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This essay is an exercise in methodology precipitated by a growing irritation at sweeping

generalizations about devotional art that litter publications about medieval piety.[1] While generalizations

are important, they are only as valid as the evidence that supports them. The primary purpose of the

essay is to explore iconographic presence of the Arma Christi and Man of Sorrows in East Anglia in the

long first half of the fifteenth century (1400–60). Secondarily, it will argue that *The Play of the*

Sacrament is a pivotal text in the development of East Anglian devotion to the Image of Pity. Richard

Homan has called attention to the Arma Christi theme in the play. Key stage properties, notably the

hammer, nails, and pincers, were among the most commonly depicted Instruments of the Passion. "The

fifteenth-century audience," Homan contended, "would readily have recognized these objects as the

Arma Christi."[2] Literature on the play is liberally sprinkled with *would haves*, *possibles*, and *perhapses*.

By focusing on parochial art in the Norfolk diocese, by looking at the art incorporated into the fabric of

the parish church, it is possible to move beyond *would have* and describe the image vocabulary

parishioners acquired from an early age. Were the visually literate members of the audience that

Monday afternoon in the year 1461 familiar with the *Arma* and the Image of Pity? R. N. Swanson has

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[1] I borrow the title of my paper from Richard Beadle's seminal essay, "Prolegomena to a Literary Geography of Later Medieval Norfolk," in Felicity Riddy, ed., *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 91–108.

[2] Richard Homan, "Devotional Themes in the Violence and Humor of the *Play of the Sacrament*," *Comparative Drama* 20 (1986–87): 335. It is unclear which nouns are the antecedents for "these objects." Homan cites "pynsonys," "naylys," "clothe," "cake," "cawdron," "dagger," "oyle," among others, but *clothe, cake*, *cawdron, ovyn*, and *oyle* are not *Arma Christi.*

drawn attention to the need to explore "the precise chronology of the spread" of the images,[3] and this essay serves as a prolegomenon to such an inquiry. The inquiry is possible because of fundamental work begun in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The Last Quarter of the Twentieth Century.[4] M. D. Anderson's *The Imagery of British Churches*, which introduced the public to the richness of English parochial art, was published in 1955, but it was not until the last quarter of the century that North American academics began using art to elucidate the texts they studied.[5] In 1981 Theresa Coletti's generously illustrated article on the *N-Town Passion* was published in *Medievalia*, and 1989 saw the publication of Gail McMurray Gibson's *Theater of Devotion*.[6] Thereafter, it became *de rigueur* for dramatic criticism to pay lip service to images, if not to reproduce them as well. Curiously, much of the illustration initially was drawn from Continental sources, not English. While the iconography of devotional subjects is often uniform over a wide geographic area, recent study of English work has revealed interesting peculiarities, ways in which insular art differed from Continental, ways in which regions differed from each other. East Anglian

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[3] R. N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 258.

[4] The first quarter of the present century has witnessed the explosion of websites devoted to parochial art. The availability of images is staggering, though the quality of commentary varies from professional to picaresque. Particularly useful is Anne Marshall, "Medieval Wall Painting in the English Parish Church: A Developing Catalogue," available at http://www.paintedchurch.org. Web site citations below were selected for ease of access.

[5] In 1973, for example, it was possible for Leah Sinanoglou to ignore art ("The Christ Child as Sacrifice: A Medieval Tradition and the Corpus Christi Plays," *Speculum* 48 [1973]: 491–509). As seminal as her essay was for textual background for *The Play of the Sacrament,* she provided only three references. One confused the Presentation of the Virgin for the Presentation of Christ; the others were impertinent.

[6] Theresa Coletti, "Sacrament and Sacrifice in the N-Town Passion," *Mediaevalia* 7 (1981): 239–64; Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

artists, in particular, had a penchant for creating new iconographies. Particularly when the provenance of

literary work can be determined, as is the case with Croxton, visual support should be drawn from East

Anglia, not the Continent.

Academic awareness of English regional art was facilitated by two North American projects

begun in the last quarter of the century: the Records of Early English Drama (REED) project to

inventory dramatic records inaugurated in 1975 at the University of Toronto, and Early Drama, Art, and

Music (EDAM) in 1976 at Western Michigan University's Medieval Institute under the direction of

Clifford Davidson, which included the publication of *The Early Drama, Art, and Music Review.*[7]

Scholars, many of them affiliated with English departments, began turning pages in county record

offices instead of grand libraries; they were opening modest church doors on town squares, camera in

hand.[8] The Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University also inaugurated a Reference Series, five

volumes of which dealt with towns and counties with strong dramatic presence, York, Chester,

Warwickshire, the West Riding of Yorkshire, and Norfolk.[9] The Subject Lists are essentially

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[7] The demise of the *Review* was regrettable because it provided a venue for small-scale studies of iconographic features relevant to drama, e.g., Gloria Bletcher, "Redemptive Iconography in the Decorative Arts and Drama of Cornwall," 24 (Spring 2002), 71–105, with copious illustrations.

[8] Not mentioned above are the many British researchers who were documenting local parishes: for Norfolk glass, the joint venture supervised by David King to photograph glass (1970–75), for which see www.cvma.ac.uk; for dating of building projects, Paul Cattermole and Simon Cotton, "Medieval Parish Church Building in Norfolk," *Norfolk Archaeology* 38 (1983): 235–79; for hammerbeam roofs, Birkin Haward, *Suffolk Medieval Church Roof Carvings* (Ipswich: Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1999). Also excluded is The Index of Christian Art, started in 1917, and recently extended beyond 1400 to 1600. It is an essential tool for the history of iconography, but not the best source for English work.

[9] Reference Series 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 include the subtitle *A Subject List of Extant and Lost Art Including Items Relevant to Early Drama*: Clifford Davidson and David E. O'Connor, *York Art* (1978); Sally-Beth MacLean, *Chester Art* (1982); Clifford Davidson and Jennifer Alexander, *The Early Art of Coventry, Stratford-upon-Avon and the Lesser Sites in Warwickshire* (1985); Barbara Palmer, *The Early Art of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, (1990); Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *The Early*

iconographic indexes of regional parish art. They are particularly useful because they include

antiquarian descriptions of art now lost, for Norfolk, in particular, Francis Blomefield, Charles Parkin,

and Thomas Martin.[10] Unfortunately, the important counties of Cornwall, Kent, and Suffolk remain to

be inventoried. Without Suffolk, the parochial art of East Anglia remains only partially accessible, a fact

that qualifies the validity of generalizations below about the region's devotional art.[11]

In addition to these sources, manuscript surveys initiated in the last quarter of the century have

also made English material readily available, in particular, the Harvey Miller series *A Survey of

Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, the fifteenth century surveyed by Kathleen Scott, *Later

Gothic Manuscripts*.[12] Scott, appreciating how much work was excluded from her *Survey*, inaugurated

the *Index of Images in English Manuscripts*, the goal of which was to index all the images in fifteenth-

century manuscripts produced in England. To date, seven fascicles have been published and ten more

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Art of Norfolk (2002), hereafter cited as *Norfolk Subject List*; additionally, Pamela Sheingorn, *The
Easter Sepulchre in England* (1987).

[10] See Barbara Green's survey in Nichols, *Norfolk Subject List*, 286–88.

[11] Useful sources for Suffolk are H. Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches and their Treasures.* 5th ed.
(Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1982); Nikolaus Pevsner and Enid Radcliffe, *East Suffolk*
(Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000); and D. P. Mortlock, *Popular Guide to Suffolk Churches*
(Cambridge: Acorn Editions), no. 1: West Suffolk (1988); no. 2: Central Suffolk (1990); no. 3: East
Suffolk (1992). See also www.suffolkchurches.co.uk for easily accessible images.

[12] Kathleen L. Scott, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British*, *Later Gothic Manuscripts
1390–1490*, 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller, 1996). Vol. 1 contains the introduction and
illustrations; vol. 2 is the catalogue of manuscripts. Scott's corpus was qualitatively selective, hence
the importance of *An Index of Images*, which is not (see n. 13).

are in progress.[13] Without this sort of reference material, iconographic generalization is hazardous if not misleading.[14]

The last decade of the century also saw the publication of Eamon Duffy's seminal *The Stripping of the Altars*, its influence on literary critics clear from repeated citation in footnotes and bibliographies.[15] What Anderson began, Duffy capped with 141 plates, largely parochial images and many from Norfolk. Duffy has been far more influential than the EDAM Subject Lists or the *Survey* volumes. Catalogues and inventories do not make for good reading, whereas Duffy is a fine stylist.[16] In his hand the world of parish devotion comes alive. Subject lists and indexes provide only fragmentary bits of that world. Nonetheless, anyone who wishes to generalize about devotional art would do well to check the data.

