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Miranda Threlfall-Holmes  
Durham University MA Thesis, 1997

Provisioning a Medieval Monastery:  
Durham Cathedral Priory's purchases of imported goods, 1464-1520.

Abstract

This study analyses the information contained in the obediary accounts of Durham Cathedral Priory relating to the priory's purchases of wine, spices and iron. It focuses on the years 1464 to 1520, for which particularly complete records exist. Those relevant to this study are the bursars', communars', hostillars' and sacrists' accounts.

The administrative system in which these accounts were produced is outlined, and the main features of the accounts themselves are described. The priory's purchases of wine, spices and iron are then discussed. For each commodity the varieties purchased, the measures used and the prices paid by the priory are surveyed. The consumption suggested by these accounts is discussed, and the priory is found to have had higher levels of wine and lower levels of spice consumption than was common in contemporary households. The bursars' purchases of iron show a trend towards the use of locally produced rather than imported iron, and suggest that the local iron industry may have been expanding earlier than has previously been thought.

The priory's methods of purchasing goods are discussed, and it is found to have been becoming increasingly reliant upon Newcastle to the exclusion of other supply centres. The merchants supplying the priory are also studied and several distinct groups are identified. The careers of several Newcastle merchants are pieced together, and the relevance of this evidence to the question of Newcastle's economic health in this period is addressed.

Appendices tabulate the contents of the relevant sections of the obediary accounts and list the merchants mentioned, showing the level of involvement of different individuals in the priory trade and the degree of overlap that existed between the suppliers of different commodities.

# Provisioning a Medieval Monastery

Durham Cathedral Priory's Purchases of Imported Goods, 1464-1520

Miranda Threlfall-Holmes

M.A. Thesis  
University of Durham  
History Department  
1997

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## INTRODUCTION

The records of Durham Cathedral Priory have long been recognised as one of the most important medieval monastic archives in Europe. Their importance is due partly to the wide variety of material that has survived from the middle ages, and partly to the quality and the quantity of the documents. Charters, letters, deeds, estate records and accounting material are all represented in the archive, and this material provides the evidence for an unusually rounded picture of the life and times of the priory to be constructed. The obedientiary accounts of the priory are particularly notable. These annual records of the income and expenditure of the priory's numerous officials have survived in exceptionally good condition, with the most important, the bursars' accounts, being represented from as early as 1278 and with several substantial series from the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The obedientiary accounts of the priory list in some detail the income from the priory's properties, and all the miscellaneous items of expenditure incurred by the priory over the course of each year - food, drink, clothing, gifts or taxes, estate expenses and so on. Extracts from a selection of the accounts have been published, although these are rather unsatisfactory as they contain several minor errors and - more importantly - major omissions and contractions made by the editor and not flagged in the text.<sup>1</sup> These accounts have been widely used, with several important works having been substantially based on their evidence. In particular, these obedientiary accounts were the major source for Dobson's *Durham Cathedral Priory 1400-1450*,<sup>2</sup> a comprehensive survey of the social, political, economic and intellectual life of the priory in those years. In addition, a great deal of work on the estates and estate management policies of the priory, drawing on these accounts, has been carried out by Lomas,<sup>3</sup> and they have also been used by Margaret Bonney as evidence for the economic activity and the geography of medieval Durham.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Durham Account Rolls*, ed. J.T.Fowler, 3 vols., Surtees Society, Nos. 99, 100, 103, (1895, 1896, 1899).

<sup>2</sup>R.B.Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory 1400-1450*, (Cambridge, 1973).

<sup>3</sup>R.A.Lomas, "Durham Cathedral Priory as a Landowner and a Landlord, 1299-1540" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Durham, 1973); "The Priory of Durham and its Demesnes in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", *Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol.31, (1978); "A Northern Farm at the End of the Middle Ages: Elvethall manor, Durham, 1443/4 - 1513/14", *Northern History*, No.18, (1982).

<sup>4</sup>Margaret Bonney, *Lordship and the Urban Community, Durham and its Overlords 1250-1540*, (Cambridge, 1990).

However, some aspects of the material contained in the Durham Cathedral Priory obedientiary accounts have been seriously neglected, and this is especially the case for the material dating from the mid-fifteenth century. In particular, the vast amount of information contained in the second half of each account, in the expenditure listings, has only recently begun to receive detailed attention,<sup>5</sup> and has never been systematically analysed. The aim of this study is to begin such an analysis of the information contained in the accounts relating to the provisioning of the priory. Its scope is limited to the priory's purchases of imported goods - wine, spices and iron - but it is hoped to extend this study in due course to cover the full range of home-produced goods.

An analysis of the material contained in the expenditure sections of the priory accounts is important for several reasons. First, it will provide an in-depth analysis of the monks' consumption and diet, paralleling the work done for Westminster Abbey by Barbara Harvey.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the level of detail provided in the accounts, and their fine preservation as a series, enable some conclusions to be drawn about the purchasing strategies of the priory and the structure of mercantile trade in the medieval north-east of England. Thirdly, these accounts provide unique evidence for the trading activities of Newcastle merchants. The majority of the Newcastle archives for the medieval period have been lost, and only scattered customs accounts remain as evidence for the town's medieval trading activity, its merchants, and the range of commodities that could be purchased there.<sup>7</sup> The Durham Cathedral Priory accounts are an invaluable resource for the economic history of Newcastle, providing in their expenditure records many details of the merchants and the trading mechanisms involved in supplying the priory.

This study focuses on the years 1464 and 1520, for which particularly good records exist. The bursars' accounts, which contain the vast majority of the purchases of the priory - including purchases of each of the three commodities looked at here - form an almost complete series in this period. They exist for 1464-5 to 1476-7, 1478-9 to 1482-3, (the surviving account for 1483-4 contains the income section only), 1484-5 to 1488-9, 1492-3 to 1501-2, 1503-4 to 1515-16 and 1519-20. Apart from a very few of these

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<sup>5</sup>Christine Newman has recently started work on a project funded by the Leverhulme Foundation, using these accounts to study employment on the priory estates.

<sup>6</sup>Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England, 1100-1540*, (Oxford, 1993).

<sup>7</sup>*The Customs Accounts of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1454-1500*, ed. J.F.Wade, Surtees Society, No.202, (1995).

which are only partially legible due to damage, they are in near-perfect condition and are clearly legible. In addition, parallel series exist for the other obedientiaries who purchased imported goods. This study uses the account rolls of the communar, hostillar and sacrist, in addition to those of the bursar. The communar's accounts, which are the main source of information about the spice purchases of the priory, have survived in comparable condition to the bursar's accounts but unfortunately not in such great numbers; rolls containing the relevant information remain for twelve of the years covered here: 1474-5, 1480-1, 1489-90, 1496-7, 1499-1500, 1502-3, 1505-6, 1508-9, 1510-11, 1511-12, 1516-17 and 1517-18. The archives also contain rolls for 1495-6, 1497-8 and 1513-14, but these are in much worse condition and the relevant membranes are missing altogether. The hostillar's accounts, which contain supplementary information on both wine and spices, remain for 29 years: 1464-5 to 1474-5, 1479-80, 1480-81, 1485-6 to 1491-2, 1495-6, 1496-7, 1505-6, 1508-9 to 1510-11, 1512-13 and 1513-14. Finally the sacrist's accounts, which record wine purchased for use in communion services, have survived for 1465-6, 1472-3 to 1474-5 and 1483-4 to 1487-8.

Chapter One of this study briefly surveys the administrative system that was the context in which these accounts were produced, and then proceeds to describe the main features of the accounts themselves, together with their strengths and weaknesses as evidence. Chapters Two, Three and Four contain the results of this research into the priory's purchases over this period of wine, spices and iron respectively. In each chapter the varieties of each commodity that were purchased, the measures used in each case, the prices paid by the priory and the consumption suggested by these accounts are discussed, and comparisons are made between this data and that which has been found elsewhere.

Chapters Five and Six then take as their subjects some more general themes, which it would not have been useful to look at separately under each of these commodities. Chapter Five examines the evidence contained in these accounts for the patterns of trade and of trading in the north-east of England in this period, looking first at the changing emphasis placed by the priory on different markets as supply centres, then at what the obedientiary accounts reveal about the priory's methods of purchasing goods. The merchants supplying the priory are also studied here, and several distinct groups are identified, with regard to goods dealt in, involvement in overseas trade and location. The distinctive characteristics of these groups are discussed. In Chapter Six, the evidence from the accounts of Durham Cathedral Priory is brought to bear

on Newcastle. The careers of several Newcastle merchants are pieced together, and finally the relevance of this evidence to the question of Newcastle's economic health in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is addressed.

There are four appendices to this work, which set out the material from the accounts. Appendices A, B and C contain in tabulated form the contents of the relevant sections of the obedientiary accounts, relating to wine, spice and iron purchases respectively. Appendix D lists all the merchants mentioned in these sections of the accounts, tabulated by commodity and ordered by frequency of occurrence in the accounts. These lists are cross-referenced, enabling the degrees of overlap between suppliers of the different commodities to be seen.

## CHAPTER 1 - THE MATERIAL AND ITS CONTEXT

### (i) The Obedientiary System

A medieval Benedictine monastery such as Durham Cathedral Priory typically administered its estates by dividing the lands between several of the monks, who were each then responsible for part of the day-to-day running of the monastery using the revenues from their allocated manors. These monks were known as obedientiaries, the responsibilities that they were given in the monastery being their obediences. This system worked in various ways in different Benedictine houses, and at different periods, all variations deriving from the original Rule of St. Benedict. By the fifteenth century a great many modifications had been made to the system outlined in the Rule, which had mentioned only a handful of offices, focusing on the abbot and cellarer who were to act as the father and mother - ruler and housekeeper - of the community. Several of the offices listed in the rule had disappeared, been amalgamated, or become very minor by the fifteenth century, though the extent to which changes took place varied greatly between different houses. At Battle Abbey, for example, the cellarer remained in overall control of the household well into the fifteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Benedictine monasteries were each governed independently, and the precise nature of the administrative system in each differed to a considerable extent. Three broad categories of administration have been identified as in use in English religious houses by the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, the key difference between them lying in the existence and role of the bursar. One system was based around a central bursary which received all the revenues from the monastery's lands and distributed them to the various obedientiaries; another distributed the lands between the obedientiaries, who then managed them independently and received the revenues from them to be used in the expenses of their offices. The third system was a combination of these two; the obedientiaries had lands allocated to them, but these were not all the house's property - a bursar also existed, and received the revenues of all the lands not otherwise allocated.<sup>9</sup> The office of bursar developed in Benedictine houses from around the end of the thirteenth century. At this date, the value of having a bursar was to enable the rent collecting system to be centralised - revenues could then be divided between the other obedientiaries in fixed proportions, so that variations in

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<sup>8</sup>*Accounts of the Cellarers of Battle Abbey, 1275-1513*, ed. E. Searle and B. Ross, (Sydney, 1967), pp.6-13.

<sup>9</sup>R. A. L. Smith, *Collected Papers*, (London, 1947), p.35.

income affected all the offices equally. However, the bursar rapidly became a key official in his own right in most houses.<sup>10</sup>

In Durham by the late fourteenth century the third system described above was in place. The main obedientiaries had the income of certain properties assigned to their specific offices: for example, the hostillar, who was responsible for the guest hall and the entertainment of the priory's numerous guests, had an estate from which he received the largest income of all the priory's obedientiaries apart from the bursar - about £170 a year. The sacrist and communar each possessed estates worth around £66.13s.4d. with which to carry out their duties. The bursar, who received the otherwise unallocated revenues, was by far the most important of the obedientiaries, personally accounting for nearly three-quarters of the priory's income - his income came to between £1308. 5s.10¾d. and £1472. 12s. 3d. per year in this period.<sup>11</sup>

The length of the bursar's account rolls, together with the large sums that he accounted for and the wide range of goods that he was responsible for buying, misled early historians into mistaking his role. James Raine, writing in 1844, assumed that the different obedientiaries' account rolls were compiled together to create the bursar's roll, which could be taken as "embodying the whole proceedings of the monastery in a summary way".<sup>12</sup> In fact, the bursar's job was essentially miscellaneous - he was responsible for all income and expenditure not otherwise assigned. In practice, however, the bursar took on many of the functions of other offices, largely supplanting the cellarer's role in particular. That this was an extremely demanding job is shown not only by the size and complexity of his annual accounts, but also by the crisis in 1438, when no single monk would accept the job and the prior, John Wessington, had to divide the responsibilities of the office into three roughly equal parts before he could persuade any of the monks to undertake them.<sup>13</sup>

The gradual atrophy of the cellarer's role and expansion of the bursar's can be clearly seen in the accounts that have survived, particularly with regard to the costly and prestigious task of purchasing spices.

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<sup>10</sup>R.H.Snape, *English Monastic Organisation in the Later Middle Ages*, (Cambridge, 1926), pp.29-47, discusses the development of the bursar's office in detail. In the thirteenth century, such centralisation of the monastic administration appears to have been actively encouraged by many bishops, although it was not always pursued to its fullest extent.

<sup>11</sup>Lomas, "Durham Cathedral Priory", end pocket.

<sup>12</sup>*The Durham Household Book*, ed. James Raine, Surtees Society No.18, (1844), p.viii.

<sup>13</sup>Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory*, p.287.

In the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the cellarer had a much broader remit than later - he still purchased the monastery's spices, and his accounts contained several sections detailing his expenditure on all the various commodities which it was his responsibility to purchase.<sup>14</sup> By the period under consideration here, however, the cellarer's task had greatly contracted. A good number of the cellarer's account rolls exist for this period, and in all of these only minor, miscellaneous purchases are recorded, under the single heading of "necessary expenses". By the second half of the fifteenth century at least, then, the important spice purchases were no longer under the cellarer's control, but had passed to the communar, hostillar and bursar. The bursar's account roll for 1456-7 ends with an inventory, or "status", made at the handover of the office from one bursar (John Midellham) to the next (John Eden). This inventory includes a section listing all the spices held by the cellarer (*in scaccario cellarii*),<sup>15</sup> implying that the effective management of the cellarer's office had passed to the bursar by this date, although outdated definitions and titles remained.

Certainly, by this period both the cellarer and the granator were effectively sub-obediences, almost entirely dependent upon the bursar. The revenues of their offices consisted merely of their receiving cash or goods from the bursar by indenture, rather than deriving income from estates allocated to them.<sup>16</sup> A similar change took place in Selby abbey in the fifteenth century, and although the old titles and job descriptions remained, the offices were increasingly combined. Thus in 1436, for example, one monk was both bursar and cellarer, and another was both keeper of the spirituality and granger.<sup>17</sup> In the very last years of Durham priory, the 1530s, the bursar's role seems to have suddenly broadened considerably. Continuing to take the example of the changing responsibility for the spice purchases of the priory, it can be seen that by 1531-2 the bursar was purchasing the vast majority, if not all, of the spices for the priory, and no longer simply those for the prior's table.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>*Durham Account Rolls*, (Vol.1), pp.1-112.

<sup>15</sup>*ibid*, (Vol.3), pp.635-6.

<sup>16</sup>Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory*, p.262.

<sup>17</sup>*Monastery and Society in the Late Middle Ages: Selected Account Rolls from Selby Abbey, Yorkshire, 1398-1537*, ed. John.H.Tillotson, (Woodbridge, 1988), p.28.

<sup>18</sup>*Durham Household Book*, eg, pp.37-9, 42-4, 116-9, 122-6, 215-8, 315-8.

### (ii) The Obedientary Accounts

The accounts that these officials were required to draw up each year and present to the Chapter at Whitsuntide all follow the same format. They consist of several membranes of parchment (or, occasionally, of paper), stitched end to end to form a long roll. The bursar's accounts are unsurprisingly the longest, and these consist of either five or six membranes, each of slightly varying dimensions but typically measuring around 300mm wide and 750mm long. A typical bursar's roll is thus around four to four and a half metres long. The extent to which the account continues onto the reverse side of the parchment varies a great deal, depending on the size of writing and the number of membranes used. Generally, the bottom two or three membranes are written on both sides, but sometimes fewer; and in 1494-5, both sides are fully covered. The accounts of the other obedientiaries are formed of lesser numbers of similarly sized membranes, the total size of the accounts varying greatly between the different offices. These lesser accounts frequently cover as little as one or both sides of a single membrane.

Multiple copies of each obedientiary's accounts were drawn up, and in some cases two or even three copies still survive in the Durham archive. These are generally final versions, but there are isolated examples where this is not the case, and where draft or incomplete accounts have been preserved.<sup>19</sup> The archives also contain a few examples of the bursar's household books, notebooks in which the bursar jotted down purchases and payments made, and from which he later compiled his yearly enrolled accounts. Unfortunately, these have not survived systematically, and are generally incomplete and in worn condition;<sup>20</sup> however, they do exist in reasonably complete condition for 1530-1 to 1533-4. These later notebooks have been published, and provide a great deal of information on the purchasing mechanisms of the priory which are not revealed in the enrolled accounts.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>For example, the hostillar's account for 1508-9 is drawn up in the manner of a pro forma, with blanks left throughout for quantities and prices to be inserted. For roughly half of the roll, these gaps have been completed with the relevant details, (in a different hand and ink to that of the bulk of the account), but other sections have been left unfinished.

<sup>20</sup>Only three such notebooks survive for this period. B.Bk.G contains miscellaneous information relating to 1495-6; B.Bk.H records payments made in 1507-8, 1509-10 and 1510-11, and includes reckonings with the prior and other obedientiaries for those years; and B.Bk.J includes payments made in 1517-18, and some miscellaneous information relating to 1518-19.

<sup>21</sup>Raine, *The Durham Household Book*.

In each of the obedientiary accounts, income is listed first followed by expenditure. The categories into which the entries are divided within these broad headings are consistent within each account from year to year, although they vary somewhat between the different obedientiaries. This variation primarily takes the form of the bursar having many more divisions in his accounts - splitting out purchases of wine, corn, oats, barley, cloth and so on - whereas the lesser obedientiaries, with only one or two entries in each category, tend to lump all commodity purchases, and miscellaneous expenses together into a single 'expenses' section. In all cases, however, the section or sections detailing such expenditure are followed by several other sections listing pensions, salaries, repairs and so on. The format of each obedientiary's accounts is the same in each year, a practice that served to keep the accounting system manageable: or, as Dobson put it, "prevented an extraordinarily complicated system from falling into complete incoherence".<sup>22</sup> One useful consequence today of this high degree of standardisation is that comparable figures from different years are relatively easy to locate on the rolls of a particular obedientiary. This is of particular benefit in the case of the bursar's miscellaneous "necessary expenses" section, which frequently covers an entire membrane or more. The level of detail recorded in each entry varies between the different obedientiaries and commodities, and from year to year. Both the bursar and the hostillar regularly (though not invariably) record wine purchases by giving the price and quantity purchased from each merchant, the variety of wine, the name of the merchant and sometimes the place of purchase or the home town of the merchant concerned. The hostillar often also gives details of the carriage charges involved in bringing the purchased wine to the priory, which is rarely mentioned in the bursars' accounts. However, the sacrists' accounts do not give merchants' names, nor do they separate out carriage charges from the cost of the wine. In the case of spice purchases, the hostillar gives only a total cost for all the spices purchased that year, with no greater detail. Thankfully, both the communar and the bursar give costs for several individual spices, together with the quantities of each purchased, and often the merchant from whom they were bought; but they both also include a "diverse spices" element in their accounts, with a total cost given that defies further analysis. The iron purchases recorded in the bursar's accounts tend to provide a great deal of detail, including the merchant's name and perhaps his home town, the price per stone and the total price paid, the type of iron

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<sup>22</sup>Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory*, p.255.

involved and often the place of purchase. However, carriage charges for any commodity are rarely separated out in the bursar's accounts, and his iron purchases are no exception to this rule. There is generally a sufficiency of information in the accounts, therefore, although it is sometimes conflated in such a way that different factors can be difficult to disentangle. Full details of the entries in each year are given in the tables in the appendices to this thesis.

The accounts looked at in this study are those of greatest relevance to the priory's purchases of wine, spices and iron, but certain of the other obedientiaries' accounts may also contain some relevant purchases not considered here. Certainly, many of the obedientiaries contributed a few shillings each to the cost of wine for the prior's 'ludi', or annual holiday for the monks. However, this expenditure has deliberately been excluded from the present analysis: the amounts involved are very small, and since no details are given in these entries of the quantity, quality or type of wine purchases, or of the suppliers, the data could add little to this enquiry. The bursars', hostillars' and sacrists' accounts looked at here contain the vast majority of the wine purchases of the priory.

In the case of the iron purchases of the priory, the scope of this study is limited to the iron bought by the bursar for his needs. The majority of the obedientiaries did buy varying small amounts of iron on an ad hoc basis for the repairs needed on their estates, for shoeing their horses, or for minor building works that they were responsible for. However, to collect all of this information would have been a task far greater than the scope of this project would allow. The bursars' accounts contain the vast majority of the iron purchased by the priory, and a representative picture of the priory's iron purchasing is thus likely to be provided by an analysis of his purchases.

Spices were exclusively purchased by the bursar, hostillar and communar. However, in the case of luxury consumables such as these and wine, it is of course possible that the purchases recorded in these accounts may have been supplemented either by gifts to the priory or individual members of the community, or by the individual purchases of monks in a personal capacity. Such putative additions to the quantities discussed here would of course not be referred to in the accounts of the priory which are the raw material for this study: whilst it is unlikely that they would have comprised a significant part of the provisioning or

consumption of the priory on a regular basis, it should be remembered that only the purchases of the priory as an institution are under consideration here.

A further limitation of the use of these accounts in characterising the day-to-day consumption of the priory results from the fact that these accounts provide only yearly totals of goods bought, with little or no indication of when individual consignments were purchased or consumed. It has been assumed in the following analysis that the goods and commodities entered into each account as purchased that year were generally consumed in the same year. This assumption, while necessarily crude, finds some support in the bursar's household books, which contain several entries in which lists of purchases are followed by the a statement that some of what has been purchased has been entered into the bursar's account roll for the year, and a remainder has been carried over to the following year's accounts. For example, the wine purchases listed in the 1531-2 household book totalled £66.15s.0d., of which £53 was accounted for that year and the remainder was carried forward.<sup>23</sup> This entry is unusual in that it spells out exactly what has been done in as many words: the entry reads "*Summa 66l.15s. Unde subtrahantur pro compoto de anno presenti 53l. Remanent pro anno 1532 13l.15s.*" Several examples of a shorthand form of this statement being used - "*Unde in compoto [x]. Remanent [y]*" - may be found in the spice purchases listed in the household book for 1531-2; for example, of 138 pounds of currants purchased from various merchants that year, 128 were accounted for and 10lb left for the 1532-3 account.<sup>24</sup>

The purpose of these accounts was not to reveal profit or loss, but to ensure that an official was diligently discharging his duties. The accounts were audited, and some clarificatory note or numerical correction is occasionally to be seen interposed above a line, often in a different hand or ink, as a result of this inspection. However, not all mathematical errors have been corrected,<sup>25</sup> and there does not appear to have been any great controversy over the accounts looked at here. The main result of the monastery's aims in their accounting was that the rolls were always made to balance. This was done through the addition of a

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<sup>23</sup>Raine, *Durham Household Book*, p.49.

<sup>24</sup>*ibid*, pp.116-8.

<sup>25</sup>Most of the errors occur in the bursar's iron accounts, and take the form of an incorrect expression in the form "x stones of iron at y pence per stone equals z". The occurrence of such errors in these accounts is perhaps due to the increased difficulty in multiplying large numbers using the Roman numeric system. Alternatively, the total amount stated in the account may well have been the amount actually paid; in other words the 'error' may be in the statement of the standard rate payable rather than in the total. Those entries which contain such inconsistencies are marked by an asterisk in the table in Appendix C.

section headed 'surplus' or 'waste' (generally rents that appear in the top section because they were customary but which were in fact not collected that year, due to vacancy for example). This makes year to year comparisons of financial well-being precarious, but work done on this problem indicates that the monks were neither chronically in debt nor had any particular financial problems in this period. Their income was almost entirely stable by the second half of the fifteenth century - as has been seen, the bursar's income was consistently in the region of £1400 for the whole of this period, varying by no more than five or six per cent from this median. Even in the first half of the century, when money was tighter and crises could and did make a considerable impact on the priory's finances, the records do not suggest that any particular degree of hardship was felt by the monks.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory*, p.255.

## CHAPTER 2 - WINE PURCHASES

### Measures and Varieties of Wine

A particular indication of the financial well-being of Durham Cathedral Priory throughout the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century is the consistently large volume of wine purchased by the monks each year, seemingly regardless of any fluctuations in either supply or price. Throughout the middle ages, individuals and lesser households bought wine as they drank it, from taverns or retailers by the gallon or pint; but large customers like the priory and substantial households bought their wine wholesale, in quantities based on the vast barrel or "tun" which held 252 gallons. This measure was the largest of the system of units used for wine and similar liquid commodities, being first divided into the smaller barrels known as pipes and hogsheads, and ultimately into gallons, quarts and pints, in the following relationship:

$$1 \text{ tun} = 2 \text{ pipes} = 4 \text{ hogsheads} = 252 \text{ gallons} = 1008 \text{ quarts} = 2016 \text{ pints.}$$

It is the three largest of these measures that appear most frequently in these accounts, although smaller amounts are occasionally mentioned - as in 1468-9, when the bursar recorded the purchase of six gallons of wine "to refill a pipe".

In addition to these standard measures a handful of other non-standard terms appear, which are less easy to define. The most common in these accounts is the 'butt', a term used almost exclusively in the context of sweet wines such as malmsey or romney. The exact quantity contained in a butt is unclear: in the fifteenth century the term could be used for quantities varying between 36 and 140 gallons, but was more commonly used to refer to between 108 and 140 gallons. In these accounts the term appears to denote a constant quantity, and for the purposes of this analysis this is taken to be 126 gallons, or half a tun, as being midway between the common limits of the term's usage.

Another measure used of sweet wine in these accounts is the "roundlet", which was qualified in the hostillar's account for 1485-6 as a "roundlet of sixteen gallons". Elsewhere at this time the roundlet usually contained a fairly standard 18½ gallons, and it thus seems probable that a capacity of sixteen gallons was mentioned in 1485-6 because it was unusual rather than because it was typical. This analysis therefore assumes that a roundlet contained 18½ gallons, except where the sixteen gallon volume is specified. A 'barrel', which occurs occasionally in these records, was a measure that was used relatively consistently

throughout the middle ages, and contained about 31 gallons. Finally, an unquantifiable unit that appears here only once, in 1503-4, is "a small vessel", the capacity of which is uncertain (this has been omitted from the volume calculations made here).<sup>27</sup>

The vast majority of the wine purchased by the priory was ordinary red wine purchased by the tun. Some white wine and claret were also purchased in several years. It should be noted that the 'claret' referred to in these accounts was not the superior red wine that the term denotes today; rather, it was a spiced wine preparation, similar to mulled wine but not necessarily drunk warm. Several recipes for the making of this 'claret' have survived from the medieval period. The ingredients used varied considerably, although the main elements were always a sweetener, (usually honey), and spices - a simple preparation might use only cinnamon, galingale, grains of paradise and honey, infused in white or red wine. More complex recipes that are available contain much longer lists of ingredients; perhaps the most impressive includes cinnamon, ginger, pepper, long pepper, grains of paradise, cloves, galingale, caraway, mace, nutmeg, coriander, honey and brandy (which was itself probably a distillate of a spiced wine).<sup>28</sup>

These red, white and claret wines were the staple wines of the priory, and tended to share a common price and (presumably) a common quality. There was a tendency for these three varieties to be classed together in the accounts, suggesting that the accountant, at least, saw little to choose between them. In particular, there are frequent entries in the accounts which give a standard price for all three; for example, in 1499-1500 the bursar bought "Five tuns and one hogshead of red wine, a pipe of claret and a hogshead of white wine at 100s [per tun]". Sometimes even the respective quantities were unspecified, as in 1504-5 when the bursar's purchases included "two tuns of red, claret and white wine...at 106s.8d [per tun]". Entries such as these, together with the large quantities purchased, strongly suggest that the monks of Durham viewed most wine as a commodity rather than a luxury, to be purchased in bulk, and to be discriminated between largely by price rather than by considerations of taste.

