alice Hethe [*her daughters*] been sett in the footes of either of the said candilstikkis ... And I wull and tenderly desire that att every aulter withinne the convent church of the same place [*London Charterhouse*] their may be sett up a litle table with my name and the names of my saide late husbonde and of my fader and my moder to be sett thereinne and that the tables may stande stille upon the saide aulters by the space of vij yeres after my decesse, to thentent that the convent of the saide place may the moor tenderly remembre the soules by names ...

A priest bequeathed books and ornaments to his church:

I bequeth to the seid chirch [*St Margaret, Bridge street, London*] a new antiphoner by me late bought there to remain and abide ... *item* a chalice of silver weying xiiij unce by estimation ... *item* a newe chisible of grene demi say poudred with stierres and goold ... *item* a manuell covered with bukkiskyn ... *item* a table hongid by a chayne in the chauncell ...

Some bequests of this sort provide evidence for a testator's roots:

I woll that my saide executours ... beye a peir of honest sensours of silvere of the value of £40. or mor ... and that they give the sensours in my name to the parrish church of saint Martyn of Fyncham in the countie of Norff' ... *item* I biqueth to the parrish church of saint Mighell in the same town to serve in the same church as long as it may endure an honest crosse of coper and gilt of the price of 40s. [Laurence Fyncham, fishmonger of London]

Many people had their own private chapels, either inside their houses or the local parish church, and took care to equip them with splendour. Sometimes the contents were to be kept where they were, sometimes bequeathed to someone else:

Item I bequeth to the auter of saint John the Baptist and saynt Nicholas the which is myne owen chapell in the parish church of Newlond in the Forest of Dene in whome my body shalbe buried *in primis* a crosse of silver and gilt with a crucifix on the same, *item* a sensure

of silver, *item* a pax of coper gilt, *item* a paire of cruettes of silver. ... *Item* I bequeth to the seid chauntry auter for thapparell of the same auter a paire vestmentes of yelow velvett enbrowdered. *Item* a paire vestmentes of white damaske enbrowdered with flowers of gold and silver. *Item* a paire of russett saten enbrowdered with grete rosis with a cope of the same cloth and of the same werkes. *Item* ij clothis of purple and yelowe with an ymage of the Trinite of gold enbrowdered on the one cloth the which most hong above afor the table and the other to hong afor the auter to my cosyn Alice Beyman and to her heyris for the chapell of Clowrewall, a long table of alabastre that is now on the auter, *item* an ymage of saynt John in alabastre, another of tree of Saint Anne peynted, an holy water stokke of laton with a dayshell to the same, ij short carpettes for knellyng stolis ...