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[13] *An Index of Images in English Manuscripts from the Time of Chaucer to Henry VIII* (London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller [imprint of Brepols]) under the general editorship of Kathleen L. Scott: *The Bodleian Library I* (MSS. Additional–Digby, Ann Eljenholm Nichols, Michael T. Orr, Kathleen L. Scott, and Lynda Dennison, 2000); *The Bodleian Library II* (MSS. Dodsworth–Marshal, Lynda Dennison, Martha W. Driver, Ann Eljenholm Nichols, and Kathleen L. Scott, 2001); *The Bodleian Library III* (MSS. e Musaeo–Wood, Lynda Dennison, Michael T. Orr, and Kathleen L. Scott, 2002); *New York City* (Columbia University–Union Theological, Martha Driver and Michael T. Orr, 2007); *Welsh Manuscripts and English Manuscripts in Wales* (Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 2011); *Cambridge I* (Christ's College–Gonville and Caius and Fitzwilliam Museum, Ann Eljenholm Nichols, 2008); *The British Library I* (Additional and Egerton Collections, Kathleen L. Scott, 2013). Hereafter cited as *Index of Images*.

[14] It seems we must look to North American scholars to continue such work. One *Index* researcher recently withdrew from the project because his British institution disqualified the work as "research."

[15] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

[16] Anderson's prose in comparison is flat, yet her observations are generally sound, many of which have been touted as original by later authors.

The Play of the Sacrament. The *Play of the Sacrament* is one of a number of plays firmly

identified by language as East Anglian.[17] It is generally accepted that the Croxton cited in the banns is

the Norfolk parish lying just three miles north of Thetford and another twelve from Bury St. Edmunds.[18]

Since most of the audience would have been acquired their iconographic vocabulary locally, I shall

focus on parish churches within a fifteen mile radius of Croxton, including Suffolk.[19] (Some viewers

could, of course, have come from farther afield, and fewer yet would have been book owners.) The

biggest population center within this radius is Thetford. Although Bury St. Edmunds is just within the

Croxton circle, I shall exclude it because documentary sources for lost art have not been inventoried.

The great Abbey is reduced to bare walls,[20] and the two splendid parish churches, St. James and St.

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[17] Beadle, "Prolegomena," 102, 107, no. 133, describing the text of *The Play of the Sacrament* (Dublin, Trinity College MS. 652) as "probably from a Norfolk exemplar."

[18] Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS, s.s. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), lxxxiv–lxxxv. References to the Croxton play will be cited by line numbers in my text. In the fourteenth century Croxton was appropriated to Bromehill Priory, the Austin canons serving as vicars at least through 1384, one buried in the Croxton chancel. See Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk,* 11 vols. (London, 1805–11); for relation to canons, 2:134; www.british-history.ac.uk. There was also a chapel or religious house near Croxton, probably with connections to Thetford. For photographs of Croxton, see www.norfolkchuches.co.uk. Also see William Tydeman, *English Medieval Theatre, 1400–1500* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 59–60.

[19] Although there were dialect differences between the Suffolk and Norfolk, throughout the Middle Ages they were administratively united in one diocese, and there were joint meetings of the shire court (Beadle, "Prolegomena," 95–96).

[20] For the great Cross of Bury, perhaps a copy of the *Volto Santo* of Lucca, see Diana Webb, "Holy Face of Lucca," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1987): 235–37. Nicholas Rogers has suggested that the Abbey might have had a copy of the Veronica at Rome; see "The Bury Artists of Harley 2278 and the Origins of Topographical Awareness in English Art," in Antonia Gransden, ed., *Bury St. Edmunds: Medieval Art, Architecture, Archaeology, and Economy*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 20 (1998), 222, pl. LIIIA. This volume has a number of useful articles on Bury as an artistic center. See also T. Hoving, "The Bury St Edmunds Cross," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (June 1964): 317–40.

Mary, were studiously rebuilt by the Victorians.[21] For decades scholars have tried to locate a cultural home for the plays identified by dialect as East Anglian. Bury St. Edmunds has received the most attention,[22] but Thetford has also been suggested as an equally "persuasive cultural epicentre."[23]

Situated on the Little Ouse, Thetford was a major city throughout the fifteenth century. It was home to nine parishes, a number of chapels, the great Cluniac priory just beyond the church of St. Nicholas, a Benedictine nunnery, a Priory of the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre, and two friaries—an index of the prosperity of the town. Francis Blomefield cited twenty parishes, but the number was probably closer to twelve in the fifteenth century.[24] Today a handful of documentary citations record what was once in those churches. Only at St. Cuthbert in Thetford is there any record of Passion subjects. Blomefield recorded "the history of our Saviour's passion . . . now much defaced."[25] The 1368 archidiaconal inventories cited two parishes with painted altarpieces, a retable at St. Mary's, and a

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[21] Haward dates most of the carving at St. Mary's as early fifteenth century; for the kaleidoscopic range of subjects, see his *Suffolk Medieval Church Roof Carvings,* 51–69. For Bury as an artistic center, see Nicholas Rogers, "Regional Production," in Richard Marks and Paul Williamson, eds., *Gothic Art for England 1400–1547* (London: V&A Publications, 2003), 94–95 (hereafter *Gothic Art*). John Baret's chantry chapel is illustrated in Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, figs. 4.1–3.

[22] The case for Bury St. Edmunds has been made forcefully by Gail Gibson, "St. Edmunds, Lydgate, and the N-Town Cycle," *Speculum* 56 (1981): 56–90.

[23] Alan J. Fletcher, "The N-Town plays," in Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 185–87 (hereafter *Companion*).

[24] Blomefield, *An Essay*, 2:59–76. By the fifteenth century two were derelict, three had become hospitals, and three had been relegated to chapel status, a total that tallies with the 1368 archidiaconal visitation of twelve parishes, excluding chapels.

[25] Thomas Martin also cited scriptural subjects on the walls (*A History of the Town of Thetford* [London: J. Nichols, 1779], 83).

frontal at St. Nicholas. Other Thetford parishes had a range of vestments and books, well beyond the normal requirements.[26]

The quality of fourteenth-century art in Thetford must have been notable, at least if we can judge by the altarpiece once at the Dominican Priory but preserved today at the Musée de Cluny in Paris and Thorham Parva in Suffolk. Christopher Norton and Paul Binski have concluded that it was produced in a local workshop (not Norwich), and study of the range and sophisticated use of metals in the altarpiece further suggests what was available for those who could afford to pay.[27] The Priory church must have been magnificent, but only ruins remain.[28] We know the monks patronized music and drama in the first decade of the sixteenth century, not just at the Priory but also at unspecified festivities in neighboring parishes.[29] In 1506/7 the Prior gave 1*s* 8*d* to the "gylde of Crokeston."[30]

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[26] Archdeaconry of Norwich, Aelred Watkin, ed., *Inventory of Church Goods temp. Edward II*, 2 vols. (Norfolk Record Society, 1947–48), 2:141–45.

[27] Christopher Norton, David Park, and Paul Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia: The Thornham Parva Retable and the Musée de Cluny Frontal* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1987), esp. 82–101; Spike Bucklow, "The Use of Metals in a Fourteenth-century East Anglian Painters' Workshop: The Thornham Parva Retable," in P. Binski and W. Noel, eds., *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001), 445–56.

[28] Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *Norfolk 2: North-West and South* (London: Penguin, 1999), 705–09. The priory had a famous collection of relics, including a number directly relating to the Passion, a bit of the purple robe Christ wore when he was tormented, relics of the rock of Calvary and of the sepulchre (Blomefield, *An Essay*, 2:18). See David Dymond, *The Register of Thetford Priory*, Norfolk Record Society, pt. 1 (1482–1517) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3, for the importance of these relics at the turn of the fourteenth century,

[29] For the Thetford Priory's support of local plays, see Richard Beadle, "Plays and Playing at Thetford and Nearby 1498–1549," *Theatre Notebook*, 32 (1978): 8–9; Dymond, *Register,* 47–52, and further bibliography, n. 130.

[30] Dymond, *Register*, 218. Payments were also made for lights in the church (Martin, *History,* 152).