The exceptions were the particular types of wine purchased less frequently or in smaller amounts; most prominently the sweet wines that were increasingly fashionable in the latter half of the fifteenth

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<sup>27</sup>These measures are discussed in *The Customs Accounts of Hull 1453-1490*, ed. Wendy Childs, (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Vol. 144, 1986), pp.253-256; and under each term in the full *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>28</sup>Terence Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, (Woodbridge, 1995), pp.149-51.

century.<sup>29</sup> These were sometimes referred to generically as "sweet wine" in these accounts, and sometimes described as being specific varieties, of which malmsey is most frequently mentioned. Other varieties are each mentioned only occasionally - bastard in 1464-5; romney and muscatel in 1503-4; and romney again in 1514-5. "Sweet wine" is occasionally mentioned in small quantities in the 1460s to 1480s, but a trend towards buying this type of wine on a regular basis can be seen towards the end of the century, with a butt of malmsey being a regular annual purchase by the 1490s. For the most part, these varieties were significantly more expensive than the monks' usual wines. "Sweet wine" or malmsey was consistently around twice the price of normal wine, as was the bastard bought in 1464-5, these purchases costing roughly the same per butt as the monks paid for a tun of their more usual fare. Romney was the exception, being only slightly more expensive than claret at £5.6s.8d. per tun compared to £5.0.0. Unfortunately, the cost of muscatel cannot be calculated since the quantity purchased is unknown.

These sweet wines were almost certainly significantly stronger - that is, more alcoholic - than the staple wines of the priory. They were known as "high" or "hot" wines, as contrasted with the "mean", or lighter, French, Gascon or Rhine wines.<sup>30</sup> Actual alcohol contents are unknown and virtually impossible to calculate, since variations in viticulture and fermentation techniques are critical in the formation of alcohol and such details are not known for this period. However, it is known that three qualities of wine were produced by most vineyards, using the juice from the first, second and (diluted with water) third pressings of the grapes respectively. The last, third pressing wine was the common drink of the peasantry in wine-producing regions, and has been estimated to have contained perhaps 5% alcohol by volume.<sup>31</sup> It is certain that the monks of Durham, in common with other wealthy and middling households, would have drunk the first pressing wine, which would have been much stronger. A rough estimate for the alcohol content of the usual wines might be made on the basis of the weakest wines common today, containing around 8% alcohol by volume, but this can only be speculative.

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<sup>29</sup>Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the later Middle Ages*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp.62, 105.

<sup>30</sup>Andrew Boorde, *Dyetary*, (1542), ed. F.J.Furnivall, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No.10, 1870, pp.254-5.

<sup>31</sup>Scully, *Art of Cookery*, pp.141-2.

**(ii) Prices and Purchases**

As a cash purchaser of large quantities of wine, the priory was highly exposed to fluctuations in price. However, all the evidence from these accounts demonstrates that the monks absorbed these cost differences rather than adapt their consumption in the affected years. As the table below illustrates, the large quantities of wine purchased by the bursar for the priory are fairly constant over the period in question, and variations do not correlate with price movements. Only one year, 1465-6, stands out for an unusually low amount being purchased, and this was not a year in which wine was particularly expensive. (It is not in fact clear why such low amounts of wine should have been purchased that year).

The bursars' purchases of wine

Year	Total Spent	Tuns	Av. Price (per tun red wine)	Year	Total Spent	Tuns	Av. Price (per tun red wine)
1464-5	£46.2s.4d.	7.6	£5.13s.10d.	1487-8	£62.0s.0d.	7.5	£8.5s.4d.
1465-6	£14.0s.0d.	2.5	£5.12s.0d.	1493-4	£60.0s.0d.	8.5	£6.9s.2d.
1466-7	£35.13s.4d.	5.5	£6.9s.8d.	1495-6	£45.10s.0d.	8.5	£5.0s.5d.
1467-8	£51.10s.0d.	8	£6.8s.9d.	1496-7	£54.18s.4d.	8.5	£6.4s.10d.
1468-9	£47.17s.4d.	8	£5.19s.2d.	1497-8	£49.15s.2d.	7.5	£6.6s.11d.
1469-70	£48.4s.8d.	8.1	£5.18s.4d.	1498-9	£39.18s.4d.	8.5	£4.7s.4d.
1470-1	£50.2s.10d.	7.5	£6.10s.8d.	1499-00	£44.3s.4d.	7.5	£5.11s.11d.
1471-2	£46.12s.6d.	6.6	£7.1s.6d.	1500-1	£41.8s.0d.	7.5	£5.4s.3d.
1472-3	£50.4s.8d.	7.1	£7.0s.11d.	1501-2	£44.13s.4d.	8.5	£4.18s.4d.
1473-4	£52.0s.0d.	6	£7.13s.4d.	1503-4	£53.15s.4d.	8.8	£5.5s.1d.
1474-5	£54.0s.0d.	8	£6.15s.0d.	1504-5	£46.0s.0d.	7.5	£6.0s.11d.
1475-6	£46.3s.2d.	5.6	£8.1s.10d.	1505-6	£43.13s.4d.	8.8	£4.15s.7d.
1476-7	£44.6s.8d.	8.1	£5.8s.9d.	1506-7	£38.9s.2d.	9.5	£3.15s.7d.
1478-9	£41.16s.0d.	7.6	£5.9s.4d.	1507-8	£50.6s.8d.	9.5	£5.0s.9d.
1479-80	£44.8s.0d.	7.6	£5.16s.0d.	1508-9	£44.6s.8d.	8.5	£4.18s.4d.
1480-1	£48.6s.8d.	8.5	£5.7s.6d.	1509-10	£42.6s.8d.	8.5	£3.13s.4d.
1481-2	£37.10s.0d.	6.8	£5.11s.1d.	1510-11	£42.0s.0d.	8.5	£3.12s.6d.
1482-3	£55.5s.0d.	7.8	£7.2s.7d.	1511-12	£42.6s.8d.	8.5	£3.13s.4d.
1484-5	£69.4s.4d.	9	£7.13s.10d.	1512-13	£53.0s.0d.	8.5	£5.0s.0d.
1485-6	£46.6s.8d.	9	£5.3s.0d.	1513-14	£53.0s.0d.	8.5	£5.0s.0d.
1486-7	£75.0s.0d.	8.5	£8.12s.6d.	1519-20	£42.0s.0d.	8.5	£3.13s.4d.

In those years when wine prices rose particularly steeply, particularly 1475-6, 1486-7 and 1487-8, it is possible that the quantities purchased by the bursar may indicate some minor degree of retrenchment. The bursar bought five and a half tuns in 1475-6, compared to eight tuns in the previous year; eight in 1486-7 and seven and a half in 1487-8, having bought nine tuns in the preceding two years. However, differences of these magnitudes are not confined to years when there was a major price rise, and

the volumes purchased by the bursar regularly fluctuated by as much as a tun. In addition, it must be noted that there are some years when the amount spent by the bursar rose dramatically because of an increase in the price of wine, rather than volume being cut back to keep spending level. For example, in 1484-5 the amount spent on wine was £69.4s.4d., 144% of the average yearly spend of £48; and in 1486-7, the amount spent went up to the highest in this period - £75 - 156% of the average. This readiness to pay the highest prices for wine rather than retrench may be seen also in the first half of the century, when the bursar spent as much as £89.14s.1½d. on wine in 1443-4.<sup>32</sup>

However, whilst the monks consistently chose high prices over low stocks, there is no reason to believe that they did not keep a careful eye on the prices that they paid for their supplies. There is some evidence to suggest that the bursar shopped around over a wide area for his wine, buying in Hull rather than Newcastle if prices there were more favourable. Overall, 6% of the amount spent by the bursar on wine between 1464 and 1520 is recorded as having been spent in Hull, and this was concentrated across a few years in which wine bought at Hull accounted for a significant proportion of the priory's purchases. In particular, in 1481-2, 93% of the wine bought by the bursar was purchased at Hull; as was 65% in 1487-8. An explanation for this unusual concentration of purchasing away from Newcastle might be found in the fact that in 1486-7 (when the bursar bought three tuns of wine in Hull), and in 1487-8, the Hull wine cost £8 per tun compared with £9 per tun for that bought at Newcastle. Wine prices in Newcastle had nearly doubled since the previous year: in 1485-6, Thomas Swan sold four tuns to the priory for £5.6s.8d. a tun, whilst in 1486-7 the same merchant's price for a similar quantity (five tuns) had risen to £9 a tun. It seems unlikely that the same merchant would sell to the same corporate customer in consecutive years two wines of such widely different quality as to account for such a difference in price. In 1486-7, the year this increase occurred, the bursar bought three tuns of wine from Robert Chepman for £8 each; the discovery of such a large difference in price between Hull and Newcastle in this year may well explain his decision to purchase the majority of his wine in Hull the following year.

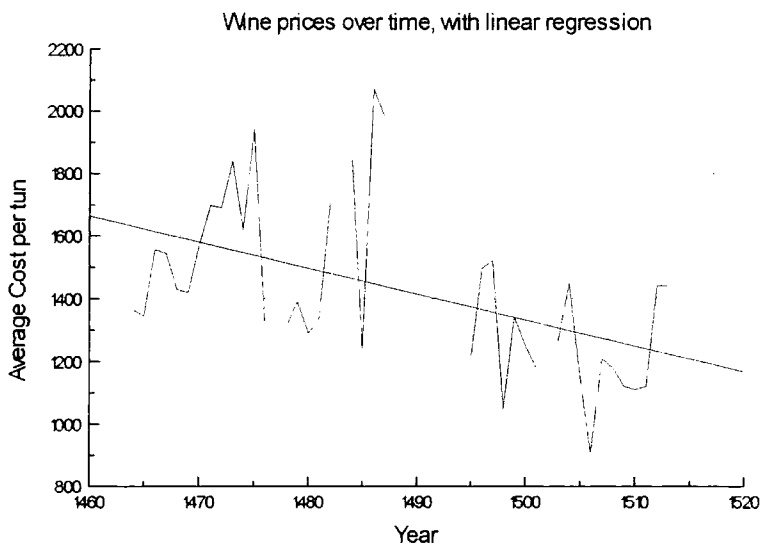
Comparable information on prices for 1481-2, the year in which 93% of the bursar's wine purchases were made at Hull, is unfortunately unavailable. The bursar did not purchase wine in Newcastle

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<sup>32</sup>Here and elsewhere, figures for the first half of the century are taken from Morimoto, "Demands and Purchases", pp 84, 86-99.

that year, the remaining 7% being accounted for by wine bought from the terrar of the priory, and the accounts of both the hostillar and the sacrist are missing. However, the price of wine in Hull that year, at £5.10s.0d. per tun, was slightly higher than the price in Newcastle the previous year (£5.6s.8d. per tun); and the price in Newcastle the subsequent year, 1482-3, is higher still, at around £7. The implication is that price movements in 1481-2 may well have followed a similar pattern as can be seen in 1487-8, with rising prices experienced in Newcastle sending the bursar to Hull to see if wine was cheaper there: and presumably returning to Newcastle in the following year as prices equalised between the two markets.

The following graph, illustrating the prices paid by the priory for wine over this period, shows the effect on wine prices of the loss of Bordeaux and the political manoeuvring caused by the instability of English politics in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. Prices increased to a peak in 1475-6, but then dropped dramatically following the removal of heavy French duties with the Treaty of Picquigny in 1475, and its commercial counterpart signed in January 1476. Apart from the brief but violent rise in the mid 1480s, perhaps a result of Henry VII's order that all wine be carried in English ships, prices generally remained at a consistently lower level between 1490 and 1520 - between 4d. and 6d. a gallon - than they had done in the previous quarter-century, when prices had fluctuated between around 5d. and 8d. per gallon.



These prices are, of course, the wholesale terms on which the Priory obtained the large quantities of wine that it purchased each year. There was a significant difference between the price paid

retail for a gallon of wine and the price per gallon when it was purchased by the tun. For example, in 1473 a gallon of wine purchased in Cambridge cost 10d., whilst the five tuns bought by the Dean and Chapter of Norwich cost them only 5½d. per gallon. Similarly in 1488-9, wine bought retail in Oxford could cost 8d., 10d. or 12d. a gallon, and the wholesale price in London averaged just under 6d.<sup>33</sup> It is also possible to compare the prices being paid retail for wine in Newcastle with the amounts charged to the Durham monks in 1508-11, since the Newcastle Chamberlains accounts, which have survived for those years, include some small wine purchases among their miscellaneous expenditure. For example, on the 16th August 1508 the accounts record the purchase of a "pottle" (half a gallon) of wine "for the Judge", and three pottles "for the Chancellor", at 8d. per gallon; in that year the bursar at Durham paid an average of just under 5d. per gallon for his eight tuns of wine. However, wholesale discounts were evidently not reserved for large customers such as the priory, and the volumes that a customer had to buy to take advantage of the lower prices were not high. In 1511, the chamberlains paid the same price - 4½d. per gallon - for the two hogsheads that they bought, as the Durham bursar did for his eight gallons.<sup>34</sup>

### **(iii) Consumption**

On average, the bursar purchased 7.7 tuns of wine per year in the years between 1464 and 1520 for which accounts remain. This was made up of about 0.4 tuns of sweet wine and 7.3 tuns of normal wine, with sweet wines becoming more common towards the end of this period, as has been seen. In addition, each year the sacrist purchased a pipe of wine for use in the communions celebrated in the cathedral, and the hostillar bought around a tun, most of which would have been drunk by the frequent guests that the priory was under an obligation to entertain. Although this latter quantity does not seem large, it is likely that only the more exalted guests of the priory were regaled with wine during their stay. In the late thirteenth century, the keeper of the guest house at Beaulieu abbey was instructed to give wine to dignitaries such as abbots and priors, and to some parsons and knights "but not all";<sup>35</sup> the lower levels of the gentry had to be content

<sup>33</sup>M.K.James, *Studies in the Medieval Wine Trade*, ed. E.M.Veale, (Oxford, 1971), pp.62, 68.

<sup>34</sup>*Accounts of the Chamberlains of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1508-1511*, ed. C.M.Fraser, (The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Record Series, No.3, 1987), pp.34, 203.

<sup>35</sup>*The Account Book of Beaulieu Abbey*, ed. S.F.Hockey, (Camden Society, 4th Series, No.16, 1975), p.273.

with ale. Given the Benedictine monasteries' constant worry about the cost of hospitality, it is probable that this distinction was maintained. It seems likely that the wine purchased by the bursar and by the hostillar was consumed by the monks and guests respectively.

If communion wine and guest wine are disregarded, to give the wine drunk by the monks as a part of their communal diet, then the priory consumed an average of 15,523 pints of wine each year. Calculating the consumption of an individual monk is far from being an exact science, since it is impossible for us to know how many other people, (such as corrodians, seculars or guests), shared in this amount, or how it was distributed between the monks themselves. However, a rough estimate might be made on the assumption that absenteeism and additional shares might have effectively cancelled each other out, it being highly unlikely that many seculars or corrodians would have had the right to a share of the monks' wine; and that the wine was shared equally between the monks. The average number of monks residing at the priory at any one time was 40,<sup>36</sup> which leads to the tentative conclusion that the average daily allowance of a monk was 1.1 pints (0.6 litres) of wine.

However, it should be noted that this allowance would have been spread very unevenly across the year. In the fast seasons of Advent and Lent wine is extremely unlikely to have been drunk, and the same probably applied to Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year. In her study of Westminster monks in this period Barbara Harvey concluded that wine would only have been drunk on 100 days of the year, comprising various saints days, anniversaries and other celebrations.<sup>37</sup> This would mean an average consumption per monk of 3.9 pints (2.2 litres) on these days - the equivalent of nearly three modern 75cl bottles. If this is spread over a larger part of the year, the 193 days that are left after the removal of the fast days noted above, then the allowance would have averaged just over two pints on those days.

These levels of wine consumption are much higher than those suggested by St. Benedict as reasonable provision. St. Benedict certainly allowed for this amount to be varied at the discretion of the prior, but almost certainly envisaged such variations as decreasing, not increasing, the allowance; the rule explains that the half-pint or so that is suggested is deemed "sufficient" having taken the "infirmities of the

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<sup>36</sup>Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory*, p.54. The monastic population of the priory was relatively stable throughout the fifteenth century.

<sup>37</sup>Harvey, *Living and Dying*, pp.44, 58.

sick" into account; and goes on to discuss how "We read that monks should not drink wine at all, but since the monks of our day cannot be convinced of this, let us at least agree to drink moderately, and not to the point of excess...[and]...where local circumstances dictate an amount much less than what is stipulated above, or even none at all, those who live there should bless God and not grumble."<sup>38</sup> It should also be noted that in addition to this wine, each monk received a daily allowance of around a gallon of ale. The volume of alcohol that they must have consumed is thus startling to modern dieticians, and can hardly be said to have met St. Benedict's guideline of moderation.

It is interesting in this context to note that the report compiled by the bishop of Durham following his 1442 official visitation of the priory contained several criticisms of illicit drinking, although it concluded that the monks were "men of worthy lives, chaste and sober, suffering neither the shame nor the chains of fleshy faults" - a judgement that cannot be totally dismissed as partial, since it was not unknown for such reports to contain strong condemnations of the visited house. Certain sections of the report make it clear that drinking to excess was recognised as undesirable; but equally, the priory's replies do not suggest that any great seriousness was attached to such criticisms. Article 20 of the report concerns the chamberlain, whom over twenty of the monks had accused of not carrying out his duties satisfactorily; "and when accusations are laid before the lord prior on this matter, the latter does not take steps to correct it, but says to the monks that this man is a drunkard, and so nothing is done". Articles 45 and 46 both concern illicit drinking-sessions, involving both the monks themselves and also laymen entering the dormitory to join them. The priory's reply is that such sessions are not known of and shall be prohibited; neither statement being entirely convincing.<sup>39</sup>

Whilst the differing size and composition of different households complicates the task of making relevant comparisons, it is clearly desirable to obtain some idea of how the wine consumption of the Durham monks compared with that of other similarly wealthy men. Barbara Harvey's analysis of the calorific make-up of the diet consumed by the monks of Westminster in this period revealed that, on average, they received

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<sup>38</sup>*The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry, (Minnesota, 1981), pp.238-41. The exact quantity of wine recommended as a daily allowance was a "hemina", which contained 0.273 litres, or about half a pint.

<sup>39</sup>Bishop Robert Neville's Visitation Report (9 July, 1442), published as the appendix to R.B.Dobson, "Mynistres of Saynt Cuthbert", Durham Cathedral Lecture 1972, (Durham, 1974); reprinted as Cap.3, *Church and Society in the Medieval North of England*, London, 1996).

an allowance of just over a quarter of a pint of wine each day.<sup>40</sup> The average Durham allowance of just over a pint was thus a great deal more - perhaps a function of the more pressing need to keep out the cold in Durham? At Battle Abbey few accounts remain, but in 1412-13 the daily allowance per monk can be estimated to have been 1.4 pints,<sup>41</sup> higher than the figures seen here for Durham, although this is calculated from a single account and may be abnormally high. Dyer estimated that at both Battle Abbey, and the household of the Countess of Warwick (for which the 1420-1 accounts remain), "the superior members of the household" probably received an allowance of about two-thirds of a pint of wine each per day.<sup>42</sup>

It should be noted here that wine was almost certainly drunk much more commonly, and in greater quantities, in the first than in the second half of the fifteenth century. Decreasing imports after the English loss of Bordeaux indicate that this was the case throughout the country,<sup>43</sup> and Dyer has suggested that the practical effect of this decreasing consumption was spread across all wine-drinking ranks, with rich households cutting back daily allowances and lesser households no longer drinking wine on a regular basis.<sup>44</sup> This picture is confirmed by a comparison of the wine purchases of Durham Cathedral Priory in the first and second halves of the century. The average yearly wine purchase of the Durham bursar was 15.1 tuns in the period from 1415-16 to 1439-40,<sup>45</sup> which was twice that recorded for 1464-5 to 1519-20. The number of monks inhabiting the priory remained stable throughout the fifteenth century, so that, high though the levels of the latter part of the century may seem, they represented a halving of the amount that was being drunk by the Durham monks half a century previously.

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<sup>40</sup>Harvey, *Living and Dying*, p.64.

<sup>41</sup>Searle and Ross, *Battle Abbey*. In 1412-13 seven tuns of wine were bought (p.105). It is unclear exactly how many monks were then in residence, but in 1394 there were 27, and 25-30 was the standard range. If there were 27, this would give 1.4 pints per monk per day assuming no other sharers in the wine; if 30, this would become 1.1 pints, matching the Durham figures.

<sup>42</sup>Christopher Dyer, "English Diet in the Later Middle Ages", in *Social Relations and Ideas*, ed. T.H.Aston et al., (Cambridge, 1983), p.194.

<sup>43</sup>James, *Wine Trade*, pp.58-9. The more usual drink in England was ale: in 1497, an Italian visitor to England noted that "the majority, not to say everyone, drink [ale]". Another Italian, in c.1500, commented that the English were "very sparing of wine when they drink it at their own expense...not considering it any inconvenience for three or four persons to drink out of the same cup...The deficiency of wine, however, is amply supplied by the abundance of ale and beer". *English Historical Documents, Vol V, 1485-1558*, ed. C.H.Williams, (London, 1967), pp.190, 195.

<sup>44</sup>Dyer, *Standards of Living*, p.105.

<sup>45</sup>Calculated from the table in Morimoto, "Demands and Purchases", p.101.

The large, though differing, quantities of wine that all these households consumed may be partially explained when it is realised quite how beneficial to health wine was perceived to be. Andrew Boorde's *Dyetary*, a manual on the healthful qualities and dangers of all sorts of food, with diet suggestions for various complaints, which was first published in 1542 and widely read, devotes a long paragraph to a panegyric on the benefits of drinking good wine - albeit in moderation. Wine was alleged to "quicken a man's wits...comfort the heart...scour the liver [perhaps more true than they knew]...rejoice all the powers of man, and nourish them...engender good blood...comfort and nourish the brain and all the body, and resolve phlegm...it is medicinable, especially white wine, for it...cleanses wounds and sores". "Furthermore", Boorde adds, "the better the wine is, the better humours it engenders".<sup>46</sup>

In addition, it has been asserted that different levels of wine drinking helped to define the internal hierarchies of the medieval aristocracy.<sup>47</sup> In particular, the laying in of casks of wine was a mark of the richest households.<sup>48</sup> Buying a tun, pipe or hogshead of wine, rather than purchasing it by the gallon as required, entailed a considerable capital investment. It also meant that that volume of wine had to be drunk in the next few months or be wasted - at best, wine began to deteriorate after six or seven months, due to the hardly sterile processing conditions of the middle ages, although the stronger, sweeter wines kept for longer due to their higher alcohol content.<sup>49</sup> Francois Villon, criticising the opulent lifestyles of French monks in the middle of the fifteenth century, noted in particular the detail that "they have good wines, often drawn from the wood [*embrochez*]"<sup>50</sup> By buying and drinking wine in these quantities, the monks of Durham were clearly showing that they considered themselves to be near the top of the social ladder.

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<sup>46</sup>Boorde, *Dyetary*, p.254.

<sup>47</sup>Dyer, *Standards of Living*, p.62.

<sup>48</sup>An Italian reporting on England in c.1500 specifically noted that "few people keep wine in their own houses, but buy it, for the most part, at a tavern". Williams, *English Historical Documents*, p.195.

<sup>49</sup>James, *Wine Trade*, p.165. It is also worth noting that in the *Northumberland Household Book* it is specified that the year's supply of wine for the household is to be delivered in two installments, each of half the total quantity: on St. Andrew's Day (30th November), to last until Lady Day (25th March), a period of four months, and on Lady Day to last until Michaelmas (29th September), a period of six months. Boorde, *Dyetary*, p.254: "high wines, such as Malmsey, may be kept long".

<sup>50</sup>Francois Villon, stanza 32 of "Le Testament", (c.1461); translated in *Villon: Poems*, ed. John Fox, (London, 1984), p.39.

### CHAPTER 3 - SPICES

The term 'spices' denoted a wide variety of substances in medieval Europe, and can be usefully subdivided into several categories. This study focuses on the various commodities that the monks themselves accounted for under this heading: this includes sugar, but not honey or salt; onions, but not garlic or herbs (many of which, in any case, would have been home-grown rather than purchased); certain nuts, dried fruits, and the 'exotic' spices for which we nowadays tend to reserve the word - principally licorice, aniseed, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, mace, pepper and saffron. The range of spices that the monks purchased over this period appears to have been fairly constant, although it is unfortunately impossible to penetrate any changes that might be hidden behind the general headings of "diverse spices" or "...and other spices" which occur so often in these accounts. The hostillar's account in fact only gives such an aggregate, but the communars' and bursars' accounts contain more detail. These specify that sugar (in the form of comfits and 'plate', but not any of the other forms common in this period such as loaves or powder) aniseed, licorice, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, mace, pepper, figs, raisins and onions were bought in most years. Nuts, saffron and 'torts' (some sort of cake or tart) were also bought in several years. The hostillar bought ginger, cinnamon and other unspecified spices in each year, and added "zintar"<sup>51</sup> to this list after 1505-6.

Some more miscellaneous items are also included in the communar's accounts. These include a category described as "electuar for the novices" each year: no further detail is given, and it seems likely that this was some sort of medicinal cordial deemed appropriate for the young. Other items appear much less frequently. 'Torts', or tarts, are occasionally mentioned - three were bought in 1502-3, and five in each of 1510-11, 1511-12 and 1517-18. An item "made of comfit" was bought for 3s.8d. in 1511-12, presumably as a centrepiece for a banquet: such 'subtleties' were highly prized examples of the confectioners' or pastry-chefs' art, and edible crowns, lambs and eagles were commonly set upon the table between courses. These figures were made of meatpaste in the earlier middle ages, but were increasingly fashioned of sugar or pastry - or even non-edible materials such as cardboard - by this period.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Zintar cannot be traced in the relevant published reference works. Mr. Weiner, Deputy Chief Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, has suggested that it may possibly be an otherwise unrecorded deviant spelling of "sanders", or sandalwood, which commonly occurs in lists of spice purchases alongside ginger and cinnamon, as zintar does in these accounts.

<sup>52</sup>Scully, *The Art of Cookery*, p. 109.

The spices for which most information can be gleaned from these accounts are sugar, dried fruit, pepper, ginger, aniseed and licorice. For each of these price series may be constructed and consumption estimated, although even here the vagueness of the hostillars' aggregate total, and the miscellaneous category in the other accounts, mean that exact calculations are not possible. However, the margin of error in the figures given here is unlikely to be large. The priory accounts do not, of course, give any great detail of how or when these spices were used. In attempting to answer this question, other sources have been necessary, and those used here are primarily Andrew Boorde's 1542 *Dyetary*, together with certain recipe collections.<sup>53</sup> The information contained in each of these sources is broadly consistent, and so it seems probable that these texts reflect standard and generally accepted practises, and so can confidently be taken to represent the probable views and tastes of the monks of Durham in these years.

