

CHAPTER 9

Understanding Variability in Consumption

In considering how consumption habits vary across medieval society, Jeremy Goldberg's (2008) stimulating comparison of later medieval urban and rural inventories provides a useful starting point. His argument, that through consumption patterns we can see the emergence of distinctive urban identities and taste, is based on the following contentions:

- High proportions of the wealth of rural households were invested in live-stock and farming equipment (what Goldberg terms 'outside' goods);
- Rural peasant households invested preferentially in 'essential' household goods, such as cooking equipment, rather than luxury goods;
- Luxury goods, specifically in Goldberg's study cushions and silver spoons, are predominantly features of urban households.

Goldberg (2008) identifies three broad modes of consumption, which he equates to a contrast between urban and rural systems of value. The 'peasant' value system privileges the acquisition of animals and goods associated with production, with a minority of wealth invested in luxury domestic items. The majority of household goods are what Goldberg terms 'essentials' related to cooking and sleeping, although no precise distinction is made between what might be considered a luxury or essential good, a distinction which is surely highly contextual. The second is an urban 'bourgeois' system of value, in which domestic goods, including luxuries, account for the majority of household possessions by value and quantity. The third is a 'mercantile' value system, related to the 'bourgeois' system, but with elevated investment in economic goods associated with production or trade.

This model appears to indicate a clear and marked distinction between urban and rural patterns of consumption. However, there are ambiguities within

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Goldberg's sample, which are of particular relevance to the current study. The majority of Goldberg's urban inventories are from larger towns, principally King's Lynn, York and London. However, the sample from York includes an individual identified as a husbandman and also incorporates a number of examples from the small-town of Northallerton. The goods of these households equate more closely to the rural signature (Goldberg 2008, 128). This demonstrates that the 'urban' mode of consumption may be more complex than this tripartite system of value suggests. Goldberg's rural sample is based on a small group of rural, non-elite inventories, principally the collection of Yorkshire probate inventories mentioned in Chapter 2, and a group of sixteenth-century inventories from Nottinghamshire. The analysis presented here provides an opportunity, firstly, to assess the wider applicability of Goldberg's rural signature across a larger and more diverse sample of rural households, and secondly to explore in greater detail the extent to which 'rural' systems of value characterise the consumption of small-town households.

Small towns are a problematic category of place. Some small boroughs may be indistinguishable from a contemporary rural settlement in terms of economy, while others were larger settlements or had particularly specialised economies (see Dyer 2002; 2003). It is this ambiguity, and the fact that many small-town dwellers were closely engaged in agriculture, with small towns being a distinctive component of the manorial economy (Dimmock 2001; Goddard 2011; Jervis 2016b) which has led to the 'urbanity' of these places being contested. The data presented here offers an opportunity to compare small-town evidence against that from larger towns presented by Goldberg, and that from categorically rural settlements. This will result in a clearer understanding of whether the consumption patterns evident in larger towns resonate in these places of more ambiguous urban status, and if they contrast in any way with those of their rural counterparts. A characteristic of models such as Goldberg's is that they are necessarily generalising, and therefore a key aim of our analysis is to understand the extent to which we can see variability in the consumption habits of households both between town and country, but also in relation to wealth and social status. A further consideration arising from Goldberg's model concerns the classification of goods as 'inside' or 'outside', which suggests a clear spatial division between 'domestic' and 'productive' activities, a distinction which is not tenable when one considers both the archaeological and historical evidence for the multifunctional character of medieval houses and the areas around them (Briggs *et al.* 2019; Dyer 2013).

Hamling and Richardson (2017), discussing the later part of our period, suggest that the material trappings of domestic life were one way in which the 'middling sort' emerged as a cohesive social group, with its members sharing an understanding of material meaning and the entangling of objects within relationships of obligation and community building. Yet, as in Goldberg's analysis, their source material is primarily urban in character and is not well suited to considering the rural and lower status households which characterise the

datasets under consideration here. We must take care in considering consumption to avoid privileging the urban and middling experience; it need not be the case that non-elite households were seeking to emulate those of higher social standing, nor that they were left behind, but rather that they constructed specific material worlds which generated distinctive ways of life. The aim of this chapter is to contextualise consumption, to understand how and why it varied across the spectrum of medieval society.