Thetford's location on the Little Ouse made it accessible via the East Anglian river system. In contrast, most of the parishes within the fifteen-mile radius of Croxton are situated in the Breckland, which lay between the fens to the west and chalk uplands to the north and east. Meres dotted the western area, but the heart of the area was heathland, since converted to farmland and forest but detectable from the wide occurrence of "heath" in local place names in Norfolk and Suffolk.[31] The geography explains why the area was sparsely populated, unlike other parts of East Anglia, and why the churches were relatively poor by comparison with parishes further north and south. Even those churches that were once richly decorated (e.g., Mildenhall and Lakenheath) have suffered badly from twentieth-century demographic shifts. This being the case, to what extent can it be argued that images in parishes outside the Croxton fifteen-mile circle are relevant for the play audience that Monday afternoon? Here the principle of critical mass comes into play.[32] Because there are fewer churches in the Breckland, one's expectations must be low. Because so much parochial art was destroyed, where a critical mass remains, as in the Holt hundred in north Norfolk, it is justifiable to use the pattern there as a reliable template for what might have existed elsewhere, for example, at Thetford.[33]

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[31] Lackenheath ("Lacca's hithe") was a key inland port on the fenland waterways, a situation that accounts for the extensive decoration there (see above, n. 11). Hockham, to be discussed below, derives from "Hoc pan," town in the dirt. For the nature of the land around Lakenheath, see Mark Baily, "The Priory and Convent of Ely and their Management of the Manor of Lakenheath," in M. J. Franklin and Christopher Harper-Bill, eds., *Medieval Ecclesiastical Studies in Honour of Dorothy Owen* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), 2–3. See also W. M. Corbitt, *Breckland Forest Soils*, Soil Survey, no. 7 (Harpenden, 1973).

[32] For the significance of textual mass, see Mieke Bal, *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 69.

[33] For the Holt hundred, see below, n. 95.

Arma Christi (Instruments of the Passion).[34] The *Arma Christi* motif, as understood in this essay, comprises both the Instruments of the Passion, sometimes displayed as *arma* proper on a shield, and the Image of Pity, to be discussed in the next section. The two are commonly, but not always, linked. Before beginning the regional survey, certain operational principles are in order. We start with manuscripts because they survive in great number and so establish a pattern of iconography that influenced other arts and crafts. Only manuscripts produced in the long first half of the fifteenth century (through 1460) are relevant.[35] Because this is a regional study, to be immediately relevant, the manuscripts need to have been either produced in East Anglia or owned by people living there. Here the resources sometimes disappoint because few manuscripts preserve ownership evidence. Certainly, East Anglian ownership exceeded the twenty-nine identified by Scott. This essay is based on a working corpus of thirty East

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[34] For a summary of the extensive bibliography, see Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 16–19 (hereafter, *Arma Christi*).

[35] Both the conversion miracle in Aragon and the production of the play in Rome are dated 1461 (Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays*, 58–61 [ll. 11, 58, 86]). The date is just a century after the feast of Corpus Christi was introduced belatedly in East Anglia. Aelred Watkin noted that in 1368 the liturgical texts for the feast existed only in quires (*Inventory of Church Goods*, pt. 2, xxxix). For theories about Marian use of the play, see Tamara Atkin, "Playbooks and Printed Drama: A Reassessment of the Date and Layout of the Manuscript of the *Play of the Sacrament*," *Review of English Studies* 60 (2009): 194–205.

Anglian manuscripts, ten from Scott's list,[36] and seventeen from Richard Beadle, including the Croxton

play,[37] and three roll copies of the poem "O Vernicle."[38]

The *Arma Christi* devotion was indulgence centered. Pardons could be gained for devoutly

considering the Instruments of the Passion, the usual conditions applying. The devotion was established

in England in the second half of the fourteenth century. At the turn of the fifteenth century, the first

manuscripts of the illustrated English poem "O Vernicle" appear, each of its twenty-four stanzas

dedicated to a different Instrument of the Passion. In *Omne bonum*, one of the earliest English examples,

the Latin indulgence is copied beneath an elaborate *Arma Christi* page: "Quicunque arma superius

devote inspexerit."[39] In the pardon poem that accompanies "O Vernicle," the phrase is translated in one

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[36] The term *East Anglia* can be used broadly to include parts of Cambridgeshire and Essex; here it is restricted to Norfolk and Suffolk. Scott identified twenty-nine of the 140 manuscripts catalogued as Norfolk or Suffolk, many of the basis of style. Only ten of these were likely to attract *Arma* illustration; see *Survey*, vol. 2, nos. 5, 16, 17 (also Beadle, "Prolegomena," no. 77), 39B, 44, 46, 69, 80, 92, 121. This list omits East Anglian manuscripts produced in the second half of the century.

[37] Beadle, "Prolegomena," 104–05, nos. 45–46 and 76–88. Of Beadle's fifty-two manuscripts classified as devotional or theological, the *Index of Images* has only searched two collections covering sixteen manuscripts in his list: *The Bodleian Library* (2000, 2001, 2002) and *Cambridge I*. The seventeenth manuscript is the Croxton play (no. 133). Beadle's caveat is important: "The list makes no pretence to being exhaustive, and the copyists of numerous manuscripts as yet uninvestigated will doubtless prove to have had their origins [in East Anglia]" (102). Scribes trained in East Anglia, of course, could move and work elsewhere.

[38] I deal with this poem in more detail in "'O Vernicle': Illustrations of an *Arma Christi* Poem," in Marlene Villalobos Hennessy, ed., *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott*: *English Medieval Manuscripts, Readers, Makers and Illuminator*s (London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 2009), 139–169, hereafter cited as *Tribute*s. See also "O Vernicle: A Critical Edition," in Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, 308–91, hereafter cited as "Edition." Three essays in that collection deal with the poem.

[39] "Quicunque arma superius descripta sive insignia domini nostri iesu christi devote inspexerit, a summis pontificibus subscriptam indulgenciam consequetur," Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Omne Bonum: A Fourteenth-Century Encyclopedia of Universal Knowledge,* 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), 1:127, fig. 113. There are four other early *Arma* pages, for which see Nichols, *Tributes*, 166. For Bristol, Avon County Library, MS. 14, see Scott, *Survey*, 2:38, 135, 163.

copy as "Wat man þis armes ouer-se."[40] In the *Omne bonum* page, thirty-four *Arma* frame four central

images of Christ: the Eucharistic Christ (chalice with Host), the Face of Christ, the Crucified Christ, and

Imago Pietatis.[41] By the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century, the Man of Sorrows, sometimes

with *Arma*, had been established as the typical illustration for the Passion psalms in Sarum Books of

Hours imported from the Continent.[42] According to Scott, English ateliers were slow to establish a

canonical illustration for these psalms,[43] but in her corpus of thirteen Books of Hours from the first half

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[40] Richard Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood: Symbols of the Passion and Cross-Poems*, EETS, o.s.
46 (1871; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 195 (l. 203); *New Index of Middle English
Verse*, 3305.8. For the distribution of the pardon poem, see table 4.1 in my "Footprints of Christ," in
Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, 135–36. It appears in the earliest manuscripts of "O
Vernicle"; see Nichols, "Edition," 325–26, 328, 331. Harvard University Library, MS. Typ 193,
was written by an Essex-trained scribe. The indulgence (marked through) is published by Shannon
Gayk, "Early Modern Afterlives of the *Arma Christi*," in Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma
Christi,* 279.

[41] Most recently reproduced in Copper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, pl. I.1. For the
complete *Arma Christi* indulgence, see Sandler, *Omne Bonum*, vol. 1, pl. 113.

[42] Nicholas Rogers, "Books of Hours Produced in the Low Countries for the English Market in the
Fifteenth Century," 2 vols., M. Litt. diss. (University of Cambridge, 1984), 1:67, 71–72; vol. 2,
Appendix IV. I have excluded imported Hours because of the difficulty of ascertaining ownership.
However, Rogers thinks that Cambridge University Library, MS. Ii.6.2, which substituted the Man
of Sorrows for the standard Judgment scene at the Penitential Psalms, reflects local taste.
Continental imports influenced English practice, e.g., New York, Public Library, MS. Spencer MS.
3, fol. 95v, a Flemish Book of Hours with a Pity illustrating the Passion Psalms to which an English
miniature with the indulgence was added (fol. 8v, Scott, *Survey*, no. 106, fig. 399). Driver and Orr,
Index of Images, provide separate entries for each part, cat. nos. 67 and 79. The Flemish Pity is
illustrated in Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, pl. I.4. This illustrative use continues
through the second half of the fifteenth century, e.g., see *Index of Images*, Bodleian Library II, no.
528, fig. 10.