### Dried Fruit

Dried fruit accounted for by far the largest part of the priory's spice purchases each year, in terms of both quantity purchased and amount spent, despite appearing only in the communar's accounts. The communar spent an average of £1.3s.8½d. on dried fruits over this period, a significant proportion of the total that he spent on spices, which varied between £1.10s.1½d. and £3.0s.2d. per year. The dried fruits that he bought - figs, raisins, "big raisins" and currants - are measured in a bewildering variety of ways in these accounts: in pounds, dd., fraills, toppets, pecks or sorts. It is necessary to establish acceptable relationships between these measures before consumption can be reliably estimated.

A dd., ( short for "*duodecim*"), was a dozen pounds. This can be established from the internal evidence of the communar's accounts: for example, in 1505-6, he bought 6½ "dd" of large raisins "at 1½d." per pound, costing a total of 9s.9d. The only discoverable reference to this unit of measurement outside of these priory records occurs in the Finchale accounts.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Two particularly useful collections of medieval recipes are *Two Fifteenth Century Cookery Books*, ed. Thomas Austin, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No.91, 1888, and *Curye on Inglysch*, ed. Constance B.Hieatt and Sharon Butler, Early English Text Society, Supplementary Series, No.8, 1985. The principles behind the medieval use of spices are discussed in detail in Scully, *The Art of Cookery*.

<sup>54</sup>*The Priory of Finchale*, ed. James Raine, (Surtees Society Vol.6, 1837), pp.234, 426.

Both the frail and the toppet were measures based on the baskets in which dried fruit was commonly purchased. The frail was a particularly vague measure in the fifteenth century, and could denote quantities anywhere from 30 to 75lbs.<sup>55</sup> The price given per frail of figs in these accounts is reasonably consistent, varying between 32d. and 48d. and averaging 40.5d. This suggests that the measure is used here to represent a roughly consistent quantity. It may be estimated that this was approximately 40lbs, since in 1505-6 the communar paid 20d. for 20lb of figs, and 40d. for a frail. A toppet, (used here only of raisins), was simply a basket, and no indication of the quantity it might have contained can be found.<sup>56</sup> At Durham priory on both occasions when toppets of raisins were bought by the communar they cost 2s.8d. each, which does at least suggest that a consistent volume was understood by this term. The raisins bought by the communar consistently cost around 4d. per pound where they were bought in quantities of a few pounds, but only about 1½d. per pound when they were bought in multiples of a dozen pounds, suggesting that a bulk discount of almost two-thirds applied to purchases made in the larger units. If it is posited that the apparently fairly standard bulk price of raisins of around 1½d. per pound applied to this quantity, a toppet can be estimated to have contained just over 20lb. of raisins.

A peck was a standard measure of volume rather than weight, containing 2 gallons (a quarter of a bushel).<sup>57</sup> By the same calculation as that used for the toppet, an estimate of the weight of a peck would be 80lbs. The largest of the measures used, the sort, is again ill-defined.<sup>58</sup> It was certainly a large amount, being the quantity that figs were most commonly imported in. It thus occurs frequently in the Newcastle customs accounts, where John Wade thought it might refer to a quantity of as much as 224lb.<sup>59</sup> Thorold Rogers took it to be the equivalent of three frails,<sup>60</sup> and this is the conversion used here in calculating quantities - in other words, a sort is here taken to be 120lbs.

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<sup>55</sup>*Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol.6, p.138.

<sup>56</sup>*ibid*, Vol.18, p. 259; Wade, *Customs Accounts*, p.311.

<sup>57</sup>*ibid*, Vol. 11, p.410.

<sup>58</sup>*ibid*, Vol.16, p.30.

<sup>59</sup>Wade, *Customs Accounts*, p.311.

<sup>60</sup>J.E.Thorold Rogers, *A History of Agriculture & Prices in England*, Vol. IV, (Oxford, 1882), pp. 668-9.

**The communars' purchases of dried fruit in pounds**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Volume purchased (lbs.)</u>	<u>Total cost</u>	<u>Average price per lb.</u>
1474-5	120lbs.	16s.0d.	1.6 pence
1480-1	120lbs.	12s.10d.	1.3 pence
1489-90	120lbs.	16s.0d.	1.6 pence
1496-7	60lbs.	10s.0d.	2 pence
1502-3	240lbs.	23s.0d.	1.2 pence
1505-6	219.5lbs.	21s.11d.	1.2 pence
1508-9	342lbs.	37s.8d.	1.3 pence
1510-11	344lbs.	37s.6d.	1.3 pence
1511-2	280lbs.	27s.4d.	1.2 pence
1516-7	323lbs.	31s.1d.	1.2 pence
1517-8	303lbs.	27s.5d.	1.1 pence

As the above table shows, the amount of dried fruit bought by the communar increased considerably over this period, from 120lbs in the 1470s and 1480s to over 300lbs in the first decades of the sixteenth century, and averaging 211lbs. This is a considerable volume of dried fruit, although divided into 40 monk-portions, it still allows only 1.5 ounces each per week over the entire year. However, dried fruit was an essentially Lenten aspect of the monastic diet; in Westminster, it accounted for 2.5% of the calorific value of the monk's food in that season, and was absent from their diet for the rest of the year. Averaged only across Lent, the quantities purchased here would have given each monk around 2oz. per day. This is significantly higher than the comparable allowance received by the monks of Westminster in this period, who even in Lent received only 4oz. of raisins each per week.<sup>61</sup> Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the one year in which prices were notably higher than the rest is the year in which by far the smallest quantity was purchased. The question is, of course, whether the small amount purchased was a reaction to high prices, or whether it was due to some other factor and had the result of denying bulk discounts to the priory that year.

The steady increase in the amount of dried fruit bought by the priory reflects a general tendency in medieval Europe to include more dried fruit in cookery as time went on, as can be seen in a comparison of fourteenth and early fifteenth century recipes with those of the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>62</sup> Figs are practically a ubiquitous ingredient in the fifteenth century recipes that have survived, being used in both

<sup>61</sup>Harvey, *Living and Dying*, pp.57, 64.

<sup>62</sup>Hieatt & Butler, *Curye on Inglysch*, p.12.

sweet and meat dishes.<sup>63</sup> In the sixteenth century Andrew Boorde rated figs above all other fruits. He also heartily recommended "great raisins", stating that they "make the stomach firm and stable" and "provoke a man to have a good appetite, if a few of them be eaten before meat".<sup>64</sup> It may have been their reputation as appetite stimulants that made these fruits staple items of the Lenten diet.

### Sugar

The majority of the spices bought by the priory are familiar today and need no further explanation. However, the forms in which sugar was purchased were rather different in the medieval period. Powdered sugar, such as is most common in modern usage, was perhaps the rarest and certainly the most expensive form in which sugar could be found. Most sugar was bought in loaves - solid blocks from which sugar was scraped or broken off as required for use; alternatively, as here, it could be bought in plate form - which may have been rather like hard toffee. Comfits were different. This term was used to cover a wide range of sweet things, from dragees (sugared almonds), sugar-coated seeds and spices, to sugar that had been delicately flavoured with rose-water. Comfits were considered very desirable and beneficial to health in the middle ages, and it became conventional for small boxes of carefully chosen sugared spices to be given to guests at the end of a meal, or before bed, to aid digestion and to sweeten the breath. They were also widely used in cookery, particularly as a garnish.<sup>65</sup> A very wide variety of spices, nuts, seeds and flavourings were used in making comfits: the 1482 "Regimen Sanitatis" of Magninus Mediolanensis listed the best and most delicious comfits then in use as being candied, sugar- or honey-coated ginger; candied pine-nuts, pistachios and filberts; candied aniseed, coriander, fennel and juniper seeds; crude dragees; fine table dragees; rose-sugar; marzipan and walnuts candied in sugar or honey. Similarly, Platina described in the 1475 "De honesta voluptate" how "by melting [sugar] we make almonds...pine-nuts, hazelnuts, coriander, anise, cinnamon and many other things into candies".<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Austin, *Two Cookery Books*. Dried fruit appears in the vast majority of recipes listed here. Typical sweet recipes based on figs, raisins and dates include "Fygeye" (p.24), and fruit-filled pies (pp.15, 112). Fruit was also included in meat and fish tarts (p.47), and several other savoury dishes.

<sup>64</sup>Boorde, *Dyetary*, p.282.

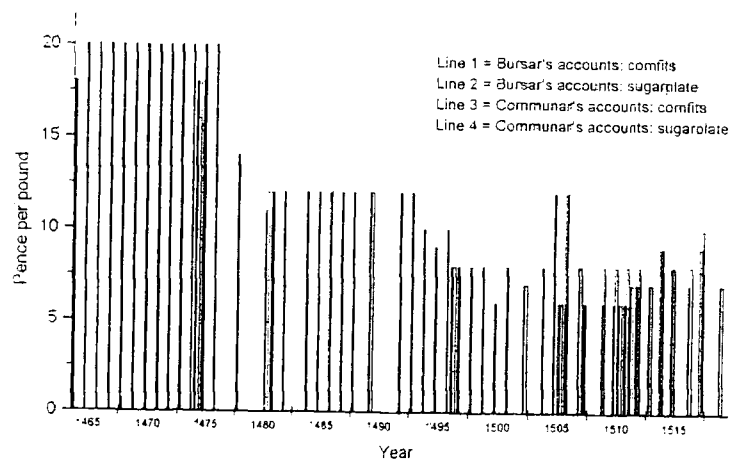
<sup>65</sup>For example, anise is mentioned five times, four of them "in comfyte" as a specified garnish, in Austin, *Two Cookery Books*.

<sup>66</sup>Quoted in Scully, *The Art of Cookery*, pp.129-31, 57.

The prevailing principle behind these confections was that the combination of the "humours" inherent in sugar and in the spice or flavouring would aid digestion. Sugar was perceived to match very closely the ideal temperament of the human, being slightly warm and slightly moist, and its increasingly widespread use was thus justified by the best available medical principles - to the great relief, one suspects, of the increasingly sweet-toothed Europeans who had gained a taste for it since it had become more commonly available since the fourteenth century.<sup>67</sup>

Perhaps the best price series in these accounts is that for sugar, for which four data sources are available: the confectionery and the sugar plate purchased by the bursar and by the communar (although for the first two decades looked at here the confectionery purchased by the bursar stands alone). This data shows some extremely interesting price movements.

Sugar prices in the priory accounts



As the above chart shows, sugar prices more than halved over this period, descending in two main "steps" rather than maintaining a steady downward trend. Between 1478 and 1482, the price of sugar dropped dramatically from a mode price of 20d. per pound to 12d.; and then dropped again to around 7d. per pound in c. 1495. The increased variation in price which occurs towards the end of this period was

<sup>67</sup>Scully, *The Art of Cookery*, p. 52.

probably in fact a characteristic of prices in the earlier decades too: the data sources proliferate in the accounts in the later years, so that less uniformity in the data is to be expected.

Sugar prices were certainly dropping throughout Europe in these years as a result of the new Portuguese navigations.<sup>68</sup> Comparable price series for this period can be found for Flanders, Brabant and Cambridge, in the archives of hospitals and colleges. The specific forms of sugar referred to do vary in these accounts - white sugar was the more highly refined variety, and was thus most expensive; the monks of Durham instead bought sugar-plate and comfits, and elsewhere candy, powdered or loaf-sugar was preferred - but prices for all the different types and grades of sugar appear to have risen and fallen together. Thorold Roger's records of prices in the Cambridge area show a great deal of variety, but an average price was probably around 1s.6d. per pound throughout the 1460s, falling to 1s. per pound in 1468 and then varying between 6d. and 1s. per pound until the 1490s, after which prices varied between 3d. and 8d. per pound for the rest of the period.<sup>69</sup> In Flanders, white sugar prices fell by a third, from around 15d. to 10d. per pound, in 1468, and prices then remained fairly constant until 1484, when they began to fall gradually to around 4d. per pound by 1500. Similarly, powdered sugar, which cost around 10d. per pound in the 1450s and 1460s, fell to 6d. per pound after 1468. The timing and magnitude of the price drop of these two types of sugar was thus the same, despite their very different prices. Prices for another type of sugar may be found in the records of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Antwerp, which bought sugar-candy each year: from 1484 to 1498 the price averaged 8d. per pound. The price then fell suddenly after that date to average 4d. per pound in the first years of the new century.<sup>70</sup>

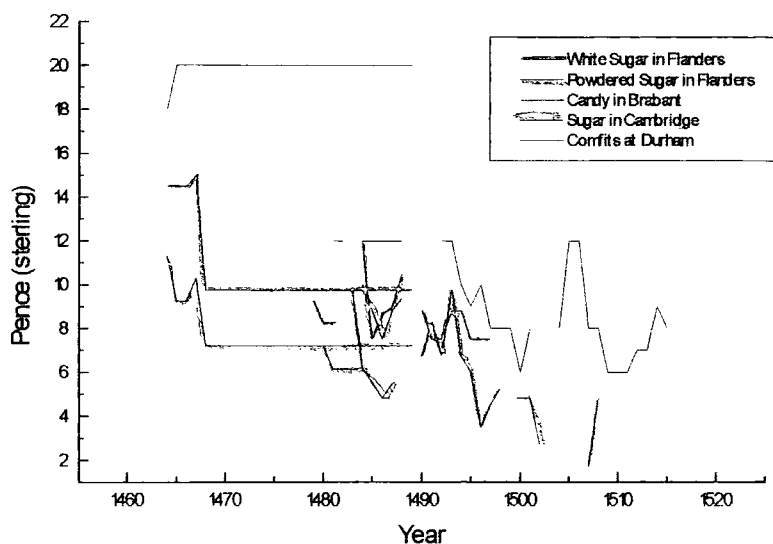
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<sup>68</sup>Hermann Van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 3 vols., (The Hague, 1963), Vol.2, pp.127-9; J.A. van Houtte, *An Economic History of the Low Countries*, (London, 1977), p.176.

<sup>69</sup>Thorold Rogers, *A History of Agriculture and Prices*, Vol.III, pp.528-535.

<sup>70</sup>*Documents Pour L'Histoire des Prix et des Salaires en Flandres et en Brabant*, ed. C.Verlinden, (Bruges, 1959), pp.47-8, 330. Prices given in Flanders and Brabant coinage have been converted into the equivalent English currency using the Flanders/Sterling conversion table in N.B.Harte & K.G.Ponting eds., *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe*, (London, 1983), p.70; Brabant currency has been converted on the principal that £1.10s. Brabant = £1 Flanders, as stated in Peter Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, (London, 1986), p.230.

Prices of sugar at Cambridge, Flanders, Brabant &amp; Durham



Two interesting features of the evidence from these accounts are that the drop in price in Durham came over a decade later than in Flanders; and that prices in Durham, (and presumably in the north-east in general), were significantly higher than elsewhere, at up to double the price in the Low Countries. As the above graph illustrates, sugar prices in Flanders dropped in the late 1460s, a fall that did not register at all in the prices paid by the monks of Durham (no data is recorded by Thorold Rogers for Cambridge for these years). The fall in prices experienced by Durham and Newcastle in the years around 1480 clearly mirrors trends elsewhere. However, for the whole of this period it can be seen clearly from the graph that the prices paid by the priory were consistently higher than prices in Flanders, Brabant or Cambridge. This may well reflect the additional transport costs involved in either importing sugar to Newcastle, or transporting it via London. It is also possible that low demand for the spice trade in the Durham and Newcastle area pushed prices up, a tendency that would have been reinforced by low levels of competition in the trade - only a handful of merchants appear supplying the priory with spices compared to nearly a hundred selling wine.<sup>71</sup> Both in Flanders and in East Anglia, then, sugar prices fell by about a third in 1468; in Newcastle, this fall appears to have been delayed until c.1480. The lesser fall at the end of the century is mirrored by the experience of St.Elizabeth's in Antwerp, but seems to have been preceded by around 15 years in Cambridge.

<sup>71</sup>See below, p.57.

Unfortunately the Flanders price series are broken off at 1500 and 1485 respectively, so comparisons here cannot be made.

### Pepper

After sugar, the most common spice in the medieval world was pepper. This was the staple commodity of the spice-dealers in the middle ages, accounting for over four-fifths of the cargoes brought to Europe from Alexandria by the Venetian galleys at the beginning of the fifteenth century.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, sellers of spices and aromatics were generally known as pepperers, although it is certain that they dealt in the whole range of such commodities, and were effectively general grocers who could be relied upon to stock spices.<sup>73</sup> European imports of pepper increased by between 30 and 55% over the fifteenth century, due at least in part to the progressive impoverishment of the Moslem Levant, which kept prices low on the Eastern markets throughout the second half of the century;<sup>74</sup> however, imports of other spices increased by much greater amounts over the same period, so that in relative terms the trend was for reduced consumption of pepper and increased consumption of other spices.<sup>75</sup>

Pepper may have been overtaken in popularity by other spices in the last years of the fifteenth century, but it was still very much a staple of the wealthy kitchen. A very wide variety of recipes call for a sprinkling of pepper, and it was credited with a wide range of regenerative powers. Boorde observed that it "does heat the body...desolve phlegm and wind...help digestion and makes a man to make water". He also commented that "black pepper does make a man lean", which may perhaps account for its popularity amongst the wealthy.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>C.H.H. Wake, "The Changing Pattern of Europe's Pepper and Spice Imports, ca.1400-1700", *Journal of European Economic History*, Vol.8, 1979, p.368.

<sup>73</sup>S. Thrupp, "The Grocers of London", in E.Power & M.M.Postan, *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, (London, 1966), p.283; Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community*, (London, 1995). Kathryn L.Reyerson, in "Commercial Fraud in the Middle Ages: the Case of the Dissembling Pepperer", *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol.8, 1982, p.67, quotes the case of a pepperer found guilty of selling adulterated saffron, and banned in perpetuity from following the trade of pepperer and selling "saffron, ginger, pepper, cloves, sugar or any subtle substance pertaining to the pepperer's trade".

<sup>74</sup>Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1983), pp.469-70.

<sup>75</sup>Wake, "Changing Pattern", pp. 372, 393-4; ginger imports increased by 257%, cinnamon by 395%, other spices 561% in the fifteenth century. Imports of Moluccan spices - cloves, nutmeg and mace - increased by 292% in the fifteenth century and by a further 500% between 1500 and 1620.

<sup>76</sup>Boorde, *Dyetary*, p.286.

Pepper prices and quantities purchased are unfortunately not specified in the priory accounts until after 1502-3, when the communar began to separate pepper out in his accounts. He certainly bought pepper in previous years - it is mentioned by name in the miscellaneous list in three years - but it is not until that date that the amount bought and price paid is given for pepper individually. However, those figures that are given - though too few for definite trend analysis - do fit the pattern described above, of a gradual lessening of consumption. The purchases made in the seven years for which details remain are shown in the following table:

**Pepper purchases**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Volume bought</u></b>	<b><u>Amount spent</u></b>	<b><u>Price per lb.</u></b>
1502-3	1lb.	24d.	24d.
1505-6	1lb.	22d.	22d.
1508-9	1lb.	18d.	18d.
1510-11	3/4lb.	15d.	20d.
1511-12	not stated	8d.	?
1516-17	1/2lb.	8d.	16d.
1517-18	1/2lb.	10d.	20d.

The price of pepper appears to have been reasonably stable, averaging 20d. per pound and not fluctuating by more than 4d. per pound to either side of that figure. Although it might be expected that the Portugese entry into the pepper business from 1500 onwards would have driven prices steeply downwards, it seems that the Portugese were careful not to over-supply the market, but to keep imports at a level that would maintain the price on the European market.<sup>77</sup> However, prices did drop slightly, and the prices paid by the priory fit the pattern found in Antwerp, with a lowest point around 1515, when the Portugese had achieved their major victories at sea.<sup>78</sup>

Clearly, price increases cannot explain the drop in volume purchased by the communar shown by the above table. Although it is risky to infer trends from such a small number of data points, the spice accounts in general show a high degree of consistency in the purchases made from year to year, which means that the halving of the quantities purchased and amount spent which is found here over four successive accounts is unlikely to have been due simply to normal variation and the accident of survival.

<sup>77</sup>Wake, "Changing Pattern", pp.387-8.

<sup>78</sup>Van der Wee, *Growth of the Antwerp Market*, Vol.II, p. 129.

Such a decrease in consumption is probably a reflection of the changing tastes in European cookery, outlined above, with pepper decreasing in importance and more exotic spices assuming greater prominence.

### **Ginger**

Ginger was second only to pepper in providing the stable basis of the high-risk international spice trade. It was a very popular ingredient throughout the medieval period, being considered an excellent aid to digestion.<sup>79</sup> In particular, ginger was popular in comfits, and was a common ingredient in a wide variety of meat- and milk-based dishes.<sup>80</sup> The officers of Durham priory bought ginger regularly - it was one of the few spices mentioned by name each year in the hostillars' accounts, and was listed individually by the communar throughout this period.

The price of ginger at Durham varied fairly widely over this period, between 16d. and 40d. a pound. However, the actual amount spent by the communar on this spice did not vary to the same degree - being between 16d. and 24d. per year - since the amount that he purchased varied with these changes in price. A very clear correlation can be seen here between price and demand: the communar bought 1lb. per year when ginger cost less than 2s. per pound, but only ½lb. when the price rose above that level. 2s. per pound was clearly felt to be the decisive point, as when ginger cost exactly this much quantities of ½lb., ¾lb. and 1lb. were purchased. The prices paid for ginger by the priory are similar to those noted by Thorold Rogers for this period.<sup>81</sup>

### **Aniseed and Licorice**

Purchases of aniseed and licorice are recorded in the bursars', as well as the communars', accounts. It is interesting that the priory should have bought these spices in comparable quantities to the other spices looked at above, since they were much less common in the recipes of the time. It seems likely that these two items were used primarily for medicinal, rather than strictly culinary, purposes - although the two were by no means sharply differentiated in the medieval mind. The medicinal qualities assigned to them by Boorde do

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<sup>79</sup>Boorde, *Dyetary*, p.286.

<sup>80</sup>Austin, *Two Cookery Books*, eg. pp.10-11, 17, 25.

<sup>81</sup>Thorold Rogers, *A History of Agriculture and Prices*, Vol.III, pp.528-535.

not read any differently from the characteristics he attributes to everything from pepper to strawberries: aniseed "is good to cleanse the bladder...and makes one have sweet breath", whilst licorice "is good to cleanse and open the lungs and breast, and loosens phlegm".<sup>82</sup> However, it is perhaps significant that neither licorice nor aniseed are mentioned at all in the major surviving fifteenth-century recipe collections (though anise, the parent plant of aniseed, is mentioned five times).<sup>83</sup>

The bursar consistently purchased 1lb. of aniseed and ½lb. of licorice in virtually every year until 1505-6, when these quantities suddenly rose to the new levels of 6lb. and 1lb. respectively, where they remained for the rest of the period. It is extremely unclear why this should have happened. The prices of the two commodities did not change: from 1505-6, the prices of the two commodities are given separately, at 3d. (occasionally 4d.) per pound for aniseed, and 6d. per pound for licorice dropping to 3d. or 4d. per pound after 1509-10. Before this date, 6d. per year was paid for the two together, which is consistent with the 1505-6 pricing of 3d. and 6d. respectively. The only price change evidenced here, then, was the late drop in the price of licorice. This, it should be noted, occurred five years after the volume bought doubled, ruling out price change as a factor in that purchasing decision. In any case, this price drop has no parallel in the case of aniseed, yet the volume of this purchased by the bursar did not double but increased six-fold.

Interestingly, the prices and price changes for aniseed and licorice that are recorded in the communar's accounts do not parallel the bursar's records. Here, the price of aniseed drops quite early in this period, from 6d. per pound in 1474-5, to 5d. in 1489-90, and then to 4d. from 1496-7 onwards. The price of licorice was around 4d. per pound in 1474-5 and 1480-1, 6d. per pound in 1489-90 and 1497-7, and then 4d. from 1499-1500 onwards, this drop thus preceding that shown in the bursar's accounts by ten years. Unfortunately, comparable price series for these commodities are not published, so it is difficult to get a feeling for which of these patterns is the deviant. It is possible that the reason the price drop came earlier for the bursar was because he was purchasing larger quantities than the prior, around four pounds of aniseed and one or one and a half pounds of licorice per year. However, the prices paid by the bursar did not drop when the quantities he purchased rose to these levels; and in any case, one would expect price changes to

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<sup>82</sup>Boorde, *Dyetary*, pp.281, 287.

<sup>83</sup>Austin, *Two Cookery Books*.

have appeared in both accounts at the same time, even if bulk discounts meant that the absolute prices differed.

### Consumption

Disregarding dried fruit, sugar was the spice bought in the greatest quantity by the obedientiaries of Durham Cathedral Priory. Both the bursar and the communar list sugar purchases in their accounts, in its two forms of confects and plate; that the hostillar does not specify sugar as one of his list of specified spices suggests that he did not buy it, since in both the other accounts it is a major component and so one would expect it to have been mentioned by name. The bursar purchased between 3lb. and 8lb. each year (an average of just over 5lb. per year), and the communar between 3lb. and 7½lb. (an average of just over 6lb. per year). The average sugar consumption of the monastery as a whole was therefore slightly more than 11lb. each year, increasing over this period from around 6lb. per year in the 1460s and 1470s, to around 14lb. by the first decades of the sixteenth century. The elasticity of the monastery's demand is indicated by the fact that the volume of sugar purchased over this period more than doubled as its price halved;<sup>84</sup> and it should also be noted that there was a trend throughout Europe in this period for increasing amounts of sugar to be used in cookery.<sup>85</sup> However, the amount bought was still not large: divided between forty monks it allowed only 2½oz. each per year at the beginning of the period, rising to 5½oz. - still less than a teaspoonful each per day even by the end of the period.

Other spices were also bought in what are very small quantities for such a sizeable household. For example, until 1505-6 the bursar bought only 1lb. of aniseed each year to add to the average of nearly 4lb. purchased by the communar. Between them, the bursar and communar bought between 2lb. and 2½lb. of licorice a year. The communar bought an average of 13oz. of ginger each year, although this was augmented by the unspecified quantity bought by the hostillar. Similarly, when in the early years of the sixteenth century the communar's accounts begin to separate out pepper, saffron (on one occasion only), mace and cloves the

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<sup>84</sup>The bursar bought 3lb/year in the 1470s, when sugar cost 20d./lb, and was buying around 6lb/year by the 1490s, when the price had ropped to 10d./lb or less. In 1505/6 and 1506/7, the price briefly rose from 6d./lb to 12d./lb, and the volume purchased by the bursar immediately dropped to 5lb., rising to 6lb. again in 1507/8, when the price dropped to 8d./lb.

<sup>85</sup>Hieatt and Butler, *Curry on Inglysch*, pp.9-12.

quantities are seen to be very small indeed. This is particularly the case with pepper: until 1502-3 it is mentioned only in the "other" category, but from that year it is separated out, and it is surprising to see that only between ½lb. and 1lb. was purchased each year. Again, additional supplies may well have been included in the "diverse spices" of the bursar, but still the amount is low. Mace and cloves (almost always mentioned together), and saffron, when they are mentioned with specified quantities in the accounts, are bought only at the rate of a quart, or 4oz., each per year. These last were extremely expensive commodities, costing about four times as much as pepper - as much as £1 a pound in some years.