In testing and expanding upon Goldberg's thesis, it is necessary to refine the dataset. For both the escheators' and coroners' datasets, lists have been selected for analysis for which we have a degree of confidence that they are representative of the range of goods present in a household, defined as having items for cooking and sleeping, or one of these functions plus a general category of household utensils (*utensilia domus*), with a minimum of three of thirteen functional categories of goods being represented.⁴⁰¹ These functional categories are further divided into:

'Economic' objects:

- Animals
- Farming equipment
- Craft materials and equipment
- Grain and fodder
- Textiles
- Fuel

and 'Domestic' goods:

- Tableware
- Cooking and food preparation
- Furniture
- Soft furnishings
- Personal items
- Arms and armour
- Clothing and personal adornment

It is also necessary to exclude any lists for which goods are not valued in such a way as to facilitate analysis based on function (for example where lists have total valuations, or group large numbers of items). This leaves a sample of 169 escheators' lists and 60 coroners' lists. Households have been identified as rural or living in small towns, the latter comprising places with a borough charter (as indicated by Letters 2006), or identified by Everitt (1967) as a market town in 1600. We are dealing with small towns, as larger towns were in most

⁴⁰¹ These functional categories are a refinement of those used in Briggs *et al.* 2019, which is based on a smaller dataset analysed at a preliminary phase of the project.

cases excluded from our survey and are in any case poorly served by our documentary sources (see Chapter 2). While imperfect, as places with borough status did not always develop into towns, and some non-boroughs had urban characteristics but may have declined by 1600, this approach offers the most straightforward and meaningful way of distinguishing between small-town and rural households in the context of this dataset. Archaeological evidence lends itself less well to the quantitative approach undertaken here, but provides valuable additional insights into household expenditure, particularly in relation to investment in houses themselves and as an indicator of small-scale market interactions.

A challenge in undertaking this analysis lies in defining a ‘household’, and in assessing the completeness of the lists as representations of the possessions of a household. Our analysis demonstrates that there are clear differences in the practices of felony forfeiture across England (see Chapter 2). Some lists of chattels clearly represent the items that a person had with them when they were apprehended, but other lists are more ambiguous and may point to instances of extended households. The claims of dependents in relation to forfeited property and the extent of crown rights are unclear. Understanding this in terms of the escheators’ and coroners’ records has implications for how we consider household consumption. We assume each record relates to the goods of a household; the seized goods of the named male head, being those in his name which, by extension, were those of his household. However, there may be instances of forfeiting male individuals within a household (e.g. servants, sons, apprentices), who only had a small number of items to their name. In such instances, we might expect their lists to include items such as bedding, clothing, animals and craft resources but, perhaps, not kitchen goods or other items which might have been the legal possessions of the household head.

Of interest in this regard are the possessions of John Vynche and Clement Vynche of Yalding (Kent).⁴⁰² Both had their goods seized in 1428 as outlaws in civil litigation. John, a labourer, had two piglets, a worn brass pot and pan, and a coverlet, two sheets and two blankets. Clement, a fuller, had a table and worn chair, a brass pot, two worn pans, a chest, a coverlet, a worn blanket, one sheet and two tin plates. This was, however, the second time that Clement’s goods had been seized following outlawry. In 1422, he had three piglets, two bullocks, a brass pot, and ‘a bed, namely coverlet, blankets, sheets, mattress and canvas.’ Such lists are difficult to interpret. Are these two households? Or were these seemingly related individuals living under the same roof? As a labourer, John potentially had a precarious existence relying on wages. In 1428 at least Clement Vynche had furniture, while both had metalware and bedding. We can also draw on other lists which were deemed to be ‘incomplete’ for the purposes of this analysis. While many of the apparent omissions clearly relate to regional inventorying practices or the apprehension of a felon in flight, others

⁴⁰² E101; E102; E622.

could relate to household organisation. There are numerous lists which include bedding but no cooking ware, or metal vessels with no bedding, while others include only animals or agricultural produce. Without supporting information about the organisation of these households, the data we present here must therefore be considered minimal and perhaps represent the goods of the male head of a household, his wife and children, but not necessarily the goods of everybody within a household unit. Even where the forfeiting individual is the household head, the list may not include the goods of everybody in the household. The analysis here must therefore be predicated on some assumptions: that the goods listed are those of nuclear family units, which may form one component of an extended household, and that the lists identified here as being the most comprehensive through the application of the criteria described above are close to full representations of the possessions of these units. A number of interpretations can be put forward for those lists which are excluded: that they are partial lists; that they are the goods of households with meagre possessions; that they are lists of persons other than the household head, such as servants or sons; or that goods were removed prior to seizure.