[43] Scott, *Survey*, 1:57.

of the century, five used the Instruments of the Passion.[44] The Instruments were also used to illustrate

prayers, sometimes indulgence connected.[45] A handful of manuscripts attest the presence of the *Arma* in

East Anglian productions. In British Library, Arundel MS. 302, made in or near Bury St. Edmunds

(c.1450), a full page miniature Christ as Pity is surrounded by the Instruments, accompanying a prayer

for souls in Purgatory (fol. 129v).[46] The owner of an unillustrated psalter, also produced at Bury,

arranged to have two full-page miniatures inserted, one an *Arma* page (Norwich Castle Museum, MS.

158.926.4c, hereafter cited as the Norwich Psalter). Less elegant than the *Omne bonum* page, it had what

was essential—thirty-five *Arma* on a shield and the pardon below.[47] More interesting, about 1450 an

identified religious house in north Norfolk was producing illustrated roll copies of the *Arma* poem "O

Vernicle."[48] The three rolls are utilitarian rather than elegant, the color thinly applied, and the art work

provincial rather than professional.[49] Either there was a local market for *Arma Christi* devotions, or the

house was actively creating one. Manuscript evidence for the *Arma* devotion, if not robust, was

established by mid-century.

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[44] Ibid., 2:382–83 (table III); cat. nos. 48 (10), 88 (25, with Pietà), 108 (33, with Man of Sorrows), 109 (32), and (28, with Man of Sorrows) [no cat. entry]. Table number designations are in parentheses.

[45] Ibid., cat. nos. 7 (full page) and 32 (Crucifixion with *Arma* and indulgence), both with York connections; 57 (Prayer Book of Charles d'Orleans, vol. 1, fig. 228, in color in *Gothic Art*, no. 74); 92 (full page with Man of Sorrows) and *Index of Images*, Bodleian Library, II, no. 532 and fig. 7.

[46] Scott, *Survey*, cat. no. 92, "perhaps a commercial shop"; fifteenth-century ownership by Hamelden of Holton St. Peter, Suffolk.

[47] Published in Nichols, *Norfolk Subject List*, pl. 14.

[48] Nichols, "Edition," 321–22, 341–43. The pardon poem is lacking in these rolls. See above, n. 40. The literature on pardons is extensive, but beyond the scope of this essay.

[49] Non-professional work is often *sui generis*, and so difficult to locate without the linguistic markers found in the rolls.

Parochial evidence is more striking. Given the widespread destruction of fifteenth-century

images in Norfolk, whether from the iconoclastic fervor of the Reformation or the Commonwealth,

general neglect, and/or Victorian zeal for renovation, the survival of so many representations of the

Instruments of the Passion is remarkable. The *Norfolk Subject List* citations run to five pages, with

examples in all media, even glass (the most vulnerable to destruction) and wall painting (the most liable

to deterioration). They are well-preserved as bas-reliefs on church exteriors and on baptismal fonts in

Suffolk as well as Norfolk.[50] Carved angels attached to hammerbeams commonly held the Instruments

of the Passion. Of the seventeen hammerbeam roofs in Norfolk, four are in the Croxton circle. The best

example is a complete set of *Arma Christi* angels at Swaffham on the northern boundary of the

Breckland. Five of the thirteen angels on lower hammers are largely intact, holding ladder, hammer and

pincers, seamless robe, cross, and crown of thorns.[51] Unfortunately, Swaffham must be excluded on

date, 1475, although it is a good example of *Arma* dominance that characterized the previous quarter

century. There are, however, three ceilings that qualify, two on the western boundary of the Breckland.

The nave roof at Mildenhall, Suffolk, has two angels holding the Instruments of the Passion, including

the ubiquitous hammer and three nails,[52] and at Methwold an angel holds three nails. At Bardwell,

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[50] Even when the iconoclast William Dowsing noted *Arma* in his Journal, the locals left them untouched, e.g., at Blyford, Suffolk: "A cross on the chancel they promised to take down; and a triangle on the porch, for the Trinity; and 2 whips, etc." (Trevor Cooper, ed., *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 298 (Journal, no. 234), and fig. 49. For similar survivals, see nos. 88, 217, 219, 224.

[51] Haward, *Suffolk Medieval Church Roof Carvings*, 144, illustration at 147.

[52] When J. G. Walker described the Mildenhall roof a hundred years ago, he could still identify *Arma* on the shield borne by another angel ("On the Roof of the Church of St. Andrew, Mildenhall, Suffolk," *Archaeologia,* 54 [1895]: 255–66). Haward has argued that this work, which is of the highest quality, is related to carving at Bury St. Edmunds Abbey and St. Mary's, *Suffolk Medieval*

Suffolk, a roof originally with twenty-six figures, two of the four remaining angels hold Instruments.[53]

All three roofs can be dated in the first half of the century.[54] Since the majority of the hammerbeam

roofs date from the second half of the century, twenty-three of twenty-nine in East Anglia according to

Haward, it is significant that Instruments of the Passion appeared so early in the Croxton circle.[55] It must

be noted, however, that churches were dark because of stained glass, and much of the roof detail would

have been difficult to see except on a bright day.[56]

The *Arma Christi* are also well represented on baptismal fonts, particularly in north Norfolk.[57]

Since the fonts typically faced the entrance door, parishioners were more apt to see these *Arma* than

those in the ceiling above. The most common arrangement was a Roman cross, a crown of thorns at the

bar intersection, and lance and sponge saltire. Three nails were embedded, two on the cross bar, the third

at foot level. Hammer and pincers were commonly paired. These instruments, cited in the Croxton

play's banns (39–40), were the stage properties in the "new passyoun": "Here is an hamer and naylys

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Church Roof Carvings, 130. See also Cautley, *Suffolk Churches*, 332, who noted traces of color in the roof.

[53] The angel holding the crown of thorns can be viewed at www.suffolkchurches.co.uk. See also Haward, *Suffolk Medieval Church Roof Carvings*, 24; Cautley, *Suffolk Churches*, 219.

[54] Haward dates Mildenhall to 1420–30. Cautley accepts the 1421 date for Bardwell; Methwold has documentary evidence for 1440.

[55] The drilled tenons at Walsham-le-Willows indicate that figures are lost, but angels held musical instruments and liturgical vessels as well as Instruments of the Passion, so no conclusion can be drawn.

[56] Painted angels are more easily visible as at Knapton (1455–60) in north Norfolk, the most remarkable of the *Arma* roofs; Haward, *Suffolk Medieval Church Roof Carvings*, 116–19; www.norfolkchurches.co.uk.

[57] For example, Bale, Blakeney, Field Dalling, and Salthouse (Nichols, *Norfolk Subject List*, fig. 15). See also n. 97, below. The baptismal fonts can be viewed at www.norfolkchurches.co.uk.

thre" (508); "And take yowre pynsonys that ar so sure, / And pluck owt the nayyls" (657–58), a phrase

Jason repeats, "plucke owt the naylys that stond so fast" (663). Other instruments feature in the action:

the pillar and cord "faste bynd hyme to a poste" (507); perhaps the cultellus is suggested with the

daggers "sharpe and kene" (462); and assuredly the coins of betrayal with the repetition of the word *tell*

(count) in the bargaining scene. They commonly feature in full-scale *Arma* compositions; they appear as

"þe pens also þat Iudas tolde" in "O Vernicle."[58] On the Bale font a purse represents the coins of

betrayal, and just such a purse figures in the Norwich *Arma* page cited earlier. Also included in the *Arma*

page is a counting hand; the index finger and thumb are touching. Precisely this gesture is written into

the dialogue of the play: "I shall yt *tell* in this stownd" and "*Tell* yt ere yow from me passe' (314, 317,

italics mine).[59]

The thirty-five *Arma* fonts are widely distributed over Norfolk, but only one is in the Croxton

circle. An atypical font, it is another example of East Anglian manipulation of traditional iconographic

patterns. The font is now at Lakenham, a suburb of Norwich, but originally it was at Knettishall, just

over the Suffolk border from Croxton.[60] It is a typical octagonal evangelist font, a pattern commonly

augmented by Instruments of the Passion on the other four faces of the bowl. In this case, however, the

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[58] Nichols, "Edition," 236 (l. 29). For illustrations, see Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, pls. I.1, 3.2 (bag of coins); I.4 (bag); I.3, 5.2 (coins).

[59] The literature on the bargaining scene is extensive, to which should be added Martha Rust, "The *Arma Christi* and the Ethics of Reckoning" in Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, 143–69. The modern producer can find a wealth of merchant detail in the Norwich roof bosses, e.g., the Jewish Merchant of Constantinople with his mound of coins.

[60] For Lakenham, St. John the Baptist, see D. P. Mortlock and C. V. Roberts, *The Popular Guide to Norfolk Churches, 2: Norwich, Central and South Norfolk* (Cambridge: Acorn Editions, 1985), 71. Without documentary evidence, fonts are difficult to date. Knettishall wills suggest mid-century parish renovation, but the font must have been provided earlier; otherwise one would have expected the small figure-work characteristic of the second half of the century.