These quantities appear to have been unusually low compared with what we know of the consumption of other late medieval noble households. The monks of Westminster spent around £9 on spices each year, excluding the costs of spices for the prior's table for which they accounted separately.<sup>86</sup> This is three times the total spent on spices by the monks and prior of Durham Cathedral Priory (£3), and just under four times the amount spent if the prior's spices, bought by the bursar, are excluded (£2.7s.9d.). The population of Westminster was if anything rather larger than that of Durham, averaging 50 as opposed to 40 monks, and the amounts that the two monasteries spent on wine were roughly commensurate.

Some comparisons can also be made with large secular households. The household of Sir Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, spent £4.12s.0d. on spices in 1452/3, half as much again as the priory's average. Evidence such as this lends itself less easily to comparison with the Durham figures, but it may be observed that Stafford's wine purchases, at £13.18s.0d, were less than a third of the amount spent by the priory each year,<sup>87</sup> making the spice expenditures of the two households particularly disproportionate. Similarly, the Earl of Northumberland's household book reveals a similar spend on wine to Durham priory - £49 per year - but a much greater spend on spices, which at £25.19s.7d. (not counting raisins and figs), was over eight times the amount spent by the priory each year.<sup>88</sup> Evidence also exists for the spice purchases of a smaller, but still "reasonably elegant" secular household, that of Dame Alice de Bryene, which comprised around twenty people and for which the 1412/3 accounts have survived.<sup>89</sup> This household bought 5lb. of

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<sup>86</sup>Harvey, *Living and Dying*, pp.37, 57.

<sup>87</sup>Dyer, *Standards of Living*, p.56.

<sup>88</sup>Thomas Percy, *The Northumberland Household Book*, Third Edition (London, 1905), pp.6, 19-20.

<sup>89</sup>M.K.Dale and V.B.Redstone, *The Household Book of Dame Alice de Bryene*, quoted in Hieatt & Butler, *Curie on Inglysch*, p.13.

pepper and 3lb. of cinnamon in this year, quantities equal or greater than those purchased by the obedientiaries of Durham priory for the much larger household there. It would therefore appear that the monks of Durham Cathedral Priory consumed a much smaller proportion of spices in their diet than was the habit in other secular and monastic households at this time.

In all these cases, however, the amounts used are not grotesquely large by modern standards, as is often assumed to have been the case. It is one of the most enduring myths of the middle ages that vast quantities of spices of all kinds were used in the cuisine to an extent that would be quite unpalatable to modern tastes. The theory that this was due to the generally advanced state of putrefaction of much of the meat served at table has been challenged in recent years, and a more prevalent opinion now is that the quantities were partly used for show, partly because of the exotic image and cosmopolitan air that they gave their owner, and partly because the people actually liked such strong flavourings.<sup>90</sup> What appears to be frequently overlooked is that the quantities involved were not actually that large. In the first place, medieval cookery books with their injunctions to add a wide variety of spices to every dish rarely if ever specify quantities,<sup>91</sup> and the high prices that these commodities fetched, together with the relatively small quantities of them that actually appear in most household accounts, suggest that only a light dusting was intended.

It was probably also the case that only a few of the cheaper spices were used in the daily meals, the majority of the spices being used at feasts and in special dishes.<sup>92</sup> Not many details survive of exactly how the spices purchased by a household were used, but the kitchen list has survived for one particular feast, for fifty people, given by the Salters' company in London in 1506. This lists large numbers of birds, rabbits, eggs and meat, and also gives the actual quantities of spices used: 2oz. pepper, 2oz. cloves and mace, 1½ oz. saffron, 3lb. sugar, 2lb. raisins, 1lb. dates.<sup>93</sup> Two things can be noted about this list. The first is that these are not large quantities for fifty people - scaled down to a dinner for six, (the sort of quantities with which

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<sup>90</sup>The former view was advanced, for example, in J.C.Hammond & Anne Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food*, (London, 1957), p.37. Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, (Oxford, 1985), pp.51-3, points out that tastes changed in favour of more subtle flavourings long before keeping methods improved; Dyer, *Standards of Living*, p.63, emphasises the function of spices as status-symbols, and their exotic associations.

<sup>91</sup>Austin, *Two Cookery Books*; e.g., p.52, line 23: "caste ther-to powder Pepir & Gyngere, Canel, Sugre, Saffroun, Salt...". The majority of the recipes listed here contain similar instructions.

<sup>92</sup>Dyer, *Standards of Living*, p.63.

<sup>93</sup>William Herbert, *The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London*, (1837), quoted in Hammond & Wilbraham, *Englishman's Food*, p.58.

comparisons become meaningful to anyone other than the professional cook), the quantities would be roughly ¼oz. of pepper, ¼oz. of mace and cloves, ½oz. of saffron, 6oz. sugar, 4oz. raisins, 2oz. dates - which hardly qualifies as conspicuous consumption for a major feast. The second point to note is that if these quantities were used by the priory at some meals, it would not take many of these menus to use up the year's supply of spices - in other words, it seems likely that the majority of the spices purchased by the priory were used in a few major feasts, and that the majority of their food was flavoured with the herbs that grew in the monastery garden, or was plain.

## CHAPTER 4 - IRON

### (i) Measures and varieties

The structure of the iron purchases made by the priory differs from those of wine and spices in two important ways. Firstly, iron was not a luxury good with the potential for elastic demand of wine and spice - demand was driven by the need to mend and build. Secondly, with iron the monks had a choice between imported and home-produced varieties: Spanish iron was more expensive than local Weardale iron, but was of better quality as the original ore contained less phosphor and the iron was thus less brittle. It should be noted that the total iron bought and used by the priory would have been much larger than the amount under consideration here; purchases of iron may be found scattered through the accounts of virtually all the obedientiaries. This analysis, however, focuses on the purchases recorded in the bursar's accounts, and treats these as representative.

All the iron purchased by the bursar was bought by weight, the standard unit of measurement being the stone (here, of 12lb.).<sup>94</sup> In 1498-9 and 1504-5 only, some steel was also bought by the bursar. This came in small rods called gads, which cost the bursar around 1/4d. each. These rods were evidently both common and characteristic of steel, as in 1548 an act was passed forbidding the dishonest practise of forging high-quality iron into the shape of gads and selling it as steel.<sup>95</sup> The origin of the steel bought is not stated in the accounts. However, all the iron bought by the priory is defined as either Spanish or Weardale. It is probable that the use of the term "Weardale" was simply a generic for local iron: much of it is recorded in the accounts as having been bought at Muggleswick, which is in Derwentdale where the Priory had an iron mine and bloomery, and it seems less likely that specifically Weardale iron should have been taken and sold there than that this was a generic term.<sup>96</sup>

It is an interesting question whether "Spanish" iron was an accurate descriptor or a generic term for foreign, imported iron. The vast majority of the iron imported into Newcastle - an average of three tons a month - was of unspecified origin, although small quantities of osmund iron (a high-quality iron in bar form

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<sup>94</sup>I.S.W. Blanchard, "Seigneurial Entrepreneurship", *Business History*, Vol.15, 1973; p.103 note 2, p.104 note 7 - the stone used by iron smelters contained 14 pounds, but the stone used by merchants contained only twelve pounds. The prices paid by the bursar for a few pounds of iron with the cost given per stone make it clear that the twelve pound stone was used in these accounts.

<sup>95</sup>H.R. Schubert, *History of the British Iron and Steel Industry*, (London, 1957), p.314.

<sup>96</sup>See for example Lomas, "A Northern Farm", p.38 text and footnote.

from Sweden) were also landed on a regular basis, and four tons of Liege iron was recorded in 1494-5.<sup>97</sup> In general, although as a whole England's iron imports were overwhelmingly dominated by Spanish supplies, the east-coast ports landed significant quantities of iron specified to have been of other origins - central European, French, Flemish and osmund. At Hull for example, which was the east-coast port through which the most iron passed, half of all the iron landed was osmund, and several shipments of Botolf and Land iron, from central Europe.<sup>98</sup> It is generally assumed that the iron in the Newcastle customs accounts that was of unspecified origin was Spanish,<sup>99</sup> and this is reasonably likely since other types are specified whereas none is described as Spanish, which one would expect if small amounts of this type were landed amongst a general mass of central European iron. However, we can only be certain that the "Spanish" iron mentioned in the priory accounts was imported rather than locally produced. In this discussion of the priory's purchases, I shall be using the terms Spanish and Weardale as they appear in the bursar's accounts, and it should be borne in mind that these were not necessarily strict descriptors of geographic origin.

### **(ii) Prices and purchases**

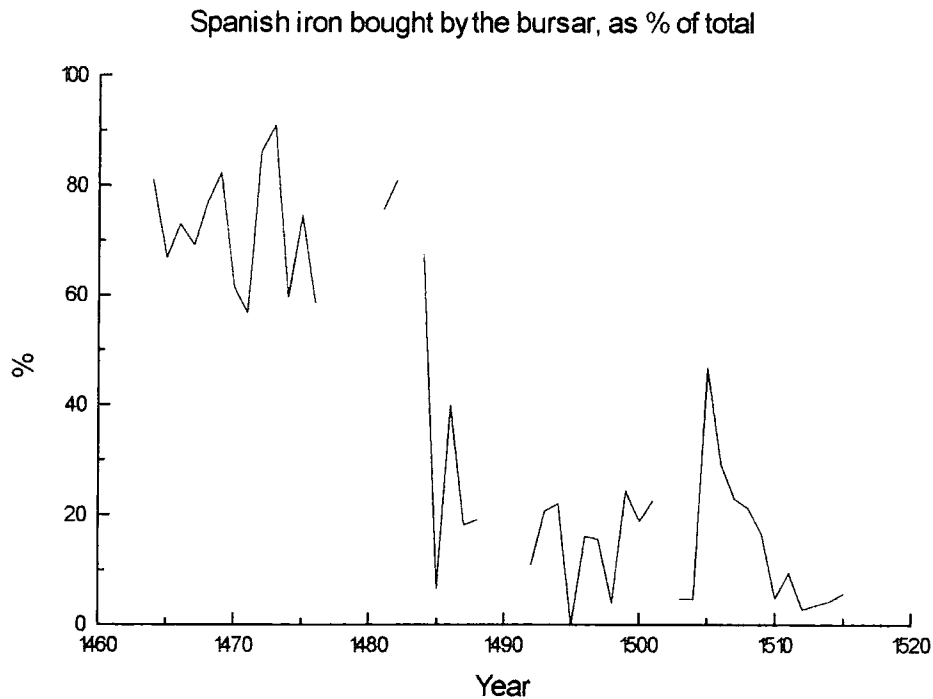
There are several important features of the iron purchases of Durham Cathedral Priory as they appear from the bursar's accounts. First, the relative proportions of imported and local iron were inverted in the mid-1480s, when the percentage of the bursars' purchases that consisted of Spanish iron dropped suddenly and dramatically from c.80% to c.20%, to be supplanted by local supplies. In addition, the prior's instaurer became a major supplier of local iron to the bursar in this decade and "woodhire" iron began to be a regular component of the total amount of iron received by the bursar each year. Finally, the actual quantity of iron purchased by the bursar doubled in this period.

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<sup>97</sup>J.F.Wade, "The Overseas Trade of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the late Middle Ages", *Northern History*, (Vol.30, 1994), p.42.

<sup>98</sup>Wendy R.Childs, "England's Iron Trade in the Fifteenth Century", *Economic History Review*, (2nd Series, No.34), p.37.

<sup>99</sup>Wade, *supra*, I.S.W.Blanchard, "Commercial Crisis and Change", *Northern History*, Vol.8, 1973, p.77.



As the above graph shows, the percentage of the iron bought by the bursar that was Spanish as opposed to Weardale decreased suddenly and dramatically in the mid 1480s, although some Spanish iron did continue to be bought in every year for which the accounts survive except two, 1495-6 and 1519-20. The resulting shortfall was made up by increased purchases of Weardale iron, which assumed the dominant position in the bursar's supplies previously occupied by the Spanish product. Underlining this change, at the same date purchases of Weardale iron begin to be listed first in the bursar's iron accounts, followed by purchases of Spanish iron, again a reversal of their previous positions. Given the highly standardised format of the accounts already noted, this change must be significant - it indicates that the change in primacy of supply was recognised from the beginning as important enough to justify a change in the accounting order, although some uncertainty about how permanent this change was can be detected.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Spanish iron is consistently listed first until 1484/5, when Weardale iron takes precedence. Spanish iron reverts to first place in 1486/7, but from 1498/9 onwards Weardale iron is always first. However, it should be noted that this feature of the iron bought by the bursar may not have been part of a general trend - the opposite pattern has been found in the iron purchases of one of the priory's manors, with the iron bought being almost entirely local until 1490, and almost entirely imported after that date: Lomas, "A Northern Farm", p.38.

Potential explanations for this switch to local supplies include changes in the price structure of the industry, new mines being opened by the priory, or a sudden expansion in mining activity in the area. In addition, two other developments can be found in the accounts around this period, which may have some relevance to this change in emphasis of supply. Firstly, the amount of Weardale iron bought each year was boosted by the addition of a quantity of Weardale iron described as "woodhire". The first appearance of this category comes in the 1488-9 account, and thereafter "woodhire" iron appears in each year for which records have survived. Eighty stones were purchased in each year, (except for the two years 1492-3 and 1493-4, when twice this amount was purchased), at a standard rate of 4d. per stone. The consistency of this price - which was often lower than the price paid for other Weardale iron in the same years - together with the fact that a standard amount was "bought" each year, suggests that some fixed agreement lay behind its acquisition.

It seems likely that this iron was a rent paid in kind for the right to gather fuel on lands belonging to the bursar's office. Fuel supplies were crucial to the medieval iron industry, being the main limiting factor on production due to the inefficiency of the process used before the invention of the blast furnace, and so fuel rights could be extremely valuable commodities. The bishop of Durham is known to have regulated and collected dues from charcoal burners on his estates, and in 1430 he farmed the rights exclusively to one man, who was specified to have been an iron-smelter planning to use the fuel for forges.<sup>101</sup> It is not made clear whether the bishop received cash or iron in payment for this grant; but rents in kind were certainly not unheard of, as an earlier indenture from St. Mary's Abbey in York makes clear. In this document, the abbot of St. Mary's grants permission to a certain John to mine and smelt the iron from an area of land in Rosedale, and to take fuel for the smelting from the abbot's wood, in return for delivering sixteen stones of iron to a representative of the abbot each week.<sup>102</sup>

However, it is unclear why, if this were the case here, the woodhire iron noted in the bursar's accounts should frequently have been received "from the prior", or "from the prior's instaurer". This appearance of the prior or his agents as significant suppliers of iron to the bursar is the second development

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<sup>101</sup>Gaillard T.Lapsley, "The Account Roll of a Fifteenth-century Iron Master", *English Historical Review* Vol.14, 1899, p.514.

<sup>102</sup>B.Waites, "Medieval Iron Working in North-east Yorkshire", *Geography*, No.49, 1964, p.40.

that the accounts record as coinciding with the increase in the proportion of Weardale iron purchased by the bursar. One potential explanation, although the lack of corroborative evidence makes it unlikely, is that the priory was directly involved in the iron industry on its lands, as Rievaulx Abbey was in the twelfth century and Guisborough Priory was from the early thirteenth century.<sup>103</sup> Some mine accounts do remain in the priory archives, but these are exclusively concerned with the mining of coal,<sup>104</sup> and there is no evidence to suggest that the bursar or prior were involved in trading iron outside the priory.<sup>105</sup>

Although these two developments seem to suggest some degree of direct or indirect mining activity by the priory, therefore, lack of corroborative evidence makes this an unsatisfactory explanation for the change in the bursar's purchasing preferences. Increased mining activity in the area resulting in increased dues being received by the priory, or a sudden increase in the relative price of Spanish over Weardale iron, seem to be more probable explanations, and these issues are potentially interlinked.

The graph above shows the fluctuations in the prices paid by the bursar for Spanish and Weardale iron over this period. Spanish was clearly consistently more expensive than locally-produced iron, although the differential varies a great deal. The price of Weardale iron varied around 5d. per stone for the first half of this period, from 1464-5 to c.1488-9, then remained fairly steady at c.4d per stone until 1510-11, and was between 4d. and 5d. per stone from then on. The price of Spanish iron varied rather more, especially after 1485-6. Until then, it was steadily around 7d. per stone, but after that date it fluctuates between as little as 5d. and as much as 9d. per stone.

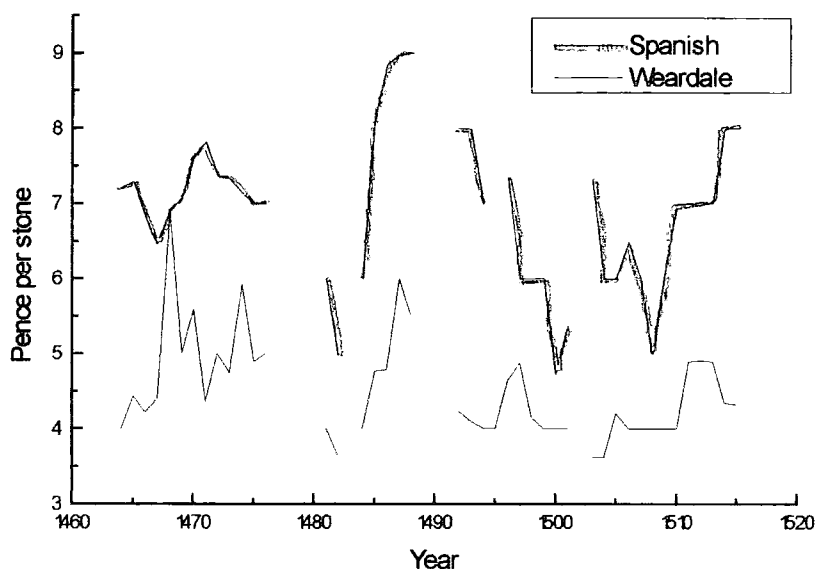
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<sup>103</sup>*ibid*, pp.35, 37.

<sup>104</sup>DCD Mines Accounts contains miscellaneous material relating to coal mining, particularly at Rainton and Ferryhill. Other memoranda and cash reckonings occur in B.Bk.F.

<sup>105</sup>Although it is interesting to note, in this context, that the bishop of Durham did trade the lead that he received as lord's dues: Blanchard, "Seigneurial Entrepreneurship", p.110, explains that the bishop's clerk of works received ore, paid for it to be worked into lead, and then arranged its sale.

Price paid by the bursar for Weardale and Spanish iron



These figures are extremely important as precursors to the evidence available to Blanchard for his analysis of the effect on the Weardale iron industry of decreasing Spanish supplies in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century. Blanchard has argued that decreasing alien imports from c. 1508-18 (due to lack of shipping space out of the Scheldt, and supply difficulties) led to an acute shortage of foreign iron on the Northern market. This in turn led to rising prices - by 40% at the onset of the crisis then by another 14% - and created a big market opportunity for the Weardale producers, allowing the 100 tons a year industry of 1508 to grow to the 500 tons a year industry of the 1530s onwards.<sup>106</sup> Whilst the prices paid by the priory were broadly in line with the figures that Blanchard quotes for the sixteenth century - Spanish iron at c.6d. per stone until 1508, when it increased to c.9d., and Weardale iron at c.4 or 5d. per stone - the evidence of Durham Cathedral Priory does not bear out his theory. Primarily the difference is that Blanchard puts the development of the Weardale iron industry as late as 1511 onwards, whereas the evidence of these accounts suggests that production may have been rapidly expanding as early as the mid 1480s. However, it is plausible that his theory of the causality of this expansion may still be relevant at this earlier period. At the point at which the priory's ratio of Spanish to Weardale iron was so abruptly reversed, around 1485, Spanish iron was at a particularly high price where it stayed for three or four years, at as much

<sup>106</sup>Blanchard, "Seigneurial Entrepreneurship", p.79.

as 9d. per stone, higher than at any point until the culmination of the crises Blanchard describes in the 1520s and 30s. This sudden rise may well have stimulated local demand and production, and the priory may have remained loyal to the local product even when imported iron prices fell again, if local production had expanded sufficiently in the mean time to make it clear that it could supply all that was necessary, and if such expansion had resulted in the priory receiving ever increasing amounts in levies.

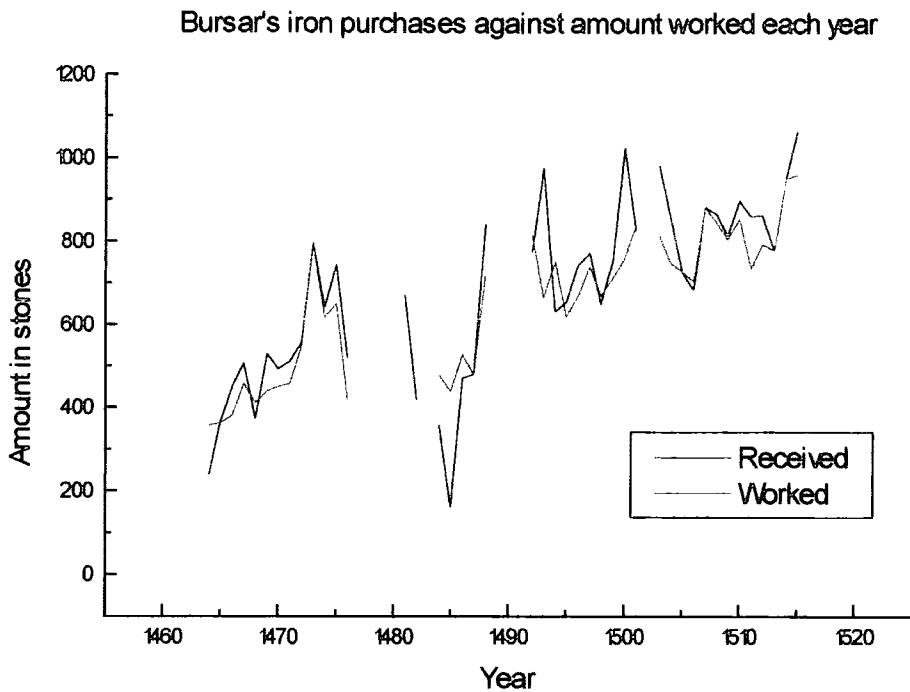
As the following graph illustrates, the total volume of iron bought by the bursar roughly doubled over this period. This may well have been due to increased production of mines on the priory's land, since the prior was entitled to a stone per wainload of iron produced there, as the owner of the mineral rights.<sup>107</sup> It does appear to have been the case that at least some of the iron purchased by the bursar, which appears in his accounts as having been purchased from a wide variety of merchants or smelters, was in fact bought by him from the prior, and this supports the theory that part of the priory's supply was made up of such dues. For example, in 1533-4 the bursar's household book records the purchase of 30 stones of iron bought from Muggleswick, for which payment was made directly to the prior - "*soluti ad manus domini Prioris...in camera sua Dunelmi*".<sup>108</sup>

However, the evidence suggests that even if increased supplies were a function of increased mining activity, the priory did actually use all the iron it received. The amount of iron that the bursar paid a smith to work into goods increased in proportion to the increase in iron received, as the following graph illustrates. Additional Spanish iron was also purchased in most years, suggesting that the quantity of iron received by the priory from such dues was not such as to fulfil all the priory's needs.

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<sup>107</sup>Blanchard, "Commercial Crisis and Change", p.78.

<sup>108</sup>Raine, *Durham Household Book*, p.239.



It is unclear why the amount of iron required by the bursar should have increased by these amounts. Iron was mainly used for miscellaneous maintenance work on the estates and around the household of the priory. Some examples of such uses can be found in the accounts of the obedientiaries other than the bursar, who frequently purchased small amounts of iron on an ad hoc basis, and who often specified the reason for the purchase in their accounts. For example, in 1472-3 the almoner paid 7d. for the working of iron into a new window for his office, and in 1480-1 paid 10d. for a stone of Spanish iron and the working of it, "for the fulling mill". Similarly, in 1528-9 the hostillar's expenses included the cost of "making one mill-spindle with iron and steel". In 1438-9, the cellarer's iron purchases included two bridle bits, buckles, jugs, and iron and the working of it "for mending those things necessary pertaining to the cellarer's office".<sup>109</sup> If the bursar's purchases of iron were all used for miscellaneous repairs such as these, along with the routine agricultural uses such as shoeing, mending ploughs, binding cart-wheels and so on, it seems strange that the amount required should have doubled as it did over this period. Nor can this increase be explained by the requirements of building works, since no major projects that would account for such a rise in demand occurred in these years. It seems that this must remain an open question.

<sup>109</sup>Fowler, *Durham Account Rolls*, (Vol. 1), pp.247-8, 164, 71.

## CHAPTER 5 - PATTERNS OF TRADE AND TRADING

### (i) Markets and Purchasing

The fine state of preservation of the priory accounts as a series allows long-term trends in the institutional purchasing practices of the priory to be seen, as well as enabling the actual goods purchased by the priory to be studied. Perhaps the major change that these accounts reveal is the increasing proportion of the priory's business that went to Newcastle merchants over the medieval period. Margaret Bonney's analysis of the early bursar's accounts has shown that in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, merchants from Durham itself provided the majority of the priory's supplies, with a wide variety of luxury goods being available in the market-place. By the mid-fourteenth century, the emphasis had shifted to the great fairs of Durham, Darlington and Boston, and by the late fourteenth century to the merchants of Durham, Newcastle, Hartlepool, Darlington, York and Hull. The pattern was for Durham merchants to be "gradually...replaced by those from further afield", and as early as the first years of the fifteenth century, the majority of the priory's wine came from Newcastle.<sup>110</sup> The evidence from the fifteenth century indicates that this trend towards Newcastle continued over the century, with Newcastle merchants claiming an increasing share of the priory's business.

Of the £2255.11s.0d. that the bursar's office is recorded as spending on wine over the 47 years for which totals survive, 94% was spent with Newcastle merchants. Nearly 6% was spent with the merchants of Hull, and negligible amounts were spent with merchants of York (£36.3s.4d.), London (£17.0s.6d.) and Durham (£9.6s.8d.). The proportion of the priory's trade that was given to York, in particular, had declined noticeably since the first half of the century, when 11% of the bursars' wine had come from that city.<sup>111</sup> This reflects the decreasing numbers of York merchants participating in overseas trade over the fifteenth century,<sup>112</sup> an important feature of the recession that lasted there from c.1420 to the early decades of the sixteenth century. The pattern of the priory's purchases from York merchants suggests that their increasing focus on Newcastle suppliers was a response, rather than a contribution, to this decline; there was no sudden

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<sup>110</sup>Bonney, *Lordship and the Urban Community*, pp.169-174; for the wide range of luxury goods available in Durham in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see also Constance M.Fraser, "The Pattern of Trade in the North-East of England, 1265-1350", *Northern History*, Vol.4, 1969, pp.46, 50.

<sup>111</sup>Morimoto, *op.cit.*, p.101.

<sup>112</sup>Jennifer I.Kermode, "Merchants, Overseas trade and Urban decline: York, Beverley and Hull, c.1380 - 1500", *Northern History*, Vol.23, 1987, p.57.

abandonment of the York market (indeed in 1471-2, 49% of the bursar's wine purchases were made there). In the first half of the fifteenth century, the bursar had occasionally purchased wine not simply at the four towns used in the second half of the century, but also from Hartlepool, Shields and Beaurepaire; by the sixteenth century, no wine was bought from even Hull, York or Durham merchants. Apart from the purchase of a butt of malmsey from London in 1500-1 and 1506-7, Newcastle merchants supplied all of the priory's wine after 1497-8.