We begin the chapter by focussing on Goldberg's contention that higher proportions of the wealth of rural households took the form of animals, grain and agricultural equipment, and by considering the ownership of animals. We then go on to examine the ways in which households invested in comfort and display, as well as houses themselves, before discussing the ways in which urban and rural households might be considered distinctive from each other.

Investment in economic goods by rural and small-town households

Central to Goldberg's argument is a distinction between two types of goods: 'household' goods such as furniture, tableware and cooking equipment; and 'outside' goods including animals and agricultural equipment. Rural households are characterised by a higher proportion of wealth being held as 'outside' goods, while urban 'bourgeois' households show the opposite pattern. The urban 'mercantile' signature sits somewhere between these extremes, but is characterised by the acquisition of a more diverse range of domestic goods, a phenomenon considered later in this chapter. As we have suggested elsewhere (Briggs *et al.* 2019), such a dichotomy is problematic, because it fails to appreciate the fluid and highly variable spatial arrangements of the medieval home. Here we adopt a similar distinction between items associated with economic production (e.g. animals, grain, tools) and those associated with domesticity (e.g. cooking equipment, tableware and furniture). While we acknowledge there may be an overlap between these categories, such an approach allows us to assess our data in relation to Goldberg's arguments. If Goldberg's bourgeois and mercantile consumption patterns are common to both larger and smaller

Table 9.1: Summary of minimum, mean and maximum proportion of inventoried wealth represented by domestic and economic goods by households in the escheators' and coroners' records.

| | | Domestic | | | Economic | | | No. Lists |
|-------------|------------|----------|--------|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | | Min. | Max. | Mean | Min. | Max. | Mean | |
| Escheators' | Rural | 1.5% | 100.0% | 47.7% | 0.0% | 98.6% | 52.3% | 125 |
| | Small-Town | 9.8% | 100.0% | 63.8% | 0.0% | 90.2% | 36.2% | 44 |
| Coroners' | Rural | 2.3% | 100.0% | 33.5% | 0.0% | 97.6% | 64.1% | 47 |
| | Small-Town | 3.3% | 100.0% | 60.8% | 0.0% | 67.6% | 32.9% | 13 |

towns, we would anticipate that higher proportions of the inventoried wealth of small-town households would be held as domestic goods, particularly items associated with comfort and display, than is the case for rural households. However, such a dichotomous approach runs the risk of homogenizing households within the two categories, small-town and rural; we might anticipate that a range of other variables, including occupation, wealth and household structure might all contribute to variability in consumption habits, as is suggested both by Goldberg's distinction between bourgeois and mercantile consumption, and his observations regarding the 'rural' signature of certain town dwellers.

Across the escheators' records, there are 125 lists relating to rural households and 44 relating to small-town households which meet our criteria. The figures for the coroners' records are lower: 47 relating to rural settlements and 13 relating to small-town dwellers. At a general level, both the escheators' and coroners' records bear out the contention that small-town households invested higher proportions of wealth in domestic goods and rural households invested higher proportions of wealth in economic goods (Table 9.1). For example, in the escheators' records, on average 64% of a small-town households' inventoried wealth (i.e. the total value of their goods) was held as domestic goods, while the figure is 48% for rural households. This broadly conforms to the contrast between urban and rural households observed by Goldberg. Among rural households, the mean level of inventoried wealth held as economic goods is higher than that held as domestic goods in both datasets, while the inverse is true for small-town households. The coroners' data suggests a more marked distinction between small-town and rural consumption than the escheators' data, perhaps implying greater deviation between small-town and rural lifestyles in the sixteenth century. However, these average figures conceal a wide degree of variation. In 1420 the husbandman Nicholas Gulot from the village of Bramley (Hampshire) held all of his inventoried wealth as domestic goods, including cooking vessels, bedding and tableware, while at the other extreme in 1381 Matthew de la Haye of Frindsbury (Kent) held 83% of his