Crucifixion, normally confined to one panel, occupies three, a cross on one, flanked by Mary and St. John in the adjacent panels. The fourth panel is remarkable because the mason tried to reproduce in stone an elaborate composition with nine *Arma Christi*. The work is crude, but nonetheless clear. In the center stands a pillar with the cord wound about and at the bottom a large pair of forceps. To the left are the vertical spear and sponge. At the extremes are three heads facing center. The central head on the left wears a Jewish miter, and the others wear variations of Jewish hats.[61] These are not isolated Instruments of the Passion, they are being wielded by the Jews. Four of the heads have disembodied hands. At the lower left, the hand holds a scourge; perhaps the figure at upper left was meant to hold the crown of thorns. All three heads at the right have prominent hands holding, in descending order, three nails, a raised hammer, and a birch. The busy-ness of this panel, in contrast to the simplicity of the three-panel Crucifixion, stems from crowding nine Instruments of the Passion into the same panel with six rather large Jewish heads and four hands. The prominence of hands in this work is unique in the corpus of East Anglian fonts. On the Knettishall font they visually dominate the stone relief in much the same way that the hand of Jonathas dominates the climax of the play.

Hands also figure in *Arma* devotion as the *manus alapans* and *manus depillans*. In the Norwich *Arma* page the slapping hand is depicted with the palm facing the viewer; the fingers of the second hand grasp a strand of hair. The hands are similarly depicted in the Norfolk copies of "O Vernicle."[62] The two hands are unusual in parochial art, but they appear in the well-preserved wall painting on the chancel

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[61] In physiognomy the heads belong to Haward's fearsome heads at Bury (*Suffolk Medieval Church Roof Carvings,* 8–10). Note also the heads at the left beneath the shield in the Norwich Castle Museum (MS. 158.926.4c) *Arma* page, illustrated in *Norfolk Subject List*, fig. 14.

[62] For the illustration in a southeast Midlands manuscript, see Richard G. Newhauser and Arthur J. Russell, "Mapping Virtual Pilgrimage in an Early Fifteenth-Century *Arma Christi* Roll," in Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi,* fig. 3.2, pl. 3.2.

arch in the Breckland parish Great Hockham within the Croxton circle. A good example of the East Anglian penchant for creating new iconographies, the scene presents the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the central image of the Crucifix Trinity flanked by two shields, at the left the arms of Trinity, at the right the *Arma Christi*, a central cross with two hands, one buffeting and the other pulling a stand of hair.[63]

In *Arma Christi* pages, the *manus* is one of many *Arma*, but in *The Play of the Sacrament*, it takes on a life of its own. Attached to the Host, the offending hand of Jonathas is on stage throughout the Brundiche scene. It is caste into the cauldron, plucked out by Jason "soden, the fleshe from þe bonys" (706), returned to the pot, and finally reappears "*hole agayn*" when the repentant Jonathas puts "*hys hand* [?arm] *into þe cawdron*" (777*s.d.*)—yet another miracle, flesh returned to bone. There is no more startling transformation of the *manus* theme in *Arma Christi* literature. It is impossible to know whether the audience members recognized the hand or any of the Instrument props as *Arma Christi*, though it is likely that the visually literate did. Certainly, having watched the Croxton play, all were better prepared to recognize them in the future.

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[63] The left side of the shield is lost. I am grateful to Andrea Kirkham for providing me photographs of taken from scaffolding. The complete scene can be seen at www.norfolkchurches.co.uk. Pevsner and Wilson note the unusual use of the Annunciation in what they call a Majesty scene (*Norfolk 2*:49). See also *Norfolk Subject List*, 87–88. The donors, flanking the scene, may well have owned a Book of Hours with the Annunciation (Matins) as well as the *Arma Christi* (Passion psalms).

Imago Pietatis (Image of Pity, Man of Sorrows).[64] "Man of Sorrows" is the usual art-historical

term, but as Colum Hourihane has recently observed, the term has been used for a variety of images.[65]

"Image of Pity" is a rough translation of the indulgence term *Imago Pietatis.*[66] The term has been widely

used in the last twenty-five years by authors dealing with popular religion, but it was current in Middle

English. The table of contents to the Vernon manuscript cites "The pyte of crist stondying in the

sepulchre," a scene now lost.[67] One version of the pardon poem for "O Vernicle" provides 16,036 days

for viewing "the pytye."[68] The following description of the Image of Pity is based on English examples

from the fifteenth century,[69] including the three here reproduced (figs. 1–3) (an asterisk indicates that the

same feature obtains in the Norwich Psalter, referenced in the *Norfolk Subject List*, fig. 12):

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[64] I exclude the Byzantine image since origins are outside the scope of this article. For use in the Carthusian devotional miscellany (British Library Ms. Add. 37,049), see Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 171–78. There is extensive literature on the Man of Sorrows, to which should be added Catherine R. Puglisi and William L Barcham, eds., *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013).

[65] Colum Hourihane, "Defining Terms: Ecce Homo, Christ of Pity, Christ Mocked, and the Man of Sorrows," in Puglisi and Barcham, eds., *New Perspectives,* 19–47, esp. 19–24. Hourihane defines Man of Sorrows as "a post-death devotional image," but open eyes are a regular feature in English art. Art historians also use the term "Christ of Pity," which should not be confused with "Image of Pity." It is a sixteenth-century image, predominantly French. Hourihane's fig. 14 seems to be mislabeled.

[66] For the term in Latin indulgences, see Susan Boynton, "From Book to Song," in Puglisi and Barcham, eds., *New Perspectives,* 142-143, nn. 34, 40; neither manuscript is English.

[67] *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Eng. Poet. a./1* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), 9. The image is lost.

[68] British Library, Add. MS. 11748, in Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood*, 192. This is a third-quarter manuscript. Compare similar language in 1470, "our Lord rising out of the sepulchre, sometimes called our Lord's Pity," cited in Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 109.

[69] Here excluding composite figures like the Mass of St. Gregory and St. John's Head; for the latter, see Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters* (Oxford: Phaidon, Christie's, 1984), nos. 247–

Half figure in the sepulchre displaying his bleeding wounds (figs. 1, 2, and 3).*
Head nimbed and crowned with thorns (figs. 1 and 2).*
Eyes open (figs. 1 and 2).*[70]
Wrists crossed.[71]
Both forearms raised (fig. 3).
Left hand raised (fig. 1) or resting at edge of sepulchre (fig. 2).*
Right hand on chest (fig. 2).*
Thumb and index finger outlining the vulneral wound (fig. 1).[72]
Body covered with secondary wounds from scourging.*[73]
Scene situated against an aureole (figs. 1 and 3).[74]

This is not the resurrected Christ, who also displays his wounds in triumph, nor the Christ in Judgment

scenes, who wears the marks as a sign of glory, angels bearing the Instruments of the Passion as spoils

of battle.[75] This is an image designed to evoke pity in the beholder, a Christ who might well say,

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56 (no *Arma*), all late fifteenth-century; also *Gothic Art,* no. 219, and pl. 117; and Nichols, *Norfolk Subject List*, 89. The alabasters were produced in great numbers in the last two decades of the fifteenth century, thus attesting to the growing popularity of the subject. Cheetham (317–18) makes reference to the contemporary terms "The Lord's Pity" or "Jesus' Pity" for the Image of Pity.

[70] They may be partially closed, with the effect that Christ regards his bleeding wounds, e.g., Scott, *Survey*, vol. 1, figs. 399–400.

[71] Scott, *Survey*, vol.1, fig. 400 (crossed); *Index, Bodleian II,* fig. 10. The wrists are not crossed in alabasters.

[72] Scott, *Survey*, vol. 1, fig. 399. This feature became the norm in alabaster examples; see Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, nos. 248–49, 251–52, 255–56.

[73] The body of Christ is so depicted in other Passion scenes of Norfolk origin: a crucifixion in Michael de Massa's *Writings on the Passion*, c.1404, Bodley 758, fol. 1, Scott, *Survey*, cat. no. 17, vol. 2, fig. 108; David King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft Norwich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), cviii, fig. 61, and in the disrobing of Christ, Saint Peter Mancroft Passion window, ibid., 32–33 (light l I.3c), color pl. 13, also for a fragment of the wounded body, 10–11. The design of the wounds in glass is the same in the page added to the Norwich Psalter, with coeval dates.

[74] In fig. 3 the nineteenth-century restorer provided the head of Christ as well as rays to match those in the original glass (David King, personal communication).