Newcastle merchants also dominated the priory's purchases of imported iron. Of the seventy-one merchants who sold Spanish iron to the bursar over this period, only seven are identified with a place other than Newcastle. A further nineteen are described as "of Newcastle", leaving fifty unspecified. Of these, twenty-one can be positively identified as Newcastle freemen through their inclusion in the customs accounts (those merchants not of Newcastle who appear in the customs accounts have their home town specified).<sup>113</sup> It seems likely that the majority of the others were also Newcastle merchants, the customs accounts having survived for only nine of the fifty-five years under examination here.

However, few of the spice or local iron dealers mentioned in these accounts can be identified with a particular place. In the case of the twenty spice dealers listed, four were importers and so are listed in the Newcastle customs accounts, but the others appear to have been retailers and were perhaps of lesser wealth and standing - they do not appear in the customs accounts or in civic office, but this clearly does not preclude their having traded in Newcastle. Alternatively, they may have been Durham-based. It seems unlikely that they were from further afield, since place names would be likely to have been given in that case. Spices were certainly bought from London on occasion - the cellarer's accounts from the previous century contain several references to London spice suppliers,<sup>114</sup> and occasional London purchases are also recorded in the 1523-4 bursar's account.<sup>115</sup> However, there are no explicit mentions of London in the accounts for the years under consideration here. Few spices are recorded as having been imported into Newcastle,<sup>116</sup> so

<sup>113</sup>Wade, *Customs Accounts*, pp.289-99; cf. the names in Appendix D of this thesis.

<sup>114</sup>Fowler, *Durham Account Rolls*, (Vol.1), pp. 69-72.

<sup>115</sup>In 1523-4 the bursar appears to have taken over the main spice purchasing of the priory from the communar. The expanded list of purchases that he made in this year included 60lb. of pepper from two London merchants, Thomas Potts and John Alandson. Some miscellaneous purchases were also made "at London", but without the merchant(s) being specified.

<sup>116</sup>Wade, *Customs Accounts*, p.121. Comfits, cumin, figs, filberts, ginger, licorice, onions, pepper, raisins, saffron, "spice" and sugar are recorded in the surviving customs accounts as having been imported

it seems most probable that the priory's relatively small-scale demand for spices was primarily supplied by local merchants who retailed supplies of spices that they had obtained from wholesalers elsewhere, most probably in London.

The trade in local iron, in contrast, was dominated by the Muggleswick area. Although the location of the majority of the Weardale iron merchants named in the accounts is not stated, those place names that are given are concentrated around Muggleswick, and much of the local iron received came from the prior's instaurer there.<sup>117</sup> So imported goods, at least those purchased in bulk, came almost exclusively from Newcastle in this period; whilst local iron came direct from the area in which it was produced, without being mediated through the metropolis.

The evidence suggests that most, if not all, of the imported goods that were bought in bulk by the priory's obedientiaries was bought at the hometown of the merchants concerned, and that the priory then arranged transport to Durham. The majority of the evidence relating to carriage costs concerns the carriage of wine. Several of the entries in the few surviving sacrist's accounts, for example, record the purchase of wine which is described as "from Newcastle, with carriage and rolling".<sup>118</sup> Unfortunately, these entries do not separate out the various cost elements. However, the hostillar's accounts frequently give details of the carriage costs involved in his purchases of wine. These included two elements, carriage from Newcastle (which cost around 2s. for a tun) and 8d. or so "paid to the porters of Newcastle for carrying over the Tyne bridge".<sup>119</sup> The bursars' accounts tend to be less specific; in the majority of these the carriage of wine and iron is accounted for under the general heading of "necessary expenses", and the amount given is a total for the carriage of "wine, iron, herring, salmon and other necessaries in the period of this account", from "Newcastle, Shields, Sunderland and elsewhere".<sup>120</sup> However, the rate of 2s. for the carriage of a tun of wine is again found in the rental of 1495-6, where it was accepted as a payment in kind for rent owed to the

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into Newcastle in this period. However, few of these are mentioned frequently or in significant quantities. For example, only 8lb. of comfits (p. 271), 3lb. of ginger (pp. 133, 225), and 3 1/4 lb. of saffron (pp. 22, 26) are mentioned. The only goods recorded as having been imported in significant quantities on a reasonably regular basis were dried fruits (pp. 23, 26-7, 66-7, 69-70, 141, 226, 263). Even sugar is not found in these accounts until 1494-5, and after that date only 3 chests, 66 loaves and 112lb. of this most prevalent medieval ingredient were imported in total (pp. 182, 189, 194, 226, 234, 269, 271, 275).

<sup>117</sup>See below, p. 62.

<sup>118</sup>Sacrist's account rolls, 1483-4, 1486-7, 1487-8.

<sup>119</sup>Hostillars' account rolls, eg. 1486-7 and elsewhere.

<sup>120</sup>Bursars' account rolls, eg. 1476-7 and elsewhere.

priory.<sup>121</sup> The household book for 1531-2 records that the carriage charges ruling then were 1s.4d. per hogshead, or 2s.4d per tun. Two hogsheads of the wine brought to Durham that year came by boat, and the saving this represented was considerable - the total cost for the carriage of both hogsheads and the 20 quarters of barley that accompanied them was only 12d.<sup>122</sup> Both these road and water transport costs from compare favourably with those estimated for the Midlands in 1452/3 by Christopher Dyer, at 3.2 pence per tun per mile by road and 0.6 pence by water.<sup>123</sup>

Less information, unfortunately, may be found for the transport of wine from places other than Newcastle. The main purchase of wine from York made in this period, the three tuns bought there in 1471-2, were bought "with carriage", but the cost is not separated in the accounts from that of the wine itself, and cannot be estimated.<sup>124</sup> Interestingly, there are no details given for carriage costs from Hull. It is possible that the description of merchants as being "of Hull" did not preclude their having sold wine to the bursar at Newcastle; however, one tun at least of the wine bought in 1484-5 was specifically described as "bought at Hull". Perhaps this wine was contracted for at Hull but actually handed over in Newcastle, or maybe it was brought to Durham by the agents of the priory who had purchased it at Hull.

These accounts also give tantalising glimpses of a comprehensive system of purchasing agents employed by the priory. Evidence for the use of such agents only occasionally appears under the actual commodity headings in the accounts, but the "necessary expenses" section of the bursar's accounts include several such references, as do the few surviving bursar's household books. Most of these references concern the payment of the expenses incurred by the agents. So, for example, a typical entry under the bursar's "necessary expenses" heading, that for 1495-6, reads "Paid to Willliam Wright and to Richard Wren for their expenses at Newcastle for the purchase and delivery of wine at different times - 3s." Similarly, in 1487-8 a payment of 14s. "for the expenses of William Wright and Richard Simpson at Newcastle and Hull" is recorded. These men were evidently employed on a somewhat regular basis, as the bursar's account for 1488-9 includes in the wine purchases for that year the cost of five tuns and one pipe of red wine bought

<sup>121</sup>*Durham Cathedral Priory Rentals*, ed. R.A.Lomas and A.J.Piper, Surtees Society No.198, 1989, p.136

<sup>122</sup>Raine, *Durham Household Book*, p.63.

<sup>123</sup>Christopher Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, (London, 1996), p.262.

<sup>124</sup>The cost elements cannot be estimated since the wine cost was clearly not commensurate with the other purchases made that year. The York cost was £18.10s.8d. for three tuns with carriage, compared to around £4. per pipe or £7.6s.8d. per tun for the wine bought at Newcastle. See Appendix A, p.75 of this thesis.

from William Wright and Richard Simpson, "with their expenses". William Wright can be seen to have been associated with wine purchasing for the priory for at least eight years.

Agents such as these were clearly involved in all stages of the wine purchasing process (they do not appear to have been involved in the case of spices or iron). However, their role does seem to have been solely a facilitatory one, as their names do not appear in the Newcastle customs accounts as importers, nor in the priory records as suppliers in their own right. As the above examples show, they arranged both the actual purchase and the delivery of the wine to the priory, and perhaps travelled between the different ports to ensure that the priory paid the best prices for its wine. Other entries in the accounts, and in the household books, demonstrate that payment for the wine was also mediated through such men, implying that payment was made at a later date than that on which the purchase was contracted for, a common form of credit, unsurprising when such bulk quantities were involved. The household book for 1531-2, for example, records that three hogsheads of wine were purchased "from Master Lawson, through John Bukley...paid through my servant", whilst a further three hogsheads were bought directly from a Thomas Potts, but were paid for "through Nicholas Newsham".<sup>125</sup> The comprehensiveness of the role of these agents is indicated by the entry in the bursar's "necessary expenses" section for 1535-6, where Robert Whitehead is paid 2s. 7d. "expenses for choosing wine at Newcastle".<sup>126</sup>

The question of whether and to what extent the priory bought such goods on credit in this period can also be addressed through the evidence of the household books, although the majority of the entries do not make clear what period of credit was extended.<sup>127</sup> For example, the purchases of wine for 1531-2 are recorded without the date of each purchase being given; but each entry is followed by details of how and when payment was made, implying that this was some time after delivery.<sup>128</sup> These settlement dates vary considerably, which may simply be a function of wine being bought at intervals throughout the year, or may indicate differing credit periods extended to the monks by the different merchants. Unfortunately, since no

<sup>125</sup>ibid., p.49.

<sup>126</sup>Fowler, *Durham Account Rolls*, (Vol.3), p.696.

<sup>127</sup>Fraser, "Pattern of Trade", pp.50-1, lists several examples of high-value credit transactions appearing in the obedientiary accounts in previous centuries.

<sup>128</sup>Raine, *Durham Household Book*, p.49. A typical entry reads "And from Thomas Johnson, 3 hogsheads of wine, £5. 15s.0d. Settled in the account between us [*quietus in compoto inter nos*] on the 21st of May, 1532."

dates are given for the original transactions, it is not possible to calculate the length of a typical credit period or to ascertain whether this was paid for by an increase in the original price of the wine.

However, there are some - very rare - examples in the household books of the dates of both purchase and settlement being given, and these make it certain that credit transactions did occur, and that the periods of credit were not uniform. In 1532-3, the bursar purchased 15 pounds of sugar from a Master Swynburne on the 6th and 9th July. This was "settled in the account between us, 1st December 1532",<sup>129</sup> so that the bursar had obtained nearly four months credit. On the 23rd December 1533, he bought four bushels of salt, worth 3s.4d., which was paid for [*quietus*] on the 14th January 1534, just over three weeks later.<sup>130</sup> Other goods were paid for in two or more installments. In the household book for 1533-4, for example, the bursar records the purchase of 140 sheep, costing £16. The date of purchase is not given, but credit was certainly involved since 66s.8d. was paid on the 21st May "in part payment", while the balance was paid on the Feast of St. John the Baptist, the 24th June.<sup>131</sup> It seems probable that the first payment date was the date of the transaction, in which case just over a month of credit was given in this instance.

Whilst it is impossible to calculate whether there was any cost associated with these credit transactions, the related question of whether the priory bought at preferential prices can be clearly answered in the negative. Dobson has already ascertained that the prices paid by the priory in the first half of the fifteenth century were the market prices,<sup>132</sup> and comparison of these accounts with entries in the Newcastle chamberlains' accounts makes it clear that the prices paid, and bulk discounts received, by the priory were in line with the terms offered to other customers.<sup>133</sup> It should also be noted that not all goods were acquired through straightforward cash transactions. Although the obedientiary accounts do not give details of how payments were made, occasionally this information is given in the surviving household books, and it is clear from these that the priory did sometimes pay its debts in kind or through the offsetting of debts against credits, as well as in actual currency. In addition, these methods were sometimes combined to reach the appropriate total. One example of a combined payment of this nature occurs in the household book for

<sup>129</sup>Raine, *Durham Household Book*, p.216.

<sup>130</sup>*ibid*, p.255.

<sup>131</sup>*ibid*, p.305. "*Unde soluti eisdem, in partem solucionis, 21 die maii, 66s.8d. Et eisdem, in die Sancti Johannes Baptistae, 12l.13s.4d. Et quieti.*"

<sup>132</sup>Dobson, *Durham Cathedral Priory*, p.266.

<sup>133</sup>See above, p.22.

1531-2, when four hogsheads of wine were bought from John Saunderson for £7.13s.4d., "of which 30s. of the same was paid in the tithes, and £6.13s.4d. in cash [*in pecunia*] at Jarrow".<sup>134</sup> It seems likely that John Saunderson either lived on priory lands and so owed tithes to the priory, or that he leased tithes, so that the tithe element of this payment represented a credit against a debt owed by him to the priory.

The different ways in which payments were made in this period raises an interesting question about the priory's acquisition of spices. There is some evidence to suggest that many of the home-produced goods consumed by the priory were received as payment of rent or tithes, rather than acquired by means of trade.<sup>135</sup> This does not appear to have been the case for the imported goods that entered the priory, although in the case of spices it might have been expected: spices were by no means unknown as a currency substitute in the middle ages, and the priory's 1340/1 and 1396/7 rentals list several rents which are expressed in terms of pepper or cumin, or a combination of one of these with a cash amount.<sup>136</sup> However, the 1495/6 rental, which is remarkable in recording both the payment of rents and the means of that payment, shows that none of the rents expressed in spices were paid in them that year.<sup>137</sup> It seems, then, that retail or wholesale trade transactions were the priory's only source of supply for imported goods.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the price movements of the commodities looked at in this study differ from the general direction of inflation in this period. Whilst yearly fluctuations could be great (a common feature of medieval price series) the general trend was clearly for iron prices to remain relatively stable, but for the prices of wine and the major spices to fall over this period. These price movements contrast with those observed in the market more generally, which remained static or rose very slightly in the second half of the fifteenth century, began to rise after 1500, and rose more steeply as the sixteenth century progressed.<sup>138</sup> Whilst external factors, principally the Portugese entry into the international spice trade, no doubt contributed to this deflation in the luxury goods market at a time of general price stability and mild

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<sup>134</sup>Raine, *Durham Household Book*, p.49.

<sup>135</sup>Lomas, "Priory of Durham and its Demesnes", pp.339-353.

<sup>136</sup>Lomas & Piper, *Durham Rentals*, pp.35-6, 53, 60-1, 77, 90, 109, 121, 124.

<sup>137</sup>*ibid*, pp.129-197.

<sup>138</sup>Y.S.Brenner, "The Inflation of Prices in Early Sixteenth Century England", *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, Vol. 14, 1961, p.226; Sheila V.Hopkins and E.H.Phelps-Brown, "Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables", *Economica*, New Series, No.23, 1956, pp.297-302.

inflation, it seems probable that this also reflects a slackening in demand for such goods as a result of increasing pressure on aristocratic incomes throughout the fifteenth century.

### **(ii) Merchants**

Very little is known about the merchants trading in the north-east in this period, and the evidence that does exist mainly relates to overseas trading activity. The information contained in the Durham Cathedral Priory obediendary accounts is thus both rare and important. Fortunately, for the great majority of transactions recorded in these accounts the name of the merchant or merchants involved is given, and from an analysis of this information several interesting points emerge about the group of merchants who were supplying the priory at this time. Firstly, the monks bought from a wide variety of merchants in each product category, and did not tend to have long term or exclusive relationships with particular merchants. An important exception to this was their purchases of spices, although even here as many as twenty names occur over this period. Secondly, the merchants from whom the monks bought their wine, spices and Spanish iron overlapped to a noticeable degree, but the merchants who supplied Weardale iron were an almost entirely separate group. This suggests that the distinction made in defining the scope of this study, between imported and home-produced goods, was a meaningful one in the fifteenth century. Thirdly, there are several features of the group of merchants who sold Weardale iron which are not found to the same degree in the merchants who dealt in imports, notably more and larger family-name groupings and an increase in the occurrence of minor places of origin. In addition, the few instances of female merchants listed, usually but not exclusively defined as their husband's widow, deserves comment; as do references to groups or associations of merchants selling to the priory.

On first examination of the merchants' names that are specified in the various obediendary accounts in the priory, the main impression gained is of the wide variety and high number of the merchants from whom goods were bought in each year. Ninety-six merchants are named as selling wine; seventy-one sold Spanish iron; fifty-four sold Weardale iron and twenty sold spices to the priory in this period. The majority of these merchants did not enter into anything approaching a long-term or exclusive marketing relationship with the priory. Seventy of the wine merchants' names appear only once, and another ten only twice. Thirty-

five of the merchants who sold Weardale iron to the bursar, and fifty-nine of those selling him Spanish iron did so only once or twice. Most of the merchants who did secure repeated orders still appear in the accounts only erratically. An important result of this is that the following study of the merchants who supplied the priory will inevitably focus on those relatively few names which appear frequently enough in the accounts for some conclusions to be drawn about them. It should also be noted that the large numbers of merchants who appear only once or twice in these accounts means that this evidence cannot be brought to bear on such issues as the average length of a merchant's career.

These accounts reveal that the priory's tendency was to spread its business between at least three merchants in each product category in most years. The average number of merchants from whom the bursar purchased wine in any one year was five, varying between as few as two (in six years), to as many as eight (in five years) or even nine (in 1505-6). A similar pattern may be seen in the bursar's purchases of iron, where the average was again five named merchants, varying from two (in 1508-9) to twelve (in 1467-8). The exception to this general picture comes with the spice purchases of the priory, as shown in the accounts of the bursar and the communar, who both usually give the name of the principal merchant from whom supplies were purchased in each year. Although twenty names are recorded in total in connection with these spice purchases, in fact only five merchants were repeatedly the main supplier, and these tended to succeed each other. The other merchants named were either the principal supplier of spices in a single recorded year, or are named as supplementary sources of a particular commodity only. A principal merchant is named for thirty-five of the bursar's spice accounts and for eleven of the communar's, and for thirty-eight of these forty-six years, this principal merchant was either William Cornforth (named in fourteen accounts, between 1465/6 and 1480/1); John Farnie, (eight mentions between 1480/1 and 1496/7), or his widow, (mentioned twice, in 1502/3 and 1505/6); Cuthbert Heron (named five times between 1495/6 and 1501/2) or John Eland (whose name occurs nine times in the period 1495/6 to 1511/12).

This pattern of a single merchant supplying the majority of the priory's spice requirements over a period of some years contrasts sharply with the situation in the other product categories looked at here. It may perhaps be explained by the small absolute quantities of the goods involved. This is supported by noting that the commodities other merchants occasionally supplemented were the goods bought in larger amounts,

principally the dried fruits that made up the majority of the priory's spice purchases, but also sugar and onions on two occasions. It is worth noting that none of the major suppliers of spices to the priory appear in the surviving customs accounts for Newcastle, and that those merchants who are recorded as having imported spices are the same men who appear in connection with wine, iron and indeed all sorts of other commodities.<sup>139</sup> This implies that these merchants (people such as John Brandling, George Bird, Edward Baxter and Christopher Brigham) were importers and wholesalers, and that the merchants who sold spices to the priory were retailers. These may have purchased the spices that were imported into Newcastle, but the customs accounts record very few of these imports,<sup>140</sup> implying that the majority of the spices dealt by local grocers must have come via the London merchants. Thrupp has argued that the country as a whole was almost entirely dependant on London for such commodities,<sup>141</sup> and certainly the imports recorded for Newcastle were neither large, frequent nor diverse enough to have satisfied local demand.

Nevertheless, a clear distinction can be made between those merchants whose names appear in the customs accounts as importing goods, and those who do not. The import merchants certainly engaged in direct sales, but these were always of bulk quantities, so that the distinction is not so much between wholesalers and retailers as such,<sup>142</sup> but between sellers of goods in either bulk or smaller quantities. It is interesting to speculate whether the long-term relationships with spice dealers that are indicated by the bursar's and communar's accounts were typical of the relationship between retail merchants and large households at this time, whilst the wide variety of suppliers of wine and iron may have typified wholesale arrangements. This is a question that the planned extension of this study to cover the priory's purchases of the whole range of home-produced goods will hopefully be able to address.

The distinctiveness of the group of import merchants active in Newcastle at this period is also indicated by the notable degree of overlap between the suppliers of imported iron and wine to the priory, combined with the fact that the dealers in Weardale iron were an almost entirely seperate group. Only two of the fifty-four merchants who sold local iron to the priory also sold imported iron. These were Robert

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<sup>139</sup>Wade, *Newcastle Customs Accounts*, e.g., pp.120,133 .

<sup>140</sup>*ibid*. Spice imports appear thirteen times in the surviving accounts: Sugar on nine occasions (pp.182, 189, 194, 226, 234, 269, 271 (twice) and 275; "diverse spices" once, p.121; ginger twice, pp.133, 225; and licorice once, p.32.

<sup>141</sup>Thrupp, "The Grocers of London", p.273.

<sup>142</sup>*ibid*, p.272-277.

Stroder, who supplied small amounts of both in 1514-5 only; and Richard Dixon, who supplied 40 stones of Spanish iron in 1478-9 and 20 and 40 stones of Weardale iron in the following two years. None of the merchants who sold Weardale iron to the bursar supplied the priory with either spices or wine. In contrast, just under a quarter of the merchants who supplied imported iron are recorded in the bursar's and hostillar's accounts as selling wine to the priory in this period, (with several others sharing a surname with other wine suppliers), and three of these seventeen also supplied some dried fruit. Even more to the point, only one of all the fifty-four names recorded here as dealing in local iron also appears in the Newcastle customs accounts, that of William Kirklay. He sold Weardale iron to the priory on one occasion only, in 1496/7, along with several other merchants. The name may or may not refer to the same man, but it seems reasonably likely that it did, since the only transactions recorded for him in the customs accounts are two small exports of wool in 1471, and the import of 2, 240 lbs. of osmund iron in 1472.<sup>143</sup> Apart from this, none of the suppliers of Weardale iron to the priory are recorded as having engaged in the import or export trades.

This differentiation between the suppliers of local and of imported goods is maintained in the differing profiles of the two groups. In the first place, family groupings are both larger and more common amongst the suppliers of Weardale iron than amongst the suppliers of either imported iron or wines. Thirty-two of the fifty-four merchants named as supplying the bursar with Weardale iron - 59% - share a surname with at least one other in the same list. Eighteen of these, or 33% of the total, form five family groupings of three or more. This contrasts with the merchants who sold imported iron to the priory, only 30% of whom fall into surname groups, and only 10% into groupings of three or more; and even more so with the suppliers of wine, of whom 25% share surnames but only 4% do so with more than one other person. Furthermore, there are two instances in 1475/6 of merchants with the same surname selling iron together,<sup>144</sup> suggesting that they were trading as a family partnership, which does not occur among the sellers of wine, spices or imported iron. It is generally thought to have been the case that medieval merchant families rarely

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<sup>143</sup>Wade, *Newcastle Customs Accounts*, pp.113-4, 121.

<sup>144</sup>Richard and William Greneswerd jointly sold 149 stones of Weardale iron to the bursar in that year, and William and Robert Wren sold 40 stones.

engaged in trade for more than two or exceptionally three generations,<sup>145</sup> and the evidence of these accounts supports this conclusion for the Newcastle merchants; however, it would appear not to have been the case for the local iron-dealers. This is unsurprising, since they were unlikely to have made the high profits which were possible for the import-dealers, and so the tendency of merchant families made good to transfer their capital into land would be less likely to appear.<sup>146</sup>

Secondly, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of import merchants came from, or at least had settled in and did most of their business at, Newcastle. Not only were all the purchases of local iron for which a place of purchase is specified made at Muggleswick (as might have been expected) but also a much greater proportion of the merchants are specified to be "of" some local place or village. The "address" of a merchant is only infrequently and erratically specified in all the priory accounts, but there are still ten individual place names mentioned in connection with sellers of Weardale iron, eight for the Spanish iron sellers and five for wine sellers. No place names are given in the spice accounts. It is noticeable that the vast majority of the mentions in the wine and imported iron accounts are of Newcastle, and that this is not mentioned at all in the local iron purchases. The location of the iron industry supplying the priory is indicated by the close clustering of place names mentioned in connection with the purchases of local iron around the Muggleswick area.

**Place-names mentioned in the accounts**

<u>Wine merchants</u>	<u>Spanish iron merchants</u>	<u>Weardale iron merchants</u>
Newcastle	Newcastle	Muggleswick
Hull	Durham	Durham
York	Hull	Unethank
Durham	Nethyreworth	Knytherley (now Knitsley)
London	Pipwelgate	Langchestre (now Lanchestre)
	Gateshead	Weardale
	Wallsend	Whitehall
	Stockton	Edmondbyres
		Espshelle (poss. Espershields?)
		Colpekyn (poss. Coldpike Hall?)

<sup>145</sup>Wendy R. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the later Middle Ages*, (Manchester, 1978), p.189, and W.G.Hoskins, "English Provincial Towns in the Early Sixteenth Century", *TrRHS*, 5th Series, No.6 (1956), p.9, both found this to have been the case.

<sup>146</sup>For the tendency of merchants to do this, see Hoskins, *ibid*, and E.M.Carus-Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Venturers*, (London, 1954), pp.79-81.

Another notable point of difference between the records of purchases of local iron and of imported goods is the occurrence of multiple merchants' names grouped together. Only six instances can be found in the wine accounts - in 1475-6, 1488-9, 1508-9, 1509-10, and twice in 1511-12. Half of these cases involve two merchants listed jointly, with three men occurring together twice and one instance of four names together. Similarly, Spanish iron is recorded as having been bought from two men together on seven occasions (in 1473-4, 1481-2, 1488-9, 1494-5, 1500-1, 1514-5 and 1515-6) and is once recorded as purchased from "John Farne and others" (in 1493-4). By contrast, multiple suppliers listed jointly occur twenty-two times in the records relating to the purchase of Weardale iron. In eleven of these cases, two names are recorded together; there are also two instances of three names, and one each of four, five and seven names. The remaining six instances involve one or more named merchants "and others".<sup>147</sup> It is unclear what the relationship between merchants listed jointly in this way was. It may simply have been an accounting practice used for simplicity's sake, in which various small amounts were bundled together. This is certainly suggested by the purchase, in 1469-70, of sixty-three stones of Weardale iron "from John Stobbes, Robert Batmanson and others at different prices", which implies a collection of miscellaneous purchases. In addition, the entry for 1488-9 which joins Robert Blunt and John Farne together in the sale of thirty-nine stones of Spanish iron to the bursar has an inter-lineal note splitting this out as twenty-two and seventeen stones from each of them respectively. However, one indication that jointly named merchants may have had business associations comes in the bursar's iron account for 1519-20, which records the purchase of sixty stones of Weardale iron: not from "Edward Bloomer and others", as is found in the 1515-6 account, but from "Edward Bloomer and his associates" ["et sociis suis"].

Finally, a discussion of the merchants named in these accounts would not be complete without some comment on the women who are recorded. These fall into two categories; those named as their husband's widow, and one who appears to have been trading in her own right. The three widows mentioned are those of John Farne, Alexander Robynson and John Brown. John Farne and Alexander Robynson appear in the priory accounts for several years before their deaths, and their widows then continue the

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<sup>147</sup>Two names occur jointly in 1470-1, 1471-2, 1472-3, 1475-6 (twice), 1476-7, 1479-80, 1482-3, 1484-5, 1485-6 and 1494-5. Three names occur together in 1486-7 and 1495-6; four in 1492-3; five in 1497-8 and seven in 1496-7. The six years in which the total number is unspecified are 1469-70, 1474-5, 1487-8, 1493-4, 1515-6 and 1519-20.

association. John Farne was the priory's major supplier of spices between 1480-1 and 1496-7, and also sold Spanish iron to the bursar in 1488-9, 1492-3 and 1493-4. He must have died in 1502-3, as in that year both he and his widow sold spices to the communar. His widow also appears in the communar's accounts as the main spice supplier in 1505-6, so she evidently continued the business left by her husband for a minimum of three years, and quite possibly for longer (the communar's accounts are missing between 1505-6 and 1508-9). Alexander Robynson, who sold Spanish iron to the priory in 1464-5 and 1465-6, left a widow who continued in the same line of business for at least two years - she is named in the accounts of 1467-8 and 1469-70. She evidently became known at least partially in her own right over this period, as in the latter of these accounts she is referred to not just as "Alexander Robynson's widow" but as "Johanna, widow of Alexander Robynson". The other widow mentioned, John Brown's, appears only once in these accounts, selling Spanish iron to the bursar in 1480-1. Her husband may have been the John Bronn of Pipwelgate who sold Spanish iron to the bursar in 1475-6.