inventoried wealth as economic goods including brewing equipment, four piglets and various arable produce.⁴⁰³ This variation is also evident among small-town households; in 1386 John Sele of Thirsk (Yorkshire) held all of his inventoried wealth in domestic goods including bedding, furniture and cooking equipment, in contrast to the yeoman Thomas Gribell of Tenterden (Kent) who held a range of animals and agricultural equipment, accounting for 89.5% of his inventoried wealth in 1451.⁴⁰⁴

To understand this variability better, we can divide households along two lines; firstly, by the principal source of household income as suggested by their possessions, and secondly by the total value of a household's goods, which provides a rough proxy for wealth. Within the escheators' and coroners' records, most households were agriculturalists or had some form of agricultural element to their household economy. For the purposes of this analysis, they can be divided based on the profile of their possessions into households with small numbers of animals (typically five or fewer),⁴⁰⁵ pastoral agriculturalists (who possessed a larger number of animals), arable agriculturalists (who possessed quantities of grain listed as in a field, sheaf or barn, and/or ploughing equipment) and mixed agriculturalists (who possessed animals along with items suggesting engagement in arable husbandry). Those with small quantities of animals or engaged in pastoral husbandry could also possess small quantities of grain within their homes (e.g. as bushels or sacks). Finally, a small group of households possessed no objects which provide evidence of occupation, while others clearly relate to artisans, some of whom had some form of agricultural interest.

The escheators' data shows that the distinction between small-town and rural households is less marked when households are divided by household economy in this way (Table 9.2). For example, the average proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic objects in households undertaking pastoral agriculture is 63.1% for rural households and 67.5% for small-town households. Although the sample size is small, it appears to be the economic activities of the household, rather than whether they were resident in town or country, which determined the proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic objects. The only deviation from this pattern is artisans, for whom the proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic objects is considerably higher in town (51.1%) than country (18.8%). Here though the sample size is small. A third of the value of the goods of the weaver William Horne relates to his two pairs of looms, his only economic objects.⁴⁰⁶ In contrast, the wooden hoops, barrels and brewing equipment belonging to the cooper John Coupere account for 66% of his goods

⁴⁰³ E557; E663.

⁴⁰⁴ E891; E477.

⁴⁰⁵ Exceptions are instances where households had a small quantity of fowl, five or fewer meat-bearing animals, and one or two horses, or only possessed horses in quantities which do not suggest horse breeding.

⁴⁰⁶ E483.

Table 9.2: Average proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic (Eco.) and domestic (Dom.) goods in the escheators' and coroners' records in relation to household economy.

| | Escheators' | | | | | | Coroners' | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Rural | | | Small-Town | | | Rural | | | Small-Town | | |
| | No. Lists | Mean Eco. | Mean Dom. | No. Lists | Mean Eco. | Mean Dom. | No. Lists | Mean Eco. | Mean Dom. | No. Lists | Mean Eco. | Mean Dom. |
| Few animals | 21 | 44.9% | 55.1% | 6 | 30.4% | 69.6% | 9 | 59.2% | 39.9% | 2 | 43.4% | 54.0% |
| Few animals (with grain) | 10 | 59.2% | 40.8% | 2 | 56.8% | 43.2% | 1 | 51.7% | 48.3% | 0 | – | – |
| Pastoral | 13 | 63.1% | 36.9% | 5 | 67.5% | 32.5% | 4 | 64.5% | 35.2% | 2 | 52.5% | 46.0% |
| Pastoral (with grain) | 10 | 70.9% | 29.1% | 1 | 84.9% | 15.1% | 1 | 83.4% | 16.6% | 0 | – | – |
| Arable | 7 | 64.3% | 35.7% | 1 | 34.1% | 65.9% | 1 | 76.8% | 22.7% | 1 | 44.6% | 53.7% |
| Mixed | 31 | 78.5% | 21.5% | 2 | 88.0% | 12.0% | 22 | 47.8% | 47.8% | 2 | 50.0% | 25.2% |
| Grain | 6 | 29.8% | 70.2% | 4 | 26.5% | 73.5% | 1 | 46.1% | 53.9% | 0 | – | – |
| Artisan | 6 | 18.8% | 81.2% | 7 | 51.1% | 48.9% | 0 | – | – | 2 | 23.1% | 65.7% |
| Artisan with agricultural interest | 2 | 64.7% | 35.3% | 3 | 59.2% | 40.8% | 2 | 50.7% | 49.3% | 1 | 39.7% | 59.9% |
| No evidence of occupation | 19 | 8.9% | 91.1% | 13 | 9.1% | 90.9% | 6 | 14.8% | 83.8% | 3 | 1.7% | 98.2% |
| Total | 125 | | | 44 | | | 47 | | | 13 | | |