[75] For examples in Norfolk, see *Subject List*, 118.

"*attendite et videte / Si est dolor sicut dolor meus*," as Jesus does in the Croxton miracle (717–18).[76]

Indeed, the role of Jesus in *The Play of the Sacrament* is the best mid-century evidence for the Image of Pity in a Breckland parish.

The Man of Sorrows, as we have seen above, was a standard illustration for the psalms of the Passion in imported Books of Hours, and also favoured in English productions in the first half of the century.[77] However, neither of the two of the Books of Hours in Scott's East Anglian corpus so uses the Image of Pity (Fitzwilliam Museum, Add. MS. 3–1979, c.1440, and British Library, Arundel, MS. 302, c.1440–50). They do, however, use the Pity to historiate the opening initial of the "Fifteen Oes" (fols. 177 and 130v, respectively), a use that persists in the second half of the century.[78] The owners of these two Hours, an unidentified woman and Hemelden (his arms are in the Prayer section), seem both to have had a personal interest in the image. She kneels before the image, and Hemelden's Hours included a full-page representation of the Man of Sorrows with Instruments of the Passion (fol. 129v). The same

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[76] My quotation retains Davis's emendation *sicut* in place of the MS. reading (Dublin, Trinity College, F.4.20, fol. 350v) of *simulus* (*Non-Cycle Plays*, 80).

[77] Scott cites nine examples from the first half of the fifteenth century, *Survey*, vol. 2:382–83, table III, nos. 8, 16 (cat. no. 55), 21, 24 (cat. no. 81), 26–27, 28, 31, 33 (cat. no. 108). In her recently published *British Library I*, Scott cites an early Man of Sorrows with instruments, cat. no. 190, fig. 29, and another at the end of the century as a pastedown (cat. no. 333). Neither has East Anglian provenance.

[78] Fitzwilliam, Add. MS. 3–1979 is Scott's earliest citation for the "Oes"; see *Survey*, vol. 2, table III, no. 23 (cat. no. 80). For an introduction to the "Fifteen Oes," see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 249–56. According to Scott, the "Oes" did not attract illustration until the second quarter of the century, particularly after 1440 (*Survey*, 1:57, and 2:383, table III. See also *Index of Images*: *Bodleian Library II*, no. 591, fig. 10. The poem "O Vernicle" was copied together with the "Oes" in three manuscripts, and intercalated in one; see Nichols, "Edition," 327, 338. A half-page miniature of the Pity appears at the opening of the poem in Longleat MS. 30. Four manuscripts of "O Vernicle" illustrate the last verse on the sepulchre with a Pity, and one unillustrated text entitles the last stanza "Sepulchrum pietas" (Nichols, *Tributes*, 162–63).

personal devotion is attested by the Image of Pity added to the Norwich psalter. It is far more

accomplished than the added *Arma* page, so two artists were involved. They could, of course, have

worked in the same shop, but the site has not been identified. Thus, although three or four workshops

included the Image of Pity in their repertoire, the use does not seem to have been extensive.[79] Further

work needs to be done to identify regional manuscripts.

The expanded East Anglian corpus also disappoints. The Image of Pity may well have been

"reproduced in myriads of fifteenth-century devotional books," but how many of those can be traced to

East Anglia?[80] A preliminary check of Beadle's devotional/theological manuscripts is largely negative.[81]

Of the dozen held at the Bodleian Library, two have crucifixion scenes.[82] In Cambridge, St. John's

College, MS. G.35, Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, someone drew Christ's lateral wound in the margin

opposite the words "cry mercy."[83] We know that the Bury monk John Lydgate was familiar with the Pity

devotion. The concluding stanza of his poem on the Image of Pity cites the concomitant indulgence

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[79] Although Scott thought it likely that the female owner of Add. MS. 3–1979 lived in Bury, on the
basis of style she suggested a workshop "elsewhere in East Anglia."

[80] Eamon Duffy, "Late Medieval Religion," in *Gothic Art*, 60. Duffy, of course, was talking about a
century, whereas this article narrows the focus to fifty years in one region.

[81] The *Index of Images* has surveyed the Bodleian Library and Cambridge college libraries (fasc. 2,
in preparation). The other collections in Beadle's list have yet to be surveyed, another instance of
the usefulness of such work. Cambridge, Trinity Hall MS. 17 has no relevant images, though the
historiated initials are yet further examples of East Anglian independent iconography.

[82] Beadle, "Prolegomena," no. 77 (Bodley MS. 758, cited above, n. 79); no. 85 (Rawlinson, MS.
C.86 (I), fol.1v). No. 83 is a *Speculum Christiani* with the predictable ladders, probably drawn by
the scribe. The other Bodleian manuscripts have typical scribal drawings, e.g., catchwords,
ascenders, as well as *nota bene* hands.

[83] Beadle, "Prolegomena," no. 45.

attached (49–50).[84] The poem with its refrain "dolerous pité" was meant to be illustrated with the *Imago Pietatis*: "Erly on morwe, and toward nyght also, / First and last, looke on this ffygure. / . . . My bloody woundis, set here in picture" (1– 2, 5). Unfortunately, there seems to be no verified East Anglian copy, and I have found no illustrated version of the poem. The other regional source for the devotion is "O Vernicle," but it is difficult to classify the images that illustrate the sepulchre stanza in the rolls. Christ is depicted lying full length in the sepulchre, his arms are crossed at the wrists and the wounds flowing blood.[85] Perhaps the image should be classified as a Pity, the provincial illustrator unfamiliar with the half-figure model used to illustrate the sepulchre stanza in other copies of the poem.[86] The meager evidence for Image of Pity in the first half of the century is curious, particularly because the region is generally accounted one of the most active artistic centers in England. Perhaps much has been lost, for absence does not necessarily mean loss.

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[84] "The Dolerous Pyte of Crystes Passioun," in Henry Noble MacCracken, ed., *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* pt. I, EETS, e.s.107 (1911; rpt., London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 250–52. Lydgate's "devoutly taketh heede" (26) translates *devote inspexerit.* Some form of *devout* is a constant in Pity indulgences; see Boynton, "From Book to Song," in Puglisi and Barcham, *New Perspectives,* 142, n. 34 ("cum devotione"), n. 35 ("devote dicentibus"), 143, n. 40 ("devote et contrite dixerint").

[85] The same person illustrated all three East Anglian copies; for the provincial style see Cooper and Denny-Brown, "Introduction," *Arma Christi,* pl. I.7. The full-length Christ can be compared to a similar figure in the Carthusian Miscellany, a third-quarter work, Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness*, pl.7.

[86] Four manuscripts of "O Vernicle" illustrate the last verse on the sepulchre with a Pity, and one unillustrated text entitles the last stanza "Sepulchrum pietas" (Nichols, in *Tributes*, 162–63). An East Midland Pity is reproduced by Newhauser and Russell, "Virtual Pilgrimage," in Cooper and Denny-Brown, eds., *Arma Christi*, pl. 3.5.

Neither is the Image of Pity well documented in Norfolk parochial art, in contrast to the strong presence of the *Arma*.[87] There are no wall paintings, and the sole panel painting (Wellingham, with *Arma Christi*) dated 1532 postdates the Croxton play by some seventy years.[88] The one bench at Wiggenhall St. German was carved in the 1590's.[89] By that time the *Imago Pietatis* had migrated from manuscripts into printed books and woodcut indulgences.[90] Campbell Dodgson, in his survey of early woodcuts, cited the Pity as "the commonest of all subjects among English woodcuts of this period."[91] The spread of *Arma Christi* devotion is also attested by the production of the *Arma Christi* poem "O Vernicle"; over half of the twenty copies were produced in the second half of the century. Devotion to the Pietà also spread at this time, the bloody body of Christ, adapted from the Man of Sorrows.[92] The

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[87] Rosemary Woolf's citation of a Pity at Great Hockham in her "History of the *Imago pietatis*" (Appendix E) (*The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], 391) is in error.

[88] Now lost, the date with donor names was recorded in the nineteenth century. See Audrey Baker, *English Panel Paintings 1400–1558*, ed. Ann Ballantyne and Pauline Plummer (London: Archytype, 2011) 54, 200; 227; also reproduced in Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, fig. 50.

[89] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, fig. 47.

[90] For a Sarum primer, see ibid., fig. 49. For Caxton's print, see Gayk, "Early Modern Afterlives," 282, 284, fig. 10.1.