The other woman to be mentioned in these accounts, Alice Byrde, differs from these three in being named in her own right rather than being described as her husband's widow. She sold Spanish iron to the bursar three times, in 1466-7, 1467-8 and 1478-9; and indeed was a very significant merchant on this evidence, supplying the second largest amount purchased by the bursar in 1466-7, and being the largest single supplier in each of the following two years. Unfortunately, nothing else is known about her career; she does not appear in the custom's accounts, and of course did not hold civic office.

## CHAPTER 6 : THE ECONOMY OF NEWCASTLE

### (i) Merchants

One of the most interesting findings from these accounts is that they often give the names of individual merchants, making it possible to piece together an idea of the careers of several of the major Newcastle import merchants. The records that survive for medieval Newcastle are lamentably few, so that nothing is known of the trading activities of the majority of Newcastle's merchants except from what remains of the customs accounts.<sup>148</sup> The names of several of the priory's principal suppliers of wine, several of whom also supplied other imported goods, are frequently mentioned in these customs records, and in the following section the evidence for the activities of some of these has been amalgamated to provide a full picture of what is known of their careers.<sup>149</sup> The lack of supplementary information for those men not heavily involved in overseas trade unfortunately means that the careers of the major spice and iron suppliers cannot be traced.

The name which appears most frequently in these accounts is that of John Saumple of Newcastle. He sold wine to the bursars of the priory in fourteen separate years over a period of nineteen years, from 1464-5 to 1482-3. In addition, he supplied all of the wine bought by the hostillar in the six years between 1468-9 and 1480-1 for which details survive. For many of the years in which he sold wine to the bursar he was a major - often the major- supplier, providing in excess of 50% of the year's wine in nine out of the fourteen years in which he is mentioned. He also sold iron to the bursar on one occasion, in 1472-3, when he supplied 65% of the iron bought by the bursar that year. The following table gives in detail the wine transactions with the bursar that he is recorded as having been involved in.

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<sup>148</sup>Only a single page of the merchant gild records from this period has survived, and this contains only a few names of officers of the gild, with no information on their trading activities. It is published in F.W.Dendy, *Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Vol 1*, (Surtees Society, No.93, 1895), p.81.

<sup>149</sup>In the following paragraphs, biographical data concerning family and civic office is taken from C.H.Hunter-Blair, *The Mayors...and Sheriffs of the County of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1399-1940*, (Archaeologia Aeliana, 4th Series, Vol.18, 1940). Details of import and export activities are taken from J.F.Wade, *Customs Accounts*.

## John Saumple's sales of wine to the bursar

Year	Quantity	Value	% of total	Year	Quantity	Value	% of total
1464-5	1 tun	£6	13%	1473-4	6 tuns	£46	88%
1465-6	2 tuns	£11	79%	1474-5	5 tuns	£35	65%
1467-8	1 tun	£8.13s.4d.	17%	1475-6	1 barrel	£1.4s.0d.	2%
1468-9	4 tuns	£25.6s.8d.	53%	1476-7	4 tuns*	£23.10s.0d.	53%
1469-70	6.5 tuns	£39	81%	1479-80	3 tuns*	£20.8s.0d.	46%
1470-1	7.5 tuns*	£50	99%	1480-1	2 tuns	£10.13s.4d.	22%
1472-3	5 tuns	£36.13s.4d.	73%	1482-3	1 tun	£7.6s.8d.	13%

\*Plus a roundlet of sweet wine.

The years in which John Saumple sold goods to the priory coincided with the years of his greatest prominence in Newcastle. In 1476 he was made sheriff of Newcastle, and in 1479 he served as mayor for a year. However, this was a comparatively obscure civic career compared with that of many of the merchants who preceded and followed him as mayor, who often served several times over long periods. Similarly, the surviving Newcastle customs accounts show John Saumple to have been a significant but not top-league importer of wine. In the customs account for March 1465 to April 1466, Saumple is recorded as importing one load of five tuns of wine, on the "George" of Newcastle. This was around 3% of the total wine imported that year, and made Saumple the sixth largest importer of wine out of twenty-four merchants (two merchants, Nicholas Hanyng and William Blaxton, dominated the imports with 25% each). The customs accounts for April to December 1481 show John Saumple again importing a load of wine, this time of seven tuns. Nothing else is known of him, but the length and importance of his trade with Durham implies that he must have been a solidly reputable merchant; and he must have been of above average prosperity to have been able to engage in the capital-intensive business of importing significant quantities of wine.

The second most frequent supplier of wine to Durham Cathedral Priory was another Newcastle merchant, William Carr, who sold wine to the bursar for twelve years out of sixteen for which accounts remain and details are given, over a period of twenty-four years, from 1496-7 to 1519-20. However, his share of the priory's custom only twice rivalled the levels previously enjoyed by John Saumple: in 1499-1500, when he sold the bursar five and a quarter tuns of red wine, a quarter of a tun of claret and a quarter of a tun of white wine, a total of 68% of the amount spent on wine by the bursar that year; and again in 1501-2, when the seven and a half tuns of red wine and the butt of malmsey that he sold to the bursar accounted for 95% of the year's outlay on wine. In general, Carr's share of the priory's wine business was

around 20%, an unremarkable figure. He also sold Spanish iron to the bursar, but this occurred only in one year, 1500-1, and was only a small amount in association with another merchant. William Carr's imports of wine into Newcastle, so far as can be ascertained from the surviving customs accounts, were similarly on a smaller scale than those of John Saumple. His name appears twice, importing 2 tuns of wine in each of 1494-5 and 1499-1500. Carr's civic career - such as it was - came only after he had been a merchant for at least thirty-two years; he served as sheriff of Newcastle for one year, in 1527. However, he came from a distinguished family of Newcastle merchants. An Alan Carr, with the same coat of arms, had been sheriff in 1451; and a George Carr, again with the same arms, was a merchant and alderman who became sheriff in 1472 and served as mayor eight times between 1481 and his death in c.1502. According to the surviving customs accounts, Alan Carr imported wine in 1465-6, as did George Carr in 1488-9 and 1494-5. It is possible that the key to William Carr's relatively undistinguished career in Newcastle lies in his having been a younger son, or more distant relative, of this family; that he was not, at least, the eldest son of George Carr is strongly indicated by the fact that a Ralph Carr, who was admitted to the merchant's gild in 1515, and made sheriff of Newcastle in 1531 and mayor in 1534, was described as George Carr's "kinsman and heir".

Rather more information survives about George Bird, whose name appears eight times in the Durham wine accounts (he did not sell the priory spices or iron). He provided between 10% and 46% of the bursar's wine, in eight years spread across a period of eighteen years, from 1478-9 to 1496-7, of which accounts exist for thirteen. Bird appears to have been a more significant importer and prominent citizen than either John Saumple or William Carr. In 1488-9, the customs accounts show that he imported sixteen tuns of wine, making him the largest single importer that year, and in 1494-5 he imported seven and a half tuns. Like the Carrs, the Bird family seems to have been well-established by this period. An Alan Bird with the same coat of arms as George Bird was sheriff in 1450 (when he was styled "merchant"). This is probably the same Alan Bird who sold a tun of wine to the priory in 1464-5, implying that the family had been involved in the high-risk high-profit import trade for some time. It is also probable that Alice Byrde, who sold imported iron to the priory in the 1460s and 1470s, belonged to the same family - perhaps George Bird's mother, elder sister, or aunt. George Bird himself was sheriff in 1484, and served as mayor of Newcastle in 1494-6, 1506

and 1511. He was also one of the fifty-two "ostmen" active in the town between 1508 and 1511;<sup>150</sup> in other words he was one of the merchants of sufficient standing to have been trusted to return honest accounts of the cargoes and purchases in Newcastle of all non-Newcastle owned ships, and to assist 'foreign' shipmasters in purchasing coal in the town.

Another merchant for whom several details survive is John Brandling, who traded in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Between 1504-5 and 1519-20, he supplied an average of 37% of the bursar's total wine purchases in seven out of the nine years for which records survive. This proportion even rose above 60% in two of these years. In addition, John Brandling sold dried fruit to the communar in 1511-12, and Spanish iron to the bursar in 1509-10 and 1510-11. It is possible to piece together the outline of his career from various sources. A star chamber investigation into a conflict between the merchants' and artisans' guilds in Newcastle in 1515 noted with his evidence that he was an alderman, a boothman (or corn-merchant), and was then 40 years old.<sup>151</sup> The first mention of his name to be found in the Newcastle records occurs in the customs accounts for 1488-9, where he is found exporting wool; he was active in foreign trade therefore, at least by the time he was fourteen. He is first found importing wine in 1500, when he imported a sizeable six tuns, suggesting that he had substantial capital available to him by this stage of his career. When he was about 30, in 1505, he rented a property in Clothmarket Street - and was presumably able to afford the "great cost and importable charges" that an indenture of 1513 noted he would have to spend on repairing it.<sup>152</sup> He was also appointed sheriff of Newcastle in 1505, and he served as mayor in 1509, 1512, 1516 and 1520. It may be surmised that the fortunes of his family flourished: his son Robert became sheriff of Newcastle in 1524, was mayor for several years after 1531, was knighted in 1547 and served as an MP from 1547 to 1563.

In addition to these repeatedly occurring names, the bursar also purchased imported goods from a wide variety of other Newcastle merchants. These included men of widely differing wealth and status: some are virtually impossible to find other trace of, or can occasionally be seen importing small quantities of

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<sup>150</sup>C.M.Fraser, "The Early Hostmen of Newcastle upon Tyne", *Archaeologica Aeliana* (5th Series, Vol.12, 1984), p.174.

<sup>151</sup>F.W.Dendy, "The Struggle Between the Merchant and Craft Guilds of Newcastle in 1515", *Archaeologica Aeliana* (3rd Series, Vol.7, 1911), p.99.

<sup>152</sup>A.E.Butcher, "Rent, Population and Economic Change in Late-Medieval Newcastle", *Northern History*, Vol.14, 1978, p.73.

various commodities; others were clearly major figures in the town. The extent to which a merchant had dealings with Durham priory does not appear to have had any correlation with his standing in Newcastle or the extent of his trading activities. As has been seen, the most persistent supplier of wine to the priory was John Saumple, who was by no means an insignificant merchant, but who was not one of the most dominant figures. On the other hand Edward Baxter - who appears only occasionally in the priory accounts, supplying a pipe of wine in 1505-6 and two tuns in 1519-20, some dried fruit in 1510-11 and a little Spanish iron in 1515-6 - was clearly of major importance in merchant circles. In 1509 he became sheriff of Newcastle, and he was mayor in 1517, 1518, 1522 and 1523. He first appears in the town records shipping wool and hides in 1499, and the customs account of 1513-14 shows him shipping seven cargoes of wool in that year, and importing diverse goods including silk, wrought iron, linen, cruses (cast metal vessels), trenchers, walnuts, figs, raisins, rice, oil, soap, sugar, hides, madder, alum and wine. He was probably also a ship owner, as the Merchant Adventurers' accounts for 1517 have him paying for five voyages, of three ships, in that year.<sup>153</sup>

The wide variety of imports made by Edward Baxter in 1513-14 is characteristic of the trading pattern of the Newcastle merchants in this period. Export cargoes comprised hides and wool-fells belonging to long lists of merchants, whilst incoming ships tended to bring a bewildering variety of imports on behalf of each of their clients. A typical cargo might be that of the "Katren" of Newcastle, which was recorded in the customs accounts on the first of June 1500 as carrying kettles, soap, coarse linen, iron and brass pots, laces, green ginger, eyelets and candlesticks for Robert Herryson; hemp, iron and wood for George Carr; madder, wood, cork, buckram, cumin, fustian and ashes for Robert Baxter; satin, coarse linen, two kinds of shuttle, reeds, soap, hemp and bags for John Bewyk; hemp and white paper for John Passeley; hemp, madder, blue thread, sheet metals, wire, fustian, white paper, bonnets, laces and linen for Thomas Green; soap, kettles and saws for Antonio Rede; soap for Henry Bednall and iron, soap and kettles for Alexander Baxter. Several of these men sold wine to the priory at one time or another, yet this cargo demonstrates that their interests encompassed a great deal more than wine. Indeed, many of the merchants whose names appear in the wine purchases section of the bursars' accounts may be found also supplying a variety of other

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<sup>153</sup>Fraser, "The Early Hostmen", pp. 169-70.

commodities to the priory, although no systematic study has yet been made of the sections of the accounts dealing with goods other than those looked at here.

**(ii) Newcastle's economic health**

The variety of goods being imported into Newcastle, and the large number of merchants who have been seen to have been engaged in overseas trade through the town, reopen the question of whether Newcastle escaped from the economic malaise that afflicted the trade and economic vitality of other east-coast ports in the fifteenth century. Several historians have argued that Newcastle stood out as a rare example of success and prosperity in this period; however, the chronic lack of evidence available for medieval Newcastle has made this a necessarily tendentious conclusion.<sup>154</sup> Indeed Dobson, whilst referring to Newcastle as the most successful of the medieval new towns, points out that "the sparsity of evidence makes it almost pointless to put the question" of how it fared in the fifteenth century.<sup>155</sup>

However, Butcher was able to analyse the rental income from Newcastle properties belonging to University College, Oxford, and from the evidence that these afforded of declining rents and growing arrears, he disagreed with the theory that Newcastle fared better than most, concluding that "most probably Newcastle experienced the same kind of decline, and for the same reasons, as most other provincial towns".<sup>156</sup> Those reasons, at least for the other east-coast ports with which Newcastle might be compared, are generally agreed upon. The crucial factor was declining overseas trade, which is blamed on the increasing share being channelled through London, and on the closure of the Baltic to English ships for much of this period. Declining populations, due to recurrent epidemics, are also thought to have played a part in economic decline, although this did not necessarily follow, and may even have had the reverse effect. It is generally agreed that in York, and concomitantly in its outlet port, Hull, decline was exacerbated by the loss of the clothmaking trade as it relocated to new centres.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>W.G.Hoskins, "English Provincial Towns", p.4, argued for the success of Newcastle despite this lack of evidence, concluding that "there can be little doubt that *had Newcastle been taxed in 1523-7* she would have emerged as not lower than fourth among the provincial towns" (my italics).

<sup>155</sup>R.B.Dobson, "Urban Decline in Medieval England", *TrRHS*, 5th Series, No.27 (1977), p.19.

<sup>156</sup>Butcher, "Economic Change in Late Medieval Newcastle", p.75.

<sup>157</sup>D.M.Palliser, "A Crisis in English towns? The Case of York, 1460-1600", *Northern History*, Vol.14, 1978; Kermode, "Merchants, Overseas Trade and Urban Decline".

The evidence that the obedientiary accounts of Durham Cathedral Priory contain for the imported goods purchased by the priory cannot directly address the question of whether overseas trading activity through Newcastle declined (a question that it is difficult to answer confidently since few figures are available for the volume of such trade, the Newcastle customs accounts having survived only for isolated years). However, it has been seen that not only did Durham Cathedral Priory continue to source luxury imported goods from Newcastle rather than London, in the second half of the fifteenth century the priory came to rely almost exclusively upon Newcastle as a supply centre. This at least suggests that the range and availability of imported goods in Newcastle may not have decreased in this period; indeed, a surprising range of the more expensive imported goods were to be found in Newcastle, including malmsey and other sweet wines, the trade in which was generally centred on London.

Secondly, the Durham accounts suggest that the iron industry in the Newcastle region may have been much more productive, and expanding at an earlier date, than has previously been estimated. If this were the case, it would - together with the Newcastle coal industry - have provided what may have been a crucial point of difference between Newcastle and York. Rural industrialisation around a town, such as Newcastle had and York lost, may well have been an extremely important factor in the successful survival of the fifteenth century,<sup>158</sup> and indeed Pollard saw the revival of mining activity at the very end of the century, as described by Blanchard, as "the only relieving feature" in the area's economy at this period.<sup>159</sup> York's decline certainly went alongside the migration of the cloth industry to newer centres of production, whereas Newcastle's coal and iron industries neither moved nor declined; and the latter may, if the bursar's iron purchases are representative of a regional trend, have been expanding as early as the 1480s, thirty years earlier than has previously been thought.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup>C. Pythian Adams, "Urban Crisis or Urban Change" (with Paul Slack), in *The Traditional Community under Stress*, (Milton Keynes, 1977), p. 16, argues that the main type of town to have "survived reasonably unscathed" from the fifteenth century was the port or river-town that "acted as outlets for their neighbouring industrial hinterlands" - e.g., Chester, Exeter, Worcester, Ipswich, Colchester and Newcastle.

<sup>159</sup>A.J. Pollard, *North Eastern England During the Wars of the Roses*, (Oxford, 1990), p. 74.

<sup>160</sup>Blanchard, "Commercial Crisis".

In addition, the large numbers of Newcastle merchants who were to a greater or lesser extent involved in the expensive and high risk import and export trade,<sup>161</sup> and the miscellaneous nature of their interests, do both point to the economic health of Newcastle in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Clearly Newcastle, like Hull, Boston, Lynn, Yarmouth and Ipswich, was not immune to the increasing focus of overseas trade on London,<sup>162</sup> and the lack of reliable figures to quantify the trade through Newcastle makes it impossible to say what impact this had. However, the merchants of Newcastle appear to have adapted to this developing situation by diversifying their range of interests from a relatively early stage. It should also be remembered that although even less evidence survives enabling us to quantify local trade, it is likely that this accounted for the majority of the dealings of most of Newcastle's merchants. Many of the merchants noted above as dealing in wool and wine can also be found dealing in coal,<sup>163</sup> which was mainly traded within England and the region, although exports were becoming increasingly common over this period. The possession of native industry thus helped to stabilise the fortunes of Newcastle's merchants, a group which can be seen from the priory accounts to have been quite broad-based enough to suggest the existence of a prosperous surrounding community.

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<sup>161</sup>Sea travel involved several risks besides the obvious storms: for pirate activity, see Wendy R. Childs, "The *George* of Beverley and Olav Olavesson: Trading conditions in the North Sea in 1464", *Northern History*, No.31, 1995, p.120.

<sup>162</sup>H.L.Gray, "Tables of Enrolled Customs", cap.8 in *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Eileen Power & M.M.Postan, London, 1933. Newcastle had an advantage over other east-coast ports in the favourable terms that its merchants negotiated for the conduct of its principle export trade, in wool, gaining statutory exemption from the Calais staple requirements in 1463, and a 75% reduction in the standard rate of custom and subsidy for five years from 1489. Newcastle's share of England's wool exports actually doubled over this period, from 2.9% in 1453-1460 to 6.7% in 1496-1506; Wade, "The Overseas Trade of Newcastle-upon-Tyne", pp.38,42.

<sup>163</sup>Fraser, "The Early Hostmen of Newcastle upon Tyne", pp.170,174.

## CONCLUSION

As has been seen, the obediatory accounts of Durham Cathedral Priory contain a wide variety of valuable information about the variety of goods available, the merchants trading in them, and the ways in which trade was carried out in North-East England, and especially in Newcastle. In particular, the fact that sustained series of accounts exist mean that changes in purchasing practises, such as the trend towards a more Newcastle-centred purchasing pattern, can be identified. The level of detail given in many of the accounts also allows a great many changes to be seen in the actual purchases of the priory, such as the increasing purchase of sweet wines, the swift increases in sugar purchases as prices fell, and the sudden change from mainly imported to mainly locally-produced iron.

Some of the trends in the actual purchases of the priory have already been mentioned, but on the whole the details of each commodity are best left to their respective chapters, and only general points dealt with here. The main structural change that these accounts indicate is the increasing concentration of the monastery's purchasing in Newcastle. This period saw the culmination of a trend towards buying at fewer and closer markets: a trend away from the fairs of Boston and Darlington, and the port and market of York (and also away from Durham itself, where the range of goods available became much more limited in the fifteenth and even the fourteenth century) and towards buying the vast majority of imported goods from Newcastle merchants. Even London merchants are only very occasionally mentioned in these accounts. However, it must be noted that the wine accounts, at least, strongly indicate that the monks were able - through the sophisticated use of agents - to "shop around" between the various Northern ports, and on several occasions the obediatories bought wine in Hull when the price difference between there and Newcastle made it worthwhile to do so.

The level of detail given in (especially) the bursars' accounts also enables several conclusions to be drawn about the merchants trading in Newcastle and the Durham area in this period, and the relationship that existed between them and the priory. In general, this relationship appears to have been effectively non-existent; the vast majority of the merchants named in these sections of the accounts appear only once or twice in this period. Even the careers of those who appear most regularly in these accounts are neither

consistent, (they are often absent for periods of some years), nor monopolistic; the merchant who came closest to come to fulfilling either of these descriptions, John Saumple, only appears in the accounts in fourteen out of the nineteen years over which he sold wine to the bursar, and on average supplied just half of the bursar's requirements each year. The body of merchants who supplied the priory is characterised most of all by variety.

The other main observation to be made about the merchants who appear in these accounts is that there was a clear differentiation between those who were import merchants and those who were not. The spice merchants were generally distinct from the import merchants, due to the quantities in which they dealt. Apart from a few bulk purchases of dried fruit from the import merchants, the priory's spice purchases appear to have been made on a retail rather than wholesale basis. The merchants who dealt in Weardale iron are also an almost entirely distinct group, whereas those dealing in Spanish iron and wine overlap by over a quarter. It would appear, then, that the distinction between imported and home-produced goods, made in defining the scope of this study, was a meaningful one in the period under consideration here.

This thesis has reported the principal results of my research so far into the expenditure sections of the obedientiary accounts of Durham Cathedral Priory. This research will now be broadened in scope to allow a complementary and much more extensive analysis of the priory's purchases of the full range of home-produced goods, including pulses, meat, fish, ale and so on. It is hoped that this future study will be able to address similar questions to those raised here, and in addition will be able to examine the extent of the priory's dependence for supplies on seigniorial or commercial relationships, the use of foodstuffs as currency during the coinage shortages of the late fifteenth century, and the changing sources of supply over this period. Finally, the completion of this research should provide a comprehensive analysis of the priory's consumption and purchasing in the last decades of its institutional life.

APPENDIX A : Wine PurchasesBursars' wine purchases

Year	Volume	Merchant	Price
1464-5	1 tun	Alan Byrde	£5.6s.8d.
	1 tun	John Sample	£6.0s.0d.
	2 tuns	William Fyshewyke	£12.0s.0d.
	3 tuns	John Robynson	£16.10s.0d.
	1 butt sweet wine	John Bellacyse	£5.0s.0d.
	1 barrel Bastard	"	£1.5s.8d.
			Total = £46.2s.4d.
1465-6	2 tuns	John Robynson	£11.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	John Sample	£3.0s.0d.
			Total = £14.0s.0d.
1466-7	1 pipe	John Orbell	£3.0s.0d.
	3 pipes	John Syde	£10.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	Thomas Eiydon	£3.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	William Richardson	£3.0s.0d.
	2 tuns , 1 pipe	John Robynson	£16.13s.4d.
			Total = £35.13s.4d.
1467-8	1 tun	John Sample	£8.13s.4d.
	1 tun	Thomas Davell	£6.16s.8d.
	1 pipe	Robert Heley	£2.13s.4d.
	1 pipe	Nicholas Hanyng	£2.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	Thomas Burton	£2.13s.4d.
	1 pipe	John Brotherwyck	£2.13s.4d.
	2 tuns	John Robynson	£13.6s.8d.
	2 tuns	William Clerk	£12.13s.4d.
			Total = £52.10s.0d.
1468-9	4 tuns	John Sample	£25.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Robert Hollet	£1.6s.8d.
	3 pipes	William Clakeston	£9.0s.0d.
	2 tuns	William Esyngton	£12.0s.0d.
	6 gallons	Robert Cooke	4s.0d.
			Total = £47.17s.4d.
1469-70	6 tuns , 1 pipe	John Sample	£39.0s.0d.
	1 tun	Robert Beneley	£5.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Robert Stocall	£3.0s.0d.
	1 roundlet sweet wine	Richard Hanyng	18s.0d.
			Total = £48.4s.8d.
1470-71	7 tuns	John Sample	£49.0s.0d.
	1 roundlet sweet wine	"	20s.0d.
	4 gallons, 1 quart	William Bentlay	2s.10d.
			Total = £50.2s.10d.
1471-2	3 tuns (with carriage)	Thomas Wrangwys (Y)	£18.10s.8d.
	1 pipe	Thomas Eland (Y)	£4.2s.2d.
	1 pipe	Robert Mawer	£40s.0d.
	1 pipe	William Hunter	£4.13s.4d.
	1 tun	Roger Sample	£7.6s.8d.
	1 tun	William Hudson	£7.6s.8d.
	1 roundlet sweet wine	John Esyngton	13s.0d.
			Total = £46.12s.6d.
1472-3	5 tuns	John Sample	£36.13s.4d.
	1 tun	Thomas Chepman (H)	£6.13s.4d.
	1 tun	Edward Fyndall	£6.0s.0d.
	1 roundlet sweet wine	Robert Pykten	18s.0d.
			Total = £50.4s.8d.

1473-4	6 tuns 1 butt malmsey	John Sample William Cornforth	£46.0s.0d. £6.0s.0d. Total = £52.0s.0d.
1474-5	5 tuns 3 tuns	John Sample Robert Chepman (H)	£35.0s.0d. £19.0s.0d. Total = £54.0s.0d.
1475-6	1 tun 3 tuns 1 tun  1 pipe a small quantity 1 barrel sweet wine	Robert Howet Wiliam Richardson Edward Fynkall and Thomas Bronn William Clerk in Newcastle John Sample	£7.0s.0d. £27.0s.0d. £7.6s.8d.  £3.3s.4d. 9s.2d. £1.4s.0d. Total = £46.3s.2d.
1476-7	1 pipe 1 pipe 1 tun 1 tun 4 tuns 1 tun 1 roundlet sweet winw	William Smyth (L) William Richardson William Grene John Gybson John Sample William Clerk John Sample	£2.6s.8d. £2.16s.8d. £5.0s.0d. £5.0s.0d. £22.13s.4d. £5.13s.4d. 16s.8d. Total = £44.6s.8d.
1477-8 MISSING			
1478-9	3 tuns 2 tuns 2 tuns 1 pipe 1 roundlet sweet wine	George Bird William Richardson William Beneley John Cok William Richardson	£16.0s.0d. £11.0s.0d. £11.6s.8d. £2.13s.4d. 16s.0d. Total = £41.16s.0d.
1479-80	2 tuns 3 tuns 1 tun 1 tun 1 pipe 1 roundlet sweet wine	Wiliam Camby John Sample John Cok George Bird Thomas Swan John Sample	£10.13s.4d. £19.10s.0d. £5.6s.8d. £5.6s.8d. £2.13s.4d. 18s.0d. Total = £44.8s.0d.
1480-81	3½ tuns 1 tun 2 tuns 3 pipes 1 butt sweet wine	William Camby Thomas Swan John Sample Robert Saunderson George Bird	£18.13s.4d. £5.13s.4d. £10.13s.4d. £8.0s.0d. £5.6s.8d. Total = £48.6s.8d.
1481-2	3 pipes 1 tun 1 tun 1 tun 1 pipe 1 tun 1 hogshead claret 1 pipe	Robert Chapman (H) Radulpho Langton (H) Robert Cranforth William Brampton Robert Birdsall William Salton " Terrar	£8.5s.0d. £5.10s.0d. £5.10s.0d. £5.10s.0d. £3.1s.8d. £5.10s.0d. £1.8s.4d. £2.15s.0d. Total = £37.10s.0d.
1482-3	1 tun 1 tun, 1 hogshead 1 tun 3 pipes, 1 hogshead 1 tun 1 hogshead 2 hogsheads	John Sample Robert Saunderson William Clerk Thomas Swan John Esyngton George Stalyper Rober Chapman (H)	£7.6s.8d. £8.15s.0d. £7.0s.0d. £12.5s.0d. £7.3s.4d. £1.15s.0d. £4.0s.0d. Total = £55.5s.0d.