by value.⁴⁰⁷ These examples demonstrate the need to be cautious in extrapolating generalising conclusions from a small number of lists.

The coroners' dataset is much smaller, but across all categories of household there appears to be a stronger polarisation in the relative proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic goods between town and country. This is most noticeable among those households with few animals, for whom in the countryside economic goods account for an average of 59.2% of inventoried wealth, whereas the figure is only 43.4% for urban households. This data therefore supports the interpretation of an increasing polarisation between urban and rural in the sixteenth century.

A particular feature of the data when broken down by total inventoried wealth (Table 9.3) is that in both the escheators' and the coroners' datasets, for both rural and small-town households, the households with the highest proportion of inventoried wealth held as domestic goods are those who appear poorest (Figure 9.1a and b). It is also noticeable that there is greater divergence in the proportion of inventoried wealth held as domestic goods among poorer than wealthier households in town and country, with this being more marked in the coroners' dataset (Figure 9.1b). Within the escheators' records among those of middling wealth, there is an approximately equal proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic and domestic objects, though with a slight emphasis on economic objects in rural households and domestic ones within small-town households. Among the small-town and rural datasets, the proportion of wealth held as economic goods appears to increase with wealth at a similar rate (Figure 9.2), with the goods acquired by rural households being skewed slightly towards the economic. This correlation between wealth and investment in economic goods is also reflected in the coroners' records; however, there is substantially higher investment in economic goods by rural than urban households within this dataset (Figure 9.2b).

This analysis demonstrates that consumption patterns are more complex than indicating a straightforward dichotomy between small-town and rural households in terms of the relationship between 'economic' and 'domestic' goods. While the small-town datasets are skewed towards domestic goods and the rural datasets towards economic goods, this distinction is less marked in the escheators' data than in the coroners' data. There are also clear variations along lines of economic activity, with agricultural specialists existing within small towns, who held significant proportions of their wealth as economic goods, roughly in accordance with levels of wealth; specifically, the poorest households invested the highest proportions of wealth in domestic goods, perhaps because they could either not afford or were unable to keep livestock. The remainder of this section explores the economic goods present in these households in greater depth. We then move to consider investment in household

⁴⁰⁷ E304.