[91] Campbell Dodgson, "English Devotional Woodcuts of the Late Fifteenth Century," *The Walpole Society* 17 (1928–29): 98. Twelve of the twenty-one prints he cites are Pities, to which must be added Edward Hodnett, *English Woodcuts 1480–1535* (Oxford: University Press, 1973), bound with *Additions and Corrections* (London: Bibliographic Society, 1973), nos. 350, 380, 381, 390.   Early sixteenth-century prints show Christ as full standing figure, Gayk, "Early Modern Afterlives," figs. 10.3 and 10.4.

[92] Compare the wounded body of Christ in a late-fifteenth century window at Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, cited by Gibson as "The Virgin Mary Embracing Christ the Man of Sorrows" (*Theater of Devotion*, fig. 4.7). There is a reference for a 1509 burial at St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, before "an image of Our Lady of Pity" (King, *St Peter Mancroft*, 152). Further afield, see Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), fig. 4 (at St. Neot, Cornwall, dated 1523).

Pity seems to have been favored for late mortuary art, the most striking survival being the wall painting

at the Chudleigh memorial chapel at Ashton, Devon.[93]

Fig. 1. Image of Pity. Painted glass, Church of St. Nicholas, Blakeney (Window nVII), Norfolk.
Photo: author.

What of the half century before the production of the Croxton play? There is little evidence that

the Image of Pity figured in parish art except for three painted-glass images.[94] Of the workshops active

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[93] For Ashton see *Gothic Art*, 60, no. 260; and Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*, 113. See also M. Glasscoe, "Late Medieval Paintings in Ashton Church, Devon," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 140 (1987): 187–88. The family vault originally stood below the *Imago Pietatis*. For Prior Leschman's chantry altarpiece, see James Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, 2 vols., Surtees Soc. 44, 46 (Durham: Andrews, 1864). I am grateful to Pauline Plummer for photographs of the Hexham retable.

[94] The immense loss of glass hampers investigation. Bardwell, Suffolk, in the Croxton circle must have had splendid glass, but most of it is gone. Parish records for 1643/44 cite "defaceing the pictures in glasse & wood" (Cooper, ed., *Journal of William Dowsing*, 371).

in the first half of the century, one or perhaps two in Norfolk included the classic English Pity in their repertoire, the work preserved in two parish churches on the north Norfolk coast, Blakeney and Cley.[95] The Blakeney glass, after 1434 (see fig. 1), is not *in situ*, and the orientation of the figure to the sepulchre is odd. If rotated slightly, however, the angle is similar to that in the Norwich Pity cited above.[96] At Cley the image is in the eye of the tracery (fig. 2).[97] Christ's eyes are hooded, and he rests his right hand across his breast so that the vulneral wound is not visible, only the blood flowing from it. King dates this glass c.1450–1460, the decade preceding the Croxton play.[98] A third church lies within

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[95] In Norfolk, Norwich and King's Lynn; in Suffolk, Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich. According to King "most of the medieval glass in Norfolk was made in Norwich" (*St Peter Mancroft*, xcvi). The Holt hundred was largely spared the attention of Dowsing's deputies, for which see Blatchly, "In search of bells," in Cooper, ed., *Journal of William Dowsing*, 107–22, especially Map 8.3.

[96] See also the orientation in the "Oes" illustration, *Index of Images: Bodleian Library II,* Lat. Liturg. e. 47, no. 591, fig. 10. It is unlikely that the Blakeney glass belonged to a Mass of St. Gregory scene since the only current East Anglian evidence for that composition is the defaced rood screen at Wyverstone, Suffolk, dated 1491 (Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, 229). The Image of Pity stands in the sepulchre directly above the altar on which stands a chalice with Host. The screen is yet further evidence of the importance of the *Imago Pietatis* at the turn of the sixteenth century. Iconographic details like the drapery of the kneeling figures and the hat worn by the standing figure are identical with those in the Kirkham Monument. See Arthur Gardner, *English Medieval Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), fig. 516. G. McN. Rushforth dates the monument in the same period (*The Kirkham Monument in Paignton Church*, Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural and Archaeological Society (reprint, Exeter,1927): 11, 21–25, 35, pls. I and V.1. For the Mass of St. Gregory, see Boynton, "From Book to Song," in Puglisi and Barcham, eds., *New Perspectives,* 121–22. There are only three citations in Scott, *Survey*, vol. 2, table III, two in the second half of the century.

[97] For dating, see King, *St Peter Mancroft*, cxlvii, n. 307, and 64. The Cley tracery light can also be viewed at www.cvma.ac.uk. and www.norfolkstainedglass.co.uk. Compare the tracery light at Tattershall, a fragment from the fourth-quarter of the century (Penny Hebgin-Barnes, *The Medieval Stained Glass of the County of Lincolnshire* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 313, there identified as "Christ Rising from Tomb").

[98] Once the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (CVMA) cumulative volumes are published, we will be in a better position to determine the importance of this decade for the development of the Image of Pity in East Anglia.

the Croxton circle. Great Cressingham is a magnificent building with fine glazing in the tracery (1430–

40), including two half figures of Christ displaying his wounds, in both cases against an aureole (nVI

amd nIX). One is a typical Pity (see fig. 3), though partially destroyed.[99] Both hands are raised with

blood blowing down from the hand wounds. The modelling of the loin cloth and the drops of blood from

the side wound are identical with those in the Cley Pity, though the sepulchre is horizontal rather than

angled. In the second tracery light Christ wears a mantle, thereby disqualifying the image as a Pity.

There is no banner (for the Resurrection), and the figure does not seem to have been part of a Trinity.

Great Cressingham exemplifies the problems of identifying images that may at one time have been

constituents of a larger composition.[100] Another such example is at West Rudham (c.1430–40, northwest

Norfolk). Christ is situated against a rayed aureole displaying his wounds.[101] He wears the crown of

thorns and is seated. A dark blue mantle embroidered at the hem is draped over the left arm, falling just

under the bleeding side wound and down just above the wounded feet, so designed to highlight the

wounds. The image has the "feel" of a Pity, and from the distance it is easy to misread the figure as

standing since there is only a trace of a bent leg beneath the drapery. The Man of Sorrows, however, is

not seated. The West Rudham figure is actually a good candidate for a Trinity because it is set in the

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[99] Dating has not been secured for the first window (nVI). King dates the tracery for the second window (nIX) c.1435–44 (*St Peter Mancroft*, cxix, fig. 80). See above, n. 74.

[100] In my *Norfolk Subject List* I misclassified the image of Christ displaying his wounds at St. Peter Mancroft, which King identifies as part of a Trinity scene (*St Peter Mancroft,* ccxxxi, ccxxiiii, 85, fig. 176 (I.D4).

[101] P. Lasko and N. J. Morgan, *Medieval Art in East Anglia 1300–1520* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), no. 76. The entry is by David King, color reproduction, p. 60. See also King, *St Peter Mancroft,* cxiii, fig. 70. Also available at www.cvma.ac.uk and www.norfolkstainedglass.co.uk.

tracery light at the left, which would have situated Christ at the right hand of the Father as expected.[102] If so, the glass may be another good example of East Anglian manipulation of traditional material, for the head of Christ with downcast eyes is the head of an Image of Pity.

Fig. 2. Image of Pity. Painted glass, Church of St. Margaret, Cley (Window sXI), Norfolk.
Photo: Mike Dixon.

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[102] For Trinity iconography see King, *St Peter Mancroft,* ccxxxii–iii. According to King, when the Rudham glass was removed for conservation, it was in its original leading (see Lasko and Morgan, *Medieval Art*, 51, no. 76). There are no other figures of the Trinity in the window.

Fig. 3. Partial Image of Pity, with nineteenth-century restoration, Church of St. Michael, Great Cressingham (nV), Norfolk. Photo: Mike Dixon.