1483-84 SPENDING	MISSING		
1484-85	2 tuns , 1 pipe	Thomas Swan	£21. 6s. 8d.
	1 pipe	Robert Henryson	£4. 1s. 0d.
	4 tuns	George Bird	£32. 0s. 0d.
	1 pipe	Robert Stockall	£4. 0s. 0d.
	1 pipe	John Walton	£3. 16s. 8d.
	1 tun	At Hull	£5. 6s. 8d.
			Total = £69. 4s. 4d.
1485-86	5 tuns	Thomas Swan	£26. 0s. 0d.
	1 tun	Thomas Lokwood	£5. 6s. 8d.
	1 tun	Robert Hardyng	£5. 6s. 8d.
	3 pipes	George Bird	£7. 6s. 8d.
	1 pipe	Rollando Southern	£2. 6s. 8d.
		Total = £46. 6s. 8d.	
1486-87	3 tuns	Robert Chepman (H)	£24. 0s. 0d.
	5 tuns	Thomas Swan	£45. 0s. 0d.
	1 butt malmsey	"	£6. 0s. 0d.
		Total = £75. 0s. 0d.	
1487-88	3 tuns	Robert Chepman (H)	£24. 0s. 0d.
	2 tuns	at Newcastle	£18. 0s. 0d.
	2 tuns	William Warde	£16. 0s. 0d.
	1 pipe	Robert Hardyng	£4. 0s. 0d.
		Total = £62. 0s. 0d.	
1488-89	1 tun	Thomas Swan	£6. 13s. 4d.
	1 pipe	"	£3. 19s. 4d.
	5 tuns, 1 pipe	William Wright & Richard Simpson	£34. 18s. 4d.
	(lost)	"	11s. 4d.
	1 butt malmsey	Thomas Swan	£5. 0s. 0d.
	1 tun	[lost]	£5. 10s. 0d.
		Total = £55. 14s. 4d.	
1489-92	MISSING		
1492-3	8 tuns, 1 butt malmsey	Not stated	£60. 0s. 0d.
			Total = £60. 0s. 0d.
1493-4	2 tuns, 1 pipe	William Warde (H)	£18. 0s. 0d.
	1 tun	George Bird	£6. 13s. 4d.
	4 tuns, 1 pipe	John Blaxton	£30. 0s. 0d.
	1 butt malmsey	John Kyng (L)	£5. 6s. 8d.
		Total = £60. 0s. 0d.	
1494-5	3 tuns, 1 pipe	Dom. Thomas Durham	£23. 6s. 8d.
	1 tun	Dom. Cepe	£5. 6s. 8d.
	1 hogshead white	William Richardson	£1. 11s. 8d.
	1 hogshead white	Henry Htster	£1. 16s. 0d.
	2 tuns	Christopher Brigham	£12. 13s. 4d.
	1 pipe	Jacob Brikke	£3. 0s. 0d.
	1 pipe	John Herle	£2. 13s. 4d.
	1 butt malmsey	Robert Baxter	£5. 6s. 8d.
			£55. 14s. 4d.
1495-6	7 tuns, 1 pipe	Prior	£37. 10s. 0d.
	1 pipe claret	"	£2. 13s. 4d.
	1 butt malmsey	"	£5. 6s. 8d.
		Total = £45. 10s. 0d.	
1496-97	1 tun	Prior	£6. 0s. 0d.
	1 tun	George Bird	£5. 15s. 0d.
	3 tuns, 1 pipe	George Stamper	£22. 13s. 4d.
	1 tun, 1 pipe	William Car	£9. 10s. 0d.
	1 tun	Prior of Fynehall (Y)	£6. 10s. 0d.
	1 butt malmsey	Not stated	£5. 0s. 0d.
		Total = £54. 18s. 4d.	

1497-98	1 tun	At York with carriage	£7.6s.0d.
	1 tun	George Carr	£4.16s.8d.
	3 hogsheads	John Blaxston	£8.10s.0d.
	1 pipe	Henry Bidnell	£2.6s.8d.
	1 hogshead	Johanna Scot	£1.6s.8d.
	2 hogsheads claret	William Carr	£4.13s.4d.
	2 tuns	Robert Blunt (D)	£13.6s.8d.
	1 pipe claret	"	£2.8s.0d.
	1 butt malmsey	Prior	£5.6s.8d.
			Total = £49.15s.2d.
1498-99	5 tuns, 1 pipe	Various men	£23.16s.8d.
	1 hogshead claret	"	£1.1s.8d.
	1 hogshead	George Stanper	£1.6s.8d.
	2 tuns	William Carr	£8.13s.4d.
	1 butt malmsey	Not stated	£5.0s.0d.
			TOTAL = £39.18s.4d.
1499-1500	5 tuns, 1 hogshead red wine; 1 pipe claret; 1 hogshead white wine	William Carr	£30.0s.0d.
	1 tun, 1 pipe	George Hebborne	£7.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	Roger Raw	£2.3s.4d.
	1 butt malmsey	Prior	£44.3s.4d.
			TOTAL = £44.3s.4d.
1500-1	3.5 tuns	William Carr	£16.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	George Stanper	£2.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Thomas Paton	£1.16s.8d.
	1 tun	Prior	£4.18s.0d.
	2 tuns	William Richardson D	£9.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Thomas Fayrhars	£2.0s.0d.
	1 butt malmsey	Thomas Ayer (L)	£4.18s.0d.
			TOTAL = £41.8s.0d.
1501-2	2 hogsheads	John Blaxston	£2.6s.8d.
	7.5 tuns	William Carr	£37.0s.0d.
	1 butt malmsey	"	£5.6s.8d.
			TOTAL = £44.13s.4d.
1502-3	MISSING		
1503-4	2 tuns red, 1 pipe claret	Christopher Raw	£13.6s.8d.
	3 tuns, 1 hogshead	William Carr	£20.0s.0d.
	1 pipe claret	William Swan	£2.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Christopher Brigham	£2.6s.8d.
	3 hogsheads	Roger Raw	£4.0s.0d.
	1 hogshead Romany	Richard Conyngham	£1.6s.8d.
	1 pipe Romney, 1 small vase muscadell	Prior	£6.8s.8d.
	1 butt malmsey	William Wright	£4.0s.0d.
1504-5	1 pipe	George Clerkson	£2.13s.4d.
	2 tuns red, white & claret	William Carr	£13.6s.8d.
	2 tuns	Christopher Raw	£13.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	William Hanyng	£2.13s.4d.
	1 tun	John Brandlyng	£5.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Matthew Malber	£2.13s.4d.
	1 pipe	John Bartram	£2.6s.8d.
	1 butt malmsey	Prior	£3.13s.4d.
			TOTAL = £46.0s.0d.

1505-6	1 pipe	Alan Hardyng	£2.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Edward Baxter	£2.6s.8d.
	1 pipe	Richard Claxton	£2.3s.4d.
1506-7	2 tuns red, 1 hogshead white	Christopher Raw	£11.5s.0.
	1½ tuns	William Carr	£7.13s.4d.
	1 tun	William Hardyng	£4.13s.4d.
	1 tun, 1 hogshead	William Lawys	£5.13s.4d.
	1 pipe	George Stanper	£2.3s.4d.
	1 hogshead	Bertram Yonghusband	£1.3s.4d.
	1 butt malmsey	Not stated	£4.5s.0d.
			TOTAL = £43.13s.4d.
1507-8	1 tun	John Blunt & Thomas Harebrade	£4.4s.0d.
	1 tun	Not stated	£4.1s.0d.
	2 tuns	William Carr	£9.0s.0d.
	2½ tuns	Bertram Yonghusband	£6.6s.8d.
	2 tuns	John Lewys	£8.6s.8d.
	1 hogshead claret	Christopher Raw	£1.0s.0d.
	1 hogshead claret	William Bartram	£1.1s.8d.
	1 butt malmsey	Richard Pondreth (L)	£4.9s.2d.
		TOTAL = £38.9s.2d.	
1508-9	1 tun, 2 hogsheads	Edward Conyngnam	£3.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	Roger Raw	£3.0s.0d.
	3 tuns	John Brandlyng	£16.0s.0d.
	2 hogsheads claret	"	£2.13s.4d.
	1 tun, 2 hogsheads	Robert Heley	£9.0s.0d.
	1 tun	[unclear] Hardyng	£6.0s.0d.
	1 pipe	John Brandlyng	£2.13s.4d.
	1 butt malmsey	Bartram Yonghusband	£5.0s.0d.
		TOTAL = £50.6s.8d.	
1509-10	5 tuns	John Brandlyng	£25.6s.8d.
	1 tun	Robert Heley	£4.13s.4d.
	1 tun	Thomas Hardyng	£4.13s.4d.
	1 tun	Christopher Brigham & John Blaxton	£4.13s.4d.
	1 butt malmsey	John Brandlyng	£5.0s.0d.
		TOTAL = £44.6s.8d.	
1509-10	1 pipe	John Batmanson	£2.6s.8d.
	2 tuns, 1 pipe	John Brandlyng, Thomas Hardyng & Robert Heley	£11.13s.4d.
	1 tun red, 1 hogshead white	Christopher Brygham	£5.16s.8d.
	1 hogshead claret	Richard Wranglvyshe	£1.3s.4d.
	5 pipes	John Brandlyng	£11.13s.4d.
	1 pipe, 2 hogsheads	Thomas Hardyng	£4.13s.4d.
	1 butt malmsey	John Bradlyng	£5.0s.0d.
			TOTAL = £42.6s.8d.
1510-11	4tuns, 1 hogshead red & 1 hogshead white	John Brandlyng	£21.0s.0d.
	2 tuns, 1 pipe	Roland Sotheron	£11.13s.4d.
	2 hogsheads	Christopher Brigham	£2.6s.8d.
	1 hogshead red, 1 hogshead claret	Anthony Rede	£2.0s.0d.
	1 butt malmsey	John Brandlyng	£5.0s.0d.
			TOTAL = £42.0s.0d.

1511-12	3 hogsheads 3 pipes	Christopher Brigham Bertram Yonghusband, Thomas Johnson & Thomas Epen	£3.10s.0d. £7.0s.0d.
	5 tuns, 1 pipe, 1 hogshead	John Brandlyng, George Burrell, William Carr & Thomas Hardyng	£26.16s.8d.
	1 butt malmsey	Not stated	£5.0s.0d.
			TOTAL = £42.6s.8d.
1512-13	8 tuns 1 butt malmsey	Prior "	£48.0s.0d. £5.0s.0d.
			TOTAL = £53.0s.0d.
1513-14	8 tuns 1 butt malmsey	Prior Not stated	£48.0s.0d. £5.0s.0d.
			TOTAL = £53.0s.0d.
1514-15	8 tuns red, claret & romney	Prior, with carriage	£40.12s.8d.
			TOTAL = £40.12s.8d.
1515-16	8 tuns red, claret, & 1 butt malmsey	Prior, with carriage	£45.14s.6d.
			TOTAL = £45.14s.6d.
1516-17	MISSING		
1517-18	MISSING		
1518-19	MISSING		
1519-20	3½ tuns red & claret 2 tuns 2 tuns ½ tun 1 butt malmsey	John Brandlyng Edward Baxter William Carr Anthony Rede Prior	£16.6s.8d. £9.6s.8d. £9.6s.8d. £2.6s.8d. £4.13s.4d.
			TOTAL = £42.0s.0d.

### Sacrist's wine purchases

1465-6	1 pipe	£2.0s.0d.
1466-7 to 1471-2	MISSING	
1472-3	1 pipe	£3.10s.0d.
1473-4	1 pipe	£2.6s.8d.
1474-5	1 pipe	£2.6s.8d.
1475-6 to 1482-3	MISSING	
1483-4	2 hogsheads from Newcastle, with carriage and rolling.	£4.10s.6d.
1484-5	1 pipe	£3.16s.8d.
1485-6	1 pipe	£2.8s.4d.
1486-7	2 hogsheads from Newcastle, with carriage and rolling.	£4.13s.4d.
1487-8	1 pipe from Newcastle, with carriage.	£4.11s.6d.

Hostillar's wine purchases

Year	Quantity	Supplier	Cost	Carriage Cost
1464-5	1 pipe	William Hunter	£2. 13s. 3d.	1s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 4d.)
	not stated	Not stated	£1. 6s. 4d.	
1465-6	not stated	At Newcastle	£4. 0s. 0d.	Not stated
1466-7	1 tun	John Robynson	£6. 13s. 4d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1467-8	1 tun	Thomas Smyth	£6. 0s. 0d.	3s. 0. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1468-9	1 tun	John Saumple	£5. 6s. 8d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1469-70	1 tun	John Saumple	£5. 6s. 8d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1470-1	1 tun	John Saumple	£6. 0s. 0d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1471-2	not stated	Not stated	£1. 13s. 4d.	Not stated
1472-3	1 tun	John Saumple	£6. 13s. 4d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1473-4	1 tun	Not stated	£7. 0s. 0d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1474-5	1 tun	Not stated	£7. 0s. 0d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1475-79	MISSING			
1479-80	1 pipe, 1 hogshead	John Saumple	£4. 0s. 0d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1480-1	1 tun	John Saumple	£4. 0s. 0d.	4s. 0d. (incl. portorage @ 3s. 0d.)
1481-5	MISSING			
1485-6	1 tun 1 roundlet (16 gallons) sweet wine	Not stated Not stated	£5. 6s. 8d. 18s. 8d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1486-7	1 tun 1 roundlet sweet wine	Not stated Not stated	£9. 0s. 0d. £1. 2s. 0d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1487-8	1 tun 1 roundlet sweet wine	Not stated Not stated	£8. 10s. 0d. 19s. 0d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1488-9	1 tun	Not stated	£6. 6s. 8d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1489-90	1 tun 1 roundlet malmsey	Not stated Not stated	£5. 8s. 4d. £1. 13s. 4d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1490-1	1 tun 16 gallons malmsey	Not stated Not stated	£8. 0s. 0d. £1. 1s. 4d.	2s. 8d. (incl. portorage @ 8d.)
1492-3	PURCHASES	MISSING		
1493-5	MISSING			
1495-6	1 tun 1 roundlet malmsey	John Baxter Peter Baxter	£5. 6s. 8d. £1. 6s. 8d.	4s. 6d. (with other goods)
1496-7	1 tun red wine 1 roundlet malmsey	George Stanper Not stated	£6. 13s. 4d. £1. 0s. 0d.	(carried with other goods)
1497-1505	MISSING			
1505-6	2 hogsheads 1 tun	Not stated At Newcastle	£5. 6s. 4d. £5. 11s. 8d.	6s. 4d.
1506-8	MISSING			
1508-9	Blank form			
1509-10	7 hogsheads, 2 pipes	Not stated	£5. 6s. 8d.	Included
1510-11	1 tun, 1 pipe	Not stated	£7. 0s. 0d.	Included
1511-12	MISSING			
1512-13	3 pipes, 1 hogshead malmsey and claret	Not stated Not stated	£8. 8s. 4d. 8s. 6d.	Included
1513-14	5 pipes malmsey, claret	Not stated Not stated	£12. 10s. 0d. 19s. 6d.	Included



1507-8	[Not stated]	6	4s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	18d./6d.	13s.4d.
1508-9	[Not stated]	6	4s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	18d./6d.	13s.4d.
1509-10	[Not stated]	6	3s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	18d./6d.	12s.4d.
1510-11	[Not stated]	6	3s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	18d./6d.	12s.4d.
1511-2	[Not stated]	6	3s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	18d./4d.	12s.2d.
1512-3	[Not stated]	6	3s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	18d./3d.	12s.7d.
1513-4	[Not stated]	6	3s.0d.	1	7d.	6	1	18d./4d.	12s.7d.
1514-5	[Not stated]	6	4s.0d.	1	9d.	6	1	24d./4d.	14s.3d.
1515-6	[Not stated]	7	4s.0d.	1	8d.	6	1	24d./4d.	14s.4d.
1516-9	MISSING								
1519-20	Bought at London	6	3s.6d.	2	1s.2d.	6	1	18d./4d.	13s.2d.

### Communars' Spice Purchases

Communar's accounts remain for only 12 of the years under examination here. This table does not list the years that are missing. Where volumes bought and/or the name of the supplier are not specified in the accounts, the relevant column has been left blank.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Volume bought</u>	<u>Merchant</u>	<u>Price paid</u>
1474-5	Comfits Sugerplate Ginger Annes Licorice Nutmegs, cloves, etc. Electuar for the novices Figs (including carriage) Onions	2lb. 1lb. 1lb. 2lb. 1½lb.   1 sort	William Cornforth William Cornforth William Cornforth William Cornforth   Bought at Newcastle John Wall	3s.0d. 1s.4d. 1s.8d. 1s.0d. 7½d. 3s.4d. 1s.6d. 16s. 1s.8d. <i>£1.10s.1½d.</i>
1480-1	Comfits Comfits Sugerplate Ginger Annes Licorice Nutmegs, pepper, cloves, mace, etc. Electuar for the novices Figs and raisins (including carriage) Onions and nuts	3lb. 1lb. 1½lb. ½lb. 2lb. 1½lb.   1 sort	John Farne William Cornforth John Farne John Farne John Farne   Bought at Newcastle	2s.9d. 12d. 1s.6d. 1s.3d. 12d. 7½d. 4s.5d.  1s.4d. 12s.10d. 4s.7d. <i>£1.11s.10d.</i>
1489-90	Comfits Sugerplate Ginger Annes Licorice Nutmegs, pepper, cloves, mace, etc. Electuar for the novices Figs and big raisins (inc. carriage) Onions	4lb. 1lb. 1lb. 3lb. 1½lb.   1 sort	John Farne John Farne John Farne     	4s.0d. 1s.0d. 1s.8d. 1s.3d. 9d. 3s.8d.  2s.8d. 16s.0d. 1s.6d. <i>£1.12s.6d.</i>

1496-7	Comfits Sugerplate Ginger Annes Licorice Nutmegs, pepper, cloves, etc. Electuar for the novices Figs and big raisins Onions Mace	5lb. 1lb. 1lb. 4lb. 1lb.  5dd.	Cuthbert Heron  [Forename lost] Farne	3s.4d. 8d. 1s.4d. 1s.4d. 6d. 6s.5d. 3s.8d. 10s.0d. 1s.8d. 10d. <i>£2.10s.2d.</i>
1499-00	Comfits Sugerplate Aniseed Licorice Mace Ginger Nutmeg, pepper, cloves, etc. Figs and raisins Figs Big raisins [missing] Onions	3lb 2lb 4lb. 1lb. ¼lb. 1lb.  1 sort 1 frail 2dd.	Various men Various men     George Stamper Robert Hardwareman Robert Hardwareman	2s.0d. 1s.4d. 2s.0d. 4d. 1s. 1s.4d. 7s.8d. 12s.0d. 4s.0d. 3s.0d. 3s.6d. 10d. <i>£2.1s.0d.</i>
1502-3	Comfits  Sugerplate  Ginger Annes Licorice Nutmegs, saffron and small raisins Electuar for the novices Figs Big raisins Onions Tarts Pepper	5lb.  1lb.  1lb. 4lb. 1lb.  3 frails 10dd.  3 1lb.	John Farne's widow & Robert Ruherson John Farne's widow & Robert Ruherson    John Farne's widow John Farne's widow	2s.11d.  7d.  1s.6d. 1s.4d. 4d. 2s.0d. 3s.0d. 11s.0d. 12s.0d. 2s.4d. 6s.8d. 2s.0d. <i>£2.5s.8d.</i>
1505-6	Comfits Sugerplate Ginger Annes Licorice Nutmegs, saffron, etc. Electuar for the novices Small raisins Figs Figs Big raisins Mace and cloves Pepper	5lb. 1lb. 1lb. 4lb. 1½lb.  1½lb. 3 frails 20lb. 6½dd. 1 quart 1lb.	John Farne's widow John Farne's widow  John Farne's widow   Ralph Milet John Farne's widow Ralph Milet	2s.6d. 6d. 1s.4d. 1s.4d. 6d. 6s.8d. 3s.0d. 6d. 10s.0d. 1s.8d. 9s.9d. 1s.8d. 1s.10d. <i>£2.3s.11d.</i>
1508-9	Comfits Sugerplate Ginger Annes Licorice Other spices Raisins	5½lb. 1½lb. 1lb. 5lb. 1lb.  2lb.	John Eland John Eland	2s.9d. 9d. 2s.0d. 1s.8d. 4d. 6s.8d. 8d.

	Figs	5½ frails	Thomas Rydall & William Sawell of Newcastle	22s.0d.
	Big raisins	10dd.		15s.0d.
	Mace and cloves	¼lb.		1s.10d.
	Pepper	1lb.		1s.6d.
				<i>£2. 1s. 0d.</i>
1510-11	Comfits	5lb.	John Eland	2s.6d.
	Sugerplate	2½lb.		1s.3d.
	Ginger	½lb.		2s.0d.
	Annes	4lb.		1s.4d.
	Licorice	1lb.		4d.
	Other spices, with fruit and 5 large tarts			4s.3d.
	Raisins	4lb.		1s.0d.
	Figs	6 frails	Edward Baxter of Newcastle	21s.10d.
	Raisins (including 16d. carriage)	5 toppets		14s.8d.
	Onions		Bought "in foro" (Perhaps Newcastle?)	9d.
	Cloves	¼lb.		2s.2d.
	Filberts (including carriage)		Edward Baxter of Newcastle	3s.6d.
	Pepper	¾lb.	1s.3d.	
				<i>£2. 2s. 10d.</i>
1511-12	Comfits	5lb.	John Eland	2s.11d.
	Sugerplate	2lb.	John Eland	1s.2s.
	Ginger	¾lb.		1s.6d.
	Annes	4lb.		1s.4d.
	Licorice	4lb.		1s.4d.
	Nutmegs, cloves, saffron and currants			2s.0d.
	Electuar for the novices			5s.4d.
	Figs	5 frails	John Brandlyng of Newcastle	16s.8d.
	Raisins	4 toppets		10s.8d.
	Onions		Hugh Spark, George Nitgoll & others	2s.10d.
	Cloves and mace			1s.4d.
	Tarts	5		7s.10d.
	A sugar confection			3s.8d.
	Pepper			8d.
				<i>£2. 18s. 5d.</i>
1516-7	Comfits	6lb.	John Baty	3s.6d.
	Sugerplate	1lb.		8d.
	Annes	4lb.		1s.4d.
	Licorice	1lb.		4d.
	Ginger, nutmeg and saffron			2s.0d.
	Electuar for the novices			3s.4d.
	Raisins	3lb.		1s.9d.
	Other spices bought this year			6s.2d.
	Figs	6 frails	John Dudem of Newcastle	18s.0d.
	Raisins (including 16d for carriage)	1 pec	John Dudem of N	11s.4d.
	Onions		Bought "in foro"	2s.8d.
	Mace and cloves	¼lb.		2s.2d.
	Pepper	½lb.		8d.
				<i>£2. 13s. 10d.</i>

1517-8	Comfits	6lb.	Robert Baxter & John Eland	4s.6d.
	Sugerplate	1lb.		10d.
	Ginger	½lb.		1s.8d.
	Annes	5lb.		1s.8d.
	Licorice	1lb.		4d.
	Other spices, inc. 5 large tarts			6s.4d.
	Electuar for the novices			5s.4d.
	Raisins	3lb.		1s.0d.
	Figs	6 fraills	George Swynburn of N	16s.
	Raisins	1½ fraills		12s.11d.
	Onions		Bought "in foro"	3s.4d.
	Saffron	1 quart		1s.4d.
	Mace and cloves	1 quart		1s.9d.
	Nutmeg			4d.
	Carriage [commodity/ies unstated]			2s.0d.
	Pepper	½lb.		10d.
				£3.0s.2d.

#### Hostillars' spice purchases

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>
1464-5	2s.6d.	1481-2	MISSING	1498-9	MISSING
1465-6	MISSING	1482-3	MISSING	1499-1500	MISSING
1466-7	2s.6d.	1483-4	MISSING	1500-1	MISSING
1467-8	2s.2d.	1484-5	MISSING	1501-2	MISSING
1468-9	2s.0d.	1485-6	3s.0d.	1502-3	MISSING
1469-70	2s.6d.	1486-7	2s.7d.	1503-4	MISSING
1470-1	5s.7d.	1487-8	3s.6d.	1504-5	MISSING
1471-2	4s.4d.	1488-9	3s.0d.	1505-6*	5s.9d.
1472-3	2s.4d.	1489-90	2s.8d.	1506-7	MISSING
1473-4	2s.2d.	1490-1	2s.8d.	1507-8	MISSING
1474-5	3s.0d.	1491-2	2s.9d.	1508-9	MISSING
1475-6	MISSING	1492-3	MISSING	1509-10	5s.2d.
1476-7	MISSING	1493-4	MISSING	1510-11	3s.0d.
1477-8	MISSING	1494-5	MISSING	1511-2	MISSING
1478-9	MISSING	1495-6	6s.8d.	1512-3	4s.0d.
1479-80	6s.0d.	1496-7	6s.8d.	1513-4	2s.6d.
1480-1	2s.0d.	1497-8	MISSING	1514 to 1520	MISSING

\* In 1505-6 the composition of the hostillar's purchases appears to have changed. Each of the previous entries reads "Ginger, cinnamon and other spices"; from 1505-6 this becomes "Ginger, cinnamon, zintar and other spices". See page XX for discussion of this.

APPENDIX C : Bursars' iron purchases

In the following table, an asterisk means that the calculation given in the accounts is not mathematically correct. See note, p.14 above.