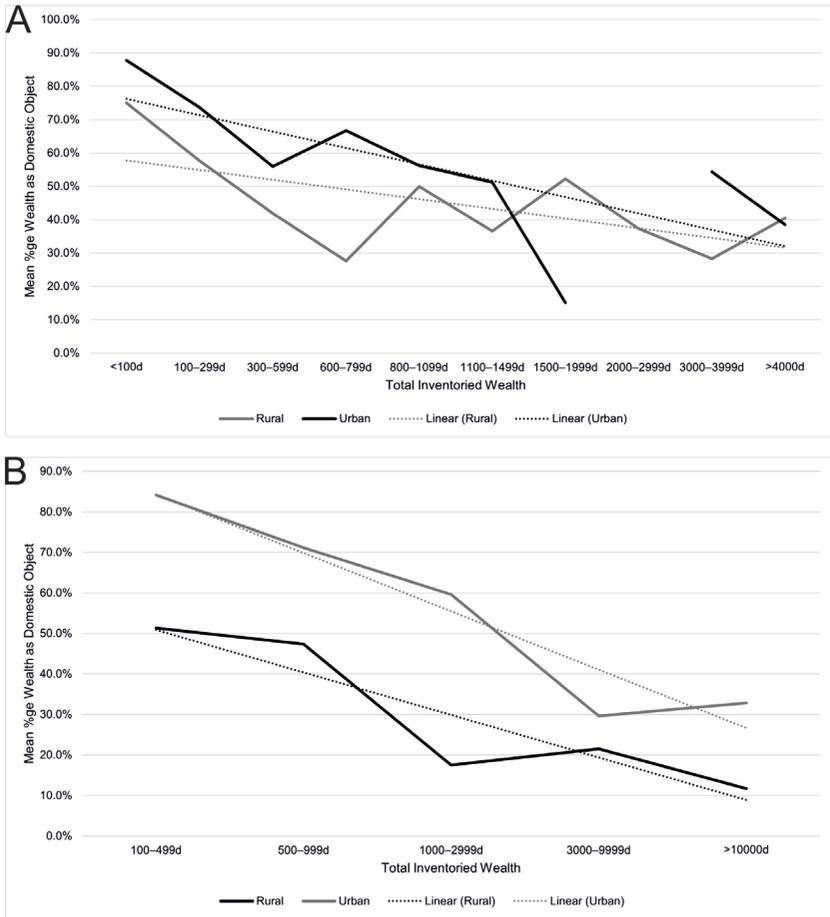


Figure 9.1: Average proportion of inventoried wealth held as domestic possessions. A: Escheators' records. B: Coroners' records.

fabric and the acquisition of 'domestic' goods, including those identified by Goldberg as markers of an urban value system.

Rural agriculturalists

Agriculturalist households of various forms comprise the vast majority of the escheators' lists. This section discusses the possession of animals and, to a lesser degree, the arable activities of these households. In considering the relationship between animal ownership and wealth, it is important to take into account not only the costs of the animals, but also of the feed and infrastructure required to keep them. While archaeological evidence cannot directly inform us about

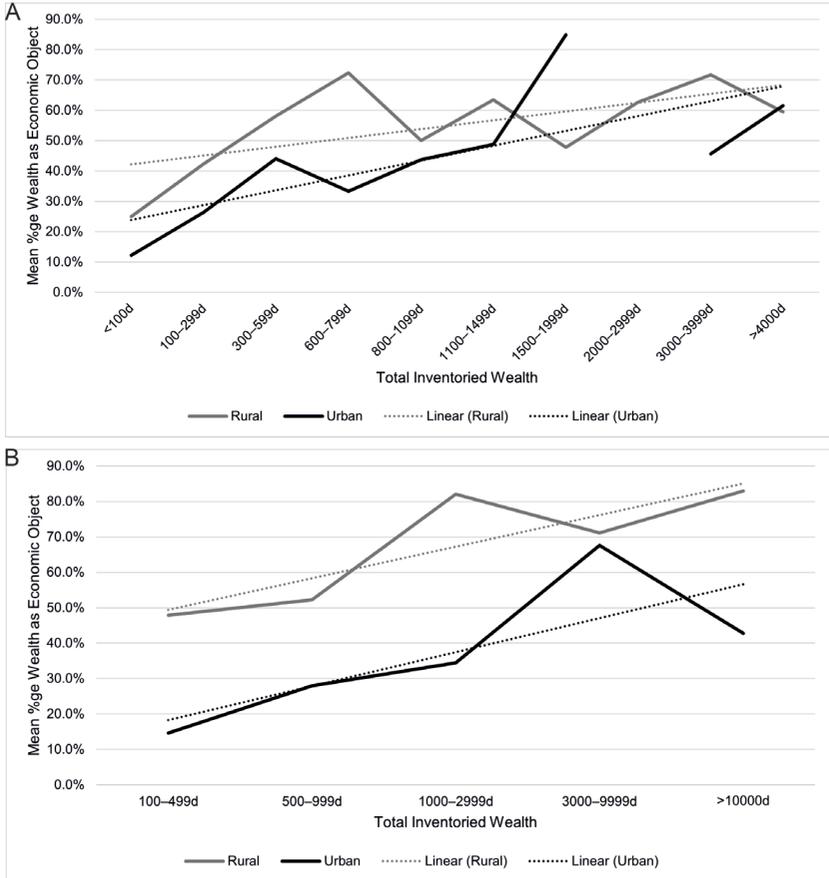


Figure 9.2: Average proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic goods. A: Escheators' records. B: Coroners' records.