Is it possible that the Pity figured in other parochial furnishings long since destroyed, perhaps painted on a temporary wooden Easter Sepulchre or one of the sepulchre cloths cited by churchwardens as Passion subjects? Sheingorn's evidence for England, however, establishes that the Resurrection was the norm, as at Northwold within the Croxton circle.[103] Furnishings for Jesus altars might have included Pities,

[103] Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*, pl. 46. Gardner, *English Medieval Sculpture*, provides a detail of the sleeping soldiers (fig. 343). Citing Northwold, Thomas Martin said there was "another such in the neighbouring church of . . ." but he did not complete the phrase (Nichols *Norfolk Subject List*, 98). It is hard to know just what Martin meant by "neighbouring," but the closest monument in Sheingorn's inventory is Swaffham, where a chest tomb bears the *Arma Christi* (253). In the Morley monument at Hingham at the apex Christ sits in Judgment, seated both hands raised. If painted, the wounds would have been visible from below. For spectacular effects outside Norfolk, see Mark C.

though these would probably have been too late for this survey.[104] Lydgate's poem on the Image of Pity includes a line that at first glance suggests public images where people passed by: "Beth not rekles whan ye forby passe, / Of myn Image devoutly taketh heede" (25–26). The opening phrase, however, sounds suspiciously like a translation of the Good Friday response: "O vos omnes, qui transiti per viam, Attendite et videte."[105]

All told, the visual evidence for the Man of Sorrows in the second quarter of the century is weak in East Anglia. The myriads of examples in devotional books have yet to be collected, though future work on local workshop styles may expand the corpus of manuscripts produced in the region. Even where the Image of Pity survives, it is small scale, the historiated initials of the "Fifteen Oes," the tracery lights in churches, remote and unlikely to draw attention, but also more likely to survive.[106] Granted, the number of images is less important than the geographic range of shops, and the concentration of *Arma Christi* images in north Norfolk can be used to argue that more would have survived elsewhere had seventeenth-century iconoclasm been less thorough. It is also suggestive that earliest surviving examples of the Image of Pity are in substantial media, in Norfolk a small, much-worn

Pilkinton, "The Easter Sepulcher at St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, 1470," and Nicholas J. Rogers, "Mechanical Images at Salisbury," in Clifford Davidson, ed., *The Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages* (New York: AMS Press, 2005), 25–27, 46–47.

[104] The earliest citation for the Mass of the Name of Jesus at St. Peter Mancroft appears in 1475, with frequent citations into the sixteenth century (King, *St Peter Mancroft*, 147–54).

[105] *La Messe et L'Office pour le Dimanches et les Fêtes*, Chant Grégorien extrait de l'édition Vaticane (Paris: Desclée, 1934), 688 (Response for Lesson 9).

[106] Christopher Woodforde, *The Norwich School of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 23.

carving in stone on the north door frame at Thurlton (14th century);[107] in other EDAM reference series

volumes, stone (twelfth-century),[108] a pendant boss (1430–50),[109] and ivory (fourteenth-century).[110]

What is lost we can never know, but conjecture is poor evidence.

The strongest mid-century evidence for the Man of Sorrows in East Anglia is Jhesus in *The Play*

of the Sacrament. He has moved out of tracery lights to center stage. The sepulchre, we have seen, is the

defining element in the Image of Pity. The "image" that rises out of the oven (sepulchre) is a demi-

figure like the Image of Pity.[111] Although critics have argued that the role was played by the boy Coll,

there are theological objections to such an interpretation. Eamon Duffy's interpretation was unqualified,

"Despite the use of the word 'image', we are not dealing here, of course, with a puppet or a

ventriloquist's dummy, but with an actor painted with wounds and scourge marks, naked to the waist,

representing the 'Imago pietatis', The Image of Pity or 'Man of Sorrows'."[112] Drawing attention to the

affinity between Christ's Resurrection speech in N-Town and the devotional tone of the Image of Pity,

Theresa Coletti conjectured that "it is entirely possible that Christ actually appeared in the scene as a

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[107] *Norfolk Subject List*, 86, with God the Father, a variation of a Crucifix Trinity (Throne of Grace), a subject whose regional chronology needs further study.

[108] Palmer, *The Early Art of the West Riding*, 134 (Wighill).

[109] Davidson and O'Connor, *York Art*, 85 (York Minster).

[110] Davidson and Alexander, *The Early Art of Coventry,* 130, fig. 4 (Astley). The figure, however, is seated and may be a Majesty rather than a Pity.

[111] The word *image* in Dublin, Trinity College MS. F.4.20 is capitalized a number of times, though there is no way of knowing whether this reflects the exemplar or the scribe's practice. See Norman Davis, introd., *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Fragments: Facsimiles of Plays and Fragments in Various Manuscripts* (Leeds: University of Leeds School of English, 1979), 93–129. Davis ignores the capitalization in his edition of the play.

[112] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 107.

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speaking 'Man of Sorrows'."[113] Richard Homan, who connected the Child with the topos of ritual child

murder, allowed that the image "conveys the feeling of the Man of Sorrows or *Imago Pietatis*."[114] In the

1981 production by the Medieval Players, a young man played the role,[115] the photograph of the

performance suggesting that the producer had that image in mind. In the most recent production in

Oxford, a boy took the part.[116] Iconographically, the former is the superior choice, for there is no

precedent for a bleeding Christ child in English art.[117] Pious authors may have conjured up a bleeding

child, but no artist did. Blood and bleeding were essentially redemptive, not the work of a child.

Theologically, it is inconceivable that the Bishop would pray to a boy actor: "For of thy souerreyn

marcy send vs thy socowr; / And for thy holy grace forgyfe vs owr errowr. / Now lett thy peté spryng

and sprede" (821–23). Still, the sole use of the word *child* by Jonathas is troubling: "A chyld apperyng

with wondys blody" (804). Bevington glossed *child* as "noble youth," but the Man of Sorrows was a

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[113] Theresa Coletti, "Sacrament and Sacrifice," 256.

[114] Richard Homan, "Two *Exempla*: Analogues to the *Play of the Sacrament* and Dux Moraud," *Comparative Drama* 18 (1984–85): 244.

[115] See Darryll Grantley, "Producing Miracles," in Paula Neuss, ed., *Aspects of Early English Drama* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983), 78–91, pl. 6, and also Meg Twycross, "Beyond the Picture Theory: Image and Activity in Medieval Drama," *Word and Image* 4 (1988): 589–617, fig. 11 at 602.

[116] St. John's College Chapel, Oxford, 2014, directed by Elisabeth Dutton, http://www.thebloodproject.net/performance/ accessed 05/16/14. She also used a boy for the 2004 production in Oxford. Dutton may have been influenced by Continental use of "un petit enfant" in the 1513 play of *La Sainte Hostie* at Metz, cited by Grantley, "Producing Miracles," 85. See also John McKinnell, "Modern Productions of Medieval Drama" in Beadle and Fletcher, eds., *Companion*, 315–16.

[117] For the extraordinary glass composition in Winchester College Chapel where the Child holds a long nail, see Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, pl. XIX. The work was by an Oxford glazier, c.1393.

man, not a youth.[118] Behind the word *child* are traces of the child-in-the Host topos, traces of the child of the Case of Paris analogue.[119] Yet even there, a pilgrim token, perhaps from the chapel built to house the miraculous objects, shows on one side a knife piercing the Host, but on the reverse, an adult Christ.[120]

The technically sophisticated *Play of the Sacrament* remains one of the most challenging of the East Anglian corpus. The language varies from aureate to commonplace; liturgical text, rich in allusion, punctuates the English lines. The author begins with an authenticating topos, complicates the action with an hierosphthitic topos,[121] and creates four stage spectaculars with blood spurting from the Host, overflowing the cauldron, seeping out of the crannies of the oven, and flowing from the wounds of Christ. Magpie-like, he collected threads from two genres, interweaving Host-desecration with doubt and conversion, and creating at least three miracles. As William Tydeman observed, the author had "a very developed capacity for inventing variation,"[122] invention nowhere as evident as in the juxtaposition of the manus motif and the hierosphthitic topos.

Despite the word *child,* the lines the author assigns to Jhesus are those the liturgy puts into the mouth of Christ the Savior. The opening quotation is from Good Friday matins, with *omnes populi* changed to *Judei*: "*O mirabiles Judei, attendite et videte / Si est dolor sicut dolor meus*" (717–18).[123]

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[118] David Bevington, ed., *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 782. He identified the image as "the resurrected Christ" (754).

[119] Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 40–44 and, for the Catalan altarpiece, fig. 21.

[120] E. Hucher, "Méreaux de plomb," *Révue Numismatique* 3 (1858): 338–50, pl. 17.2.

[121] "The Hierosphthitic Topos, or the Fate of Fergus," *Comparative Drama* 25 (1991): 29–41. I did not cite *The Play of the Sacrament* in that article.

[122] Tydeman, *English Medieval Theatre*, 54–55.

[123] "Videte omnes populi si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus," *La Messe et L'Office pour le Dimanches et les Fêtes*, 688: Response for Lesson 9; "Popule meus, quid fecisti tibi," 704.

The alliterative reproaches that follow echo the Improperia sung during the adoration of the cross. We can only conjecture how the play was produced that Monday afternoon, but the Jesus of *The Play of the Sacrament* speaks like the Man of Sorrows. The play text locates the Image of Pity in Croxton in 1461, a pivotal date for the history of the image in Norfolk. The production as artefact corrects the parochial deficiencies of the Breckland churches. It may not be extravagant to think that the production itself played a supporting role in developing regional appreciation for the bleeding Image of Pity in the next half century.

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