The type of iron involved in each transaction is given under the category column. "Working" denotes the iron that the bursar had worked up into manufactured goods in each year, and in this case the names given in the merchant column are those of the smiths.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Volume (stones)</u>	<u>Price (stone)</u>	<u>Merchant(s)</u>	<u>Total price</u>
1464-5	Spanish	120	7d.	Alexander Robynson	£3.10s.0d.
	Spanish	75, 5lbs	7d.	Thomas Davell	£2.7s.5d.
	Weardale	45	4d.	bought at Muggleswick	15s.0d.
	Working	357	-	Richard Smyth	£3.14s.4½d.
	Misc. services			Richard Rakett	6s.8d.
	TOTAL				£10.13s.5½d.
1465-6	Spanish	52	7d.	Richard Brown of Newcastle	£1.9s.2d.
	Spanish	80	7½d.	Alexander Robynson	£2.10s.0d.
	Spanish	40	7½d.	Thomas Warwick	£1.5s.0d.
	Spanish	20	7d.	John Colt	11s.8d.
	Spanish	53	7½d.	Robert Chambre	£1.13s.1½d.
	Weardale	19	5d.	Thomas Stobbes	7s.11d.
	Weardale	66	4½d.	Thomas Stobbes	£1.4s.9d.
	Weardale	6½	4½d.	Robert Batmanson	2s.3d.
	Weardale	30	4d.	Bought at Muggleswick	10s.
	Working	363	2½d.	Richard Smyth	£3.15s.7½d.
	TOTAL				£13.9s.6d.
1466-7	Spanish	60	7d.	Alice Byrde	£1.15s.0d.
	Spanish	49, 10½lbs	8d.	Thomas Davell	£1.13s.2d.
	Spanish	18	6d.	William Langton	9s.0d.
	Spanish	40, 8lbs	6½d.	Robert Stokall	£1.2s.0d.
	Spanish	20	7d.	William Welles	11s.8d.
	Spanish	141	6½d.	William Clerk	£3.16s.4½d.
	Weardale	24	4½d.	Robert Batmanson	9s.0d.
	Weardale	51, 3½lbs	4½d.	Robert Stobbes	18s.4d.
	Weardale	47	4d.	Thomas Stobbes	15s.8d.
	Working	140	2½d.	Richard Smyth	£1.9s.2d.
	Working	241	2d.	William Yonge & Henry Walker	£2.0s.2d.
	TOTAL				£14.19s.6½d.
1467-8	Spanish	20, 8½lbs	7d.	Thomas Davell of Newcastle	12s.
	Spanish	126½	6½d.	Alice Byrde	£2.14s.8d.
	Spanish	73, 4lbs	7d.	Thomas Saunderson	£2.2s.9d.
	Spanish	37	6½d.	John Esyngton	£1.0s.½d.
	Spanish	40	5½d.	John Esyngton	18s.4d.
	Spanish	5	4d.	John Esyngton	1s.8d.
	Spanish	49	7d.	Alexander Robynson's widow	£1.8s.7d.
	Spanish	19½	7d.	Robert Lyle	11s.4½d.
	Weardale	30, 10lbs	4½d.	John Stobbes	11s.2d.
	Weardale	24½	5d.	Ralph Dixon	10s.2½d.
	Weardale	23, 4 lbs	5d.	John Wright	9s.8½d.
	Weardale	8	4½d.	William Dawson	3s.0d.
	Weardale	70	4	Thomas Stobbes	£1.3s.4d.
	Working	458½		Henry Walker	£3.16s.5d.
	TOTAL				£16.3s.3d.
1468-9	Spanish	133½	7d.	Alice Byrde	£3.17s.10½d.
	Spanish	60	6½d.	William Brigham	£1.12s.6d.
	Spanish	34	7d.	Thomas Saunderson	19s.10d.
	Spanish	20	7d.	John Forster	11s.8d.

	Spanish Weardale Weardale Weardale Weardale Weardale Weardale Working TOTAL	40 16 13 6 7 44 49 412	7d. 5d. 4½d. 5d. 4½d. 4½d. 4d. 2d.	John Esyngton Henry Walker Robert Craue Robert Walker Robert Walker John Stobbes Thomas Stobbes Henry Walker	£1.3s.4d. 6s.8d. 4s.10½d. 2s.6d. 2s.7½d. 16s.6d. 16s.4d. £3.8s.8d. 314.3s.4½d.
1469-70	Spanish Spanish  Spanish Spanish Spanish Weardale  Weardale Working TOTAL	120 120  120 53 23 63  30 440	7d. 7¼d.  7d. 7d. 7d. various  4d. 2d.	John Stevenson of Newcastle Johanna, Alexander Robynson's widow William Clerk John Cok William Hayn John Stobbes, Robert Batmanson and others Thomas Stobbes Henry Walker	£3.10s.0d. £3.12s.6d.  £3.10s.0d. £1.10s.11d. 13s.5d. £1.8s.9½d.  10s. £3.16s.8d. £18.12s.3½d.
1470-1	Spanish Spanish Spanish Weardale Weardale Weardale Working TOTAL	120 58 125, 7lbs 72 80 38 450	7d. 8d. 8d. 5d. 5½d. - 2d.	Robert Stokall of Newcastle John Esyngton of the same Robert Heley of the same Thomas Stobbes John Rawe & John Stobbes Bought at Muggleswick Henry Walker	£3.10s.0d. £1.18s.8d. £4.3s.8d. £1.10s.0d. £2.5s.10d. 12s.8d. £3.15s.0d. £17.15s.10d.
1471-2	Spanish Spanish Spanish Weardale Weardale Weardale Working TOTAL	180 60 50 49 12 160 458	8d. 8d. 7d. 5½d. 4½d. 4d. 2d.	Robert Stokall of Newcastle William Clerk of the same William Cristal of the same William Tod & Thomas Stobbes Henry Walker Bought at Muggleswick Henry Walker	£6.0s.0d. £2.0s.0d. £1.9s.2d. £1.2s.5½d. 4s.6d. £2.13s.4d. £3.16s.4d. £17.5s.9½d.
1472-3	Spanish Spanish Weardale Weardale Working TOTAL	360 120 56 21 550	7½d. 7d. 5d. 5d. 2d.	John Sample John Esyngton John Stobbes & Thomas Wren John Perdenaux Henry Walker	£11.5s.0d. £3.10s.0d. £1.3s.4d. 8s.9d. £4.11s.8d. £20.18s.9d.
1473-4	Spanish Spanish Spanish Weardale Weardale Working TOTAL	246 240 240 35, 4lbs 36 794	7d. 7½d. 7½d. 4½d. 5d. 2d.	John Esyngton Peter Bewyk Robert Harcas & Roger Sample William Paton John Pardenaux Henry Walker	£7.3s.6d. £7.10s.0d. £7.10s.0d. 13s.2d. 15s.0d. £6.12s.4d. £30.4s.0d.
1474-5	Spanish Spanish Spanish Weardale  Working TOTAL	142, 6lbs 120½ 120, 3lbs 260  619	7d. 7½d. 7d. 5d.  -	Roland Sotheron William Clerk Robert Stokall William Tod, Richard Greneswerd, Robert Walker & others Henry Walker	£4.3s.1d. £3.15s.0d. £3.10s.0d. £6.8s.4d.  £5.3s.2d. £22.19s.7d.

1475-6	Spanish	189, 2lbs	7d.	John Dolphamby	£5.10s.6d.
	Spanish	121	7d.	Thomas Cuthbert	£3.10s.7d.
	Spanish	245	7d.	John Bronn of Pipwelgate	£7.2s.11d.
	Weardale	149	5d.	Richard Greneswerd & William Greneswerd	£3.2s.1d.
	Weardale	40	4½d.	William Wren & Robert Wren	15s.0d.
	Working TOTAL	650	2d.	Henry Walker	£5.8s.4d. £25.9s.5d.
1476-7	Spanish	264	7d.	John Bronn of Pipwelgate & Roland Sotheron	£7.14s.0d.
	Spanish	40	7d.	John Dobson of Durham	£1.3s.4d.
	Weardale	177	5d.	John Stobbes & Richard Greneswerd	£3.13s.9d.
	Weardale	39	5d.	Robert Wren	16s.3d.
	Working TOTAL	419	2d.	Henry Walker	£3.9s.10d. £16.17s.2d.
1477-8	MISSING				
1478-9	Spanish	120	7d.	William Chuhyng of Newcastle	£3.10s.0d.
	Spanish	51½	7d.	William Chambre of the same	£1.10s.½d.
	Spanish	40	7d.	Richard Dixon	£1.3s.4d.
	Spanish	80	7d.	William Knot of the same	£2.6s.8d.
	Weardale	130	4d.	Terrar	£2.3s.4d.
	Weardale	28	4d.	William Bowke	9s.4d.
	Weardale	40	4d.	Thomas Dawson	13s.4d.
	Weardale	43	5d.	Robert Wren	17s.10d.
	Working	525	2d.	Henry Walker	£4.7s.6d.
	TOTAL				£17.0s.17½d.
1479-80	Spanish	70	7d.	John Dolphamby	£2.0s.10d.
	Spanish	120, 4lbs	7d.	Richard Davell	£3.12s.8d.
	Spanish	200	6d.	William Milo	£5.0s.0d.
	Weardale	167	4d.	Richard Whitfeld & William Henryson of Muggleswick	5s.8d.
	Weardale	20	4d.	Robert Smyth	6s.8d.
	Weardale	20	5d.	Richard Dixon	8s.4d.
	Working	483	-	Henry Walker	£3.7s.7d.
	TOTAL				£18.2s.9d.
1480-1	Spanish	115	7d.	Robert Stokall	£3.7s.1d.
	Spanish	63, 8lbs	6d.	John Brown's widow	£1.11s.10d.
	Spanish	139, 11lbs	6d.	John Dolphamby	£3.9s.11½d.
	Spanish	80, 8lbs	6d.	Robert Coke	£2.0s.4d.
	Spanish	116	6d.	Thomas Orwell	£2.18s.0d.
	Weardale	44	5d.	Richard Dixon	18s.4d.
	Weardale	25	4d.	William Bloomer	8s.4d.
	Weardale	89	4d.	Hugh Whitfeld	£1.9s.8d.
	Weardale	83	4d.	Edward Bloomer	£1.7s.8d.
	Working TOTAL	401	2d.	Henry Walker	£3.6s.10d. £20.18s.10½d.
1481-2	Spanish	214	6d.	Robert Duke of Gateshead	£5.7s.0d.
	Spanish	160	6d.	Roland Sotheron	£4.0s.0d.
	Spanish	94, 8lbs	6d.	Richard Hele & John Lomley	£2.7s.4d.
	Spanish	40	6d.	Thomas Saunderson	£1.0s.0d.
	Weardale	163	4d.	Various men at Muggleswick	£2.14s.4d.
	Working	422	2d.	Henry Walker	£3.10s.4d.
	TOTAL				£18.19s.0d.

1482-3	Spanish	294	5d.	Thomas Swan of Newcastle	£5.18s.4d.
	Spanish	46	6d.	George Elwald	£1.3s.0d.
	Weardale	24	4d.	Edward Bloomer	8s.0d.
	Weardale	56	3½d.	Hugh Whitfeld & Roland Henryson	16s.4d.
	Working	441	2d.	Henry Walker	£3.13s.6d.
	TOTAL				£11.19s.2d.
1483-4	EXPENDITURE	MISSING			
1484-5	Weardale	80	4d.	Edward Bloomer & Thomas Marche	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	240	6d.	Roland Sotheron	£6.0s.0d.
	Weardale	36	4d.	Henry Trippe	12s.0d.
	Working	477	2d.	Henry Walker	£3.19s.6d.
	TOTAL				£11.18s.2d.
1485-6	Weardale	70	4½d.	Edward Bloomer & Robert Smyth	£1.6s.3d.
	Spanish	10½	9d.	Roland Sotheron	7s.1½d.
	Weardale	80	5d.	Bought at Muggleswick	£1.13s.4d.
	Working	440	2d.	Henry Walker	£3.13s.4d.
	TOTAL				£7.0s.½d.
1486-7	Spanish	180	8d.	Thomas Swan	£6.0s.0d.
	Spanish	28	8d.	Roland Sotheron	18s.8d.
	Weardale	82	5d.	Edward Blumer, William Marche & Thomas Henryson	£1.14s.2d.
	Weardale	120½	4½d.	Edward Blumer, William Marche & Thomas Henryson	£2.5s.2¼d.
	Weardale	80	5d.	Bought at Muggleswick	£1.13s.4d.
	Working	528	2d.	Henry Walker	£4.8s.0d.
	TOTAL				£16.19s.2¼d.
1487-8	Spanish	40	9d.	Thomas Swan	£1.10s.0d.
	Spanish	29	9d.	Robert Brigham	£1.1s.0d.
	Spanish	18	9d.	Roland Sotheron	13s.4d.
	Weardale	313	6d.	Edward Blumer & others	£7.16s.6d.
	Weardale	80	6d.	Bought at Muggleswick	£2.0s.0d.
	Working	480	2d.	William Randson	£4.0s.0d.
	TOTAL				£17.0s.19d.
1488-9	Spanish	39	10d.	Robert Blunt & John Farne	£1.12s.8d.*
	Spanish	40	8d.	Bertram Yong	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	40	9d.	Robert Brigham	£1.10s.0d.
	Spanish	42	9d.	Thomas Swan	£1.11s.6d.
	Weardale	347	6d.	Edward Blumer	£8.13s.6d.
	Weardale	252	5d.	Edward Blumer	£5.5s.3d.*
	Weardale	80	5d.	Wodhire	£1.13s.4d.
	Working	720	2d.	William Randson	£6.0s.0d.
	TOTAL				£27.12s.11d.
1492-3	Spanish	60	8d.	John Farne	£2.0s.0d.
	Spanish	25	8d.	Thomas Saunderson	16s.8d.
	Weardale	120	4d.	Prior	£2.0s.0d.
	Weardale	450	4d.	Edward Blumer, Roland Henryson, Henry Trippe & Gilbert Hawthorne	£7.10s.0d.
	Weardale	160	4d.	Wodhire from Prior	£2.13s.4d.
	Working	815	2d.	William Randson	£6.15s.10d.
	TOTAL				£21.15s.10d.

1493-4	Spanish	201	8d.	John Farne & others	£6.14s.0d.
	Weardale	240	4d.	Prior	£4.0s.0d.
	Weardale	394	4d.	Edward Blumer & others	£6.11s.4d.
	Weardale	160	4d.	Wodhire from Prior	£2.13s.4d.
	Working	665	2d.	William Randson	£5.10s.10d.
	TOTAL				£25.9s.6d.
1494-5	Spanish	139	7d.	Jacob Brikke & Robert Baxter	£4.1s.1d.
	Weardale	280	4d.	Prior	£4.13s.4d.
	Weardale	132	4d.	Edward Blumer & Henry Trippe	£2.4s.0d.
	Weardale	80	-	Wodhire from prior's instaurer	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	751	2d.	William Randson	£6.5s.2d.
	TOTAL				£18.10s.3d.
1495-6	Weardale	360	4d.	Prior	£6.0s.0d.
	Weardale	214	4d.	Hugh Whitfeld, John Marche & Edward Blumer	71s.8d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire, from prior	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	619	2d.	William Randson	£5.3s.2d.
	TOTAL				£16.1s.6d.
1496-7	Weardale	543	5d.	Hugh Whitfeld, Edward Blumer, Antony Henryson, Henry Trippe, Galfrido Kirkhous, Robert Brikke & William Kirkley	£10.14s.7d.
	Spanish	126	7d.	John Rand of Newcastle	£3.13s.6d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire, from prior's instaurer	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	669	2d.	William Randson	£5.10s.4d.*
		TOTAL			
1497-8	Weardale	572	5d.	Robert Kirklay of Knytheley, Edward Blumer, William Palyser of Unthank, Thomas Whitfeld & Thomas Kirkhaus of Langchestre	£11.18s.4d.
	Spanish	120	6d.	John Baxter of Newcastle	£3.0s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	740	2d.	William Randson	£6.3s.4d.
		TOTAL			
1498-9	Weardale	420	4d.	Prior	£7.0s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Weardale	129	4d.	John Henryson	£2.3s.4d.*
	Weardale	15	4d.	John Lovon of Weardale	5s.0d.
	Spanish	25	6d.	Roland Sotheron of Nethyrheworth	12s.6d.
	4½gads of steel			Thomas Farne	12d.
	Working	69	2d.	William Randson	£5.17s.4d.*
	TOTAL				£17.5s.10d.
1499-1500	Weardale	480	4d.	Prior	£8.0s.0d.
	Weardale	10	4d.	William Andrews of Whitehall	3s.4d.
	Spanish	127	6d.	Gawmo Taylys of Wallsend	£1.8s.8d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire, from prior's instaurer	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	712	2d.	William Randson	£5.18s.8d.
	TOTAL				£20.0s.10d.
1500-1	Weardale	751	4d.	Prior	£12.10s.4d.
	Spanish	60	6d.	Gawmo Taylys of Wallsend & William Carr of Newcastle	£1.10s.0d.
	Spanish	133	5½d.	Roland Sotheron of Newcastle	£2.5s.10d.*
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	760	2d.	William Randson	£.6s.8d.
	TOTAL				£23.19s.6d.

1501-2	Weardale	560	4d.	Prior	£9.6s.8d.
	Spanish	124	5½d.	Edmund Walle	£2.15s.0d.*
	Spanish	62	5½d.	William Chain of Stokton	£1.8s.4½d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	838	2d.	William Randson	£6.19s.8d.
	TOTAL				£21.16s.4½d.
1502-3	MISSING				
1503-4	Weardale	275	4d.	Prior	£4.11s.4d.
	Weardale	120	4d.	Robert Olyid of Edmondbires	£2.0s.0d.
	Weardale	240	4d.	Thomas Swynburn of Espshelle	£4.0s.0d.
	Weardale	220	4d.	John Swynburn	£3.13s.4d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	From prior's instaurer	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	45	6d.	Roger Rawe of Newcastle	£1.2s.6d.
	Working	813	2d.	William Randson	£6.19s.0d.
	TOTAL				£23.12s.10d.
1504-5	Weardale	660	4d.	Prior, bought at Muggleswick	£9.13s.4d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	40	6d.	George Baxter of Newcastle	£1.0s.0d.
	Weardale	60	4d.	Thomas Warde	£1.0s.0d.
	Weardale	20	4d.	Richard Stobbes of Durham	6s.8d.
	34 gads of steel			John Eland of the same	11d.
	Working	748	2d.	William Randson	£6.0s.2d.
	TOTAL				£19.7s.9d.
1505-6	Spanish	340	6d.	Bertram Yonghusband of Newcastle	£8.10s.0d.
	Weardale	20	4d.	Richard Stobbes of Durham	6s.8d.
	Weardale	248	4d.	Prior	£4.2s.8d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire from prior	£1.6s.8d.
	Weardale	39	4d.	William Warde	19s.8d.
	Working	728	2d.	William Randson	£6.0s.16d.
	TOTAL				£21.7s.0d.
1506-7	Weardale	360	4d.	Prior	£6.0s.0d.
	Spanish	200	6d.	Bought at Newcastle	£5.8s.4d.
	Weardale	44	4d.	John Swynburn	14s.8d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	26s.8d.
	Working	703	2d.	William Randson	£5.17s.2d.
	TOTAL				£19.6s.10d.
1507-8	Weardale	600	4d.	From prior's instaurer	£10.0s.0d.
	Spanish	192	6d.	at Newcastle	£4.16s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Woodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	10	6d.	Robert Sotheron of Newcastle	5s.0d.
	Working	882	2d.	William Randson	£7.7s.0d.
	TOTAL				£23.14s.8d.
1508-9	Weardale	600	4d.	From prior's instaurer	£10.0s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	184	5d.	John Hanebarrew of Hull	£3.16s.8d.
	Working	813½	2d.	William Randson	£6.15s.7d.
	Working	30	3d.	Henry Walker	7s.6d.
	TOTAL				£22.6s.5d.
1509-10	Weardale	600	4d.	From prior's instaurer	£10.0s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	123	6d.	John Brandlyng	£3.1s.6d.
	Spanish	11	6d.	Captain of the Gild of the Holy Trinity in the Church of St. Oswald, Durham	6s.5d.
	Working	793	2d.	William Randson	£6.12s.2d.
	Working	11	3d.	Henry Walker	2s.9d.
	TOTAL				£21.9s.6d.

1510-11	Weardale	600	4d.	From prior's instaurer	£10.0s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Weardale	175	4d.	Thomas Whitfeld	£2.18s.4d.
	Spanish	43	7d.	John Brandlyng	£1.5s.1d.
	Working	818	2d.	William Randson	£6.16s.4d.
	Working	36	3d.	Henry Walker	9s.0d.
	TOTAL				£22.15s.5d.
1511-12	Weardale	697½	5d.	Thomas Whitfeld	£14.10s.7½d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire; Bought at Muggleswick	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	81, 8lbs.	7d.	Nicholas Richardson	£2.7s.7d.
	Working	696	2d.	William Randson	£5.16s.0d.
	Working	38	3d.	Henry Walker	9s.6d.
TOTAL				£24.10s.4½d.	
1512-3	Weardale	758	5d.	Not stated	£15.15s.10d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	24	7d.	Bought at Newcastle	14s.0d.
	Working	757	2d.	William Randson	£6.6s.2d.
	Working	36	3d.	Henry Walker	9s.0d.
TOTAL				£24.11s.8d.	
1513-4	Weardale	670	5d.	Not stated	£13.19s.2d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Spanish	28	7d.	Fernando Melot	16s.4d.
	Working	778	2d.	William Randson	£6.9s.8d.
TOTAL				£22.11s.10d.	
1514-5	Weardale	750	4d.	Prior & Robert Stroder	£12.10s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire; Bought at Muggleswick	£1.6s.8d.
	Weardale	80	5d.	Edward Blumer	£1.13s.4d.
	Spanish	40	8d.	Robert Stroder & Ludovic Sotheron of Newcastle	£1.6s.8d.
	Working	872	2d.	William Randson	£7.5s.4d.
	Working	48	3d.	Robert Wilkynson of Elvet	12s.0d.
	Working	30	-	Henry Walker	£1.0s.0d.
TOTAL				£26.14s.0d.	
1515-6	Weardale	600	4d.	Master Hugh Whithede, the prior's instaurer, bought at Muggleswick	£10.0s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Weardale	324	5d.	Edward Blumer & others	£6.15s.
	Spanish	60.5	8d.	John Snaw & Edward Baxter of Newcastle	£2.0s.4d.
	Working	930	2d.	William Randson	£7.15s.0d.
	Working	30	-	Henry Walker	£1.0s.0d.
TOTAL				£28.17s.0d.	
1519-20	Weardale	600	5d.	Prior's instaurer	£12.10s.0d.
	Weardale	80	4d.	Wodhire	£1.6s.8d.
	Weardale	86	5d.	Edward Blumer & his associates ("sociis suis")	£1.15s.10d.
	Weardale	74	5d.	Roger Dentt of Colpekyn	£1.10s.10d.
	Working	810	2d.	John Ford	£6.15s.0d.
	Working	30	-	Henry Walker	£1.0s.0d.
TOTAL				£24.18s.4d.	

**APPENDIX D : Merchants**

The following tables list all the merchants mentioned as selling wine, spices or Spanish or Weardale iron, in the bursars', comunars', hostillars' and sacrists' accounts, in order of frequency of occurrence in each product category. The tables are cross-referenced to show the overlap between the suppliers of different commodities, using the following symbols:

@ = also appears in these accounts supplying Weardale iron.

W = also appears in these accounts supplying wine.

S = also appears in these accounts supplying spices.

# = also appears in these accounts supplying Spanish iron.

Place names that are associated with a particular merchants in these accounts are noted in the tables, with the most common - Newcastle - being designated by an asterisk (\*) after the name.

**Spanish Iron Merchants**

Mentions	Name	Name
10	Roland Sotheron* W	
5	Robert Stokall* W	John Esyngton* W
4	William Clerk* W Alexander Robynson (& his widow)	Thomas Saunderson* Thomas Swan* W
3	Alice Byrde* Thomas Davell* W	John Dolphamby John Farne S
1	Edward Baxter* W George Baxter* John Baxter* Robert Baxter WS Peter Bewyk Robert Blunt John Brandlyng* WS Robert Brigham William Brigham Jacob Brikke W John Bronn of Pipwelgate John Brown's widow Richard Brown* William Carr* W William Chambr John Cok W Robert Coke W John Colt William Cristal Thomas Cuthbert Richard Davell Richard Dixon @ John Dobson of Durham Robert Duke of Gateshead John Eland of Durham (steel) S George Elwald Thomas Farne (steel) John Forster	John Hanebabrew of Hull Robert Harcas William Hardyng W William Hayn Richard Hele Robert Heley* W William Knot William Langton John Lomley Robert Lyle Fernando Melot William Milo Thomas Orwell John Rand* Roger Rawe* W Nicholas Richardson John Sample* W Roger Sample W John Snaw Ludovic Sotheron* Robert Sotheron John Stevenson* Robert Stroder @ Thomas Warwick William Welles Bertram Yong Bertram Yonghusband* W Captain of the Gild of Holy Trinity at Durham

**Weardale Iron Merchants**

Mentions	Name	Name
19	The prior/ the prior's "instaurer"	
17	Edward Bloomer	
7	Thomas Stobbes	
6	John Stobbes	
5	Hugh Whitfeld	
4	Henry Trippe	
3	Richard Greneswerd Thomas Whitfeld	Robert Wren
2	Robert Batmanson Richard Dixon # Roland Henryson William Kirkley of Knytherley John Marche John Perdenaux	Robert Smyth Richard Stobbes of Durham John Swynburn William Tod Henry Walker Robert Walker
1	William Andrews of Whitehall William Bloomer William Bowke Robert Brikke Robert Craue Thomas Dawson William Dawson Roger Dent of Colpekyn Ralph Dixon William Grenewerd Gilbert Hawthorn Antony Henryson John Henryson Thomas Henryson William Henryson of Muggleswick Galfrido Kirkhaus Thomas Kirkhaus of Langchestre	John Lovon of Weardale Thomas Marche William Marche Robert Olyid of Edmondbires William Palyser of Unthank William Paton John Rawe Robert Stobbes Robert Stroder # Thomas Swynburn of Espshelle Thomas Warde William Warde Richard Whitfeld Thomas Wren William Wren John Wright

**Spice Merchants**

Mentions	Name	Name
14	William Cornforth W	
10	John Eland #	
9(+2)	John Farne (+ his widow) #	
5	William Shotton	Cuthbert Heron
1	Edward Baxter (fruit only) Robert Baxter #W John Brandling (fruit only) #W Henry Chester John Dudem (fruit only) William Langton Ralph Millet (fruit only)	Thomas Rydall (fruit only) William Sawell (fruit only) Roger Richardson Robert Ruherson George Swynburn (fruit only) John Wall (onions only)

Wine merchants

Mentions	Name	Name
14	John Sample #	
12	William Carr #	
8	George Bird	
7	John Brandlyng S#	
6	Thomas Swan	
5	George Stamper	
4	John Blaxton Christopher Brygham William Clerk # Robert Heley #	Thomas Hardying William Richardson John Robinson Bertram Yonghusband #
3	John Esyngton #	Roger Rawe #
2	Edward Baxter # William Camby John Cok # Edward Fyndall Robert Hardying	Christopher Raw Antonio Rede Robert Saunderson Robert Stokall # William Wright
1	Robert Bartram William Bartram John Bertram Robert Baxter S# John Bellacyse Robert Beneley William Beneley William Bentley Henry Bidnell John Blunt Jacob Brikke # Thomas Bronn John Brotherwyck George Burrell Thomas Burton Alan Byrde George Carr Master Cepe William Clakeston Thomas Claxton George Clerkson Edward Conyngham Richard Conyngham Robert Cooke # William Cornforth S Thomas Davell # Thomas Eiydon Thomas Empryson Thomas Epen Thomas Fayrhars [missing] Francis William Fyshewyte William Greene	John Gybson Nicholas Hanyng Richard Hanyng Alan Hardying William Hardying # Thomas Harebrade George Hebborne Robert Henryson John Herlo Robert Holbet Robert Howet Henry Htster William Hudson William Hunter Thomas Johnson John Lawys William Lawys Thomas Lokwood Matthew Malber Robert Mawer John Orbell Thomas Paton Robert Pykten Christopher Rawe William Richardson Roger Sample # Thomas Scot Rodolph Sotheron Roland Sotheron # Thomas Swan # William Swan John Syde John Watson Richard Wrangwysh

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