the animals kept by particular households, the remains of the associated infrastructure can reveal information about the relationship between agriculture and domestic space. Dyer (2019a, 37) notes that peasant holdings could include a range of structures for housing animals, but that documentary evidence suggests that their livestock was 'not as comprehensively sheltered as those on the demesne'. As he observes, archaeological evidence provides some context for small-scale husbandry, with house compounds often incorporating shelters for animals. Particularly good examples have been excavated at Foxcotte (Hampshire) where an ancillary structure, from which a curry comb and horse-shoes were excavated, might reasonably be interpreted as a stable (Russel 1985). A similar ancillary block, also associated with equestrian equipment forms a part of a house compound at Wythemail (Northamptonshire; Hurst and Hurst 1969; Figure 9.4), while a cobbled floor adjacent to a house at Martinsthorpe

Table 9.3: Average proportion of inventoried wealth held as economic (Eco.) and domestic (Dom.) goods by wealth in the escheators' and coroners' datasets.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | Rural | | | Small-Town | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | No. Lists | Mean Eco. | Mean Dom. | No. Lists | Mean Eco. | Mean Dom. |
| Escheators' | | | | | | |
| <100d | 16 | 25.0% | 75.0% | 6 | 12.2% | 87.8% |
| 100–299d | 26 | 42.4% | 57.6% | 13 | 26.3% | 73.7% |
| 300–599d | 33 | 58.1% | 41.9% | 11 | 45.5% | 53.9% |
| 600–799d | 9 | 72.4% | 27.6% | 1 | 33.3% | 66.7% |
| 800–1099d | 6 | 50.1% | 49.9% | 5 | 54.6% | 45.4% |
| 1100–1499d | 6 | 63.5% | 36.5% | 2 | 48.8% | 51.2% |
| 1500–1999d | 4 | 47.8% | 52.2% | 1 | 84.9% | 15.1% |
| 2000–2999d | 8 | 62.7% | 37.3% | 0 | – | – |
| 3000–3999d | 7 | 71.8% | 28.2% | 2 | 45.7% | 54.3% |
| >4000d | 10 | 59.5% | 40.5% | 3 | 61.5% | 38.5% |
| Coroners' | | | | | | |
| 100–499d | 11 | 47.9% | 51.3% | 3 | 14.6% | 84.2% |
| 500–999d | 10 | 49.2% | 50.4% | 3 | 44.6% | 53.7% |
| 1000–2999d | 12 | 82.0% | 17.5% | 4 | 34.5% | 59.6% |
| 3000–9999d | 10 | 71.1% | 21.6% | 1 | 67.6% | 29.6% |
| >10000d | 4 | 83.0% | 11.7% | 2 | 42.7% | 32.9% |

(Rutland) is interpreted as a byre (Wacher 1964). Other examples from our study area, at West Cotton (Northamptonshire; a stable), Cedars Park (Suffolk; a sheepcote) and Gomeldon (Wiltshire; a barn) are highlighted in Dyer's (2019a) survey of animal housing.

Evidence can also be found for the storage and processing of crops, for example a barn and corn drying kiln associated with a longhouse at Beere (Devon; Jope and Threlfall 1958). Enclosed crofts also allowed for small-scale arable or horticultural cultivation within the houseplot. Particularly good examples are the excavated houses and enclosures at West Whelpington (Northumberland; Jarrett 1970; Evans and Jarrett 1987). Here the plots are laid out around a green which could have been used as common pasture, with sizeable enclosures to the rear of the houses. In upland areas in northern and south-western England,

a particularly close relationship between animal husbandry and domesticity is indicated by the distinctive longhouse, or byre-house, form (Dyer 2019a, 38–40). These have a byre at one end, sheltering households and their animals under one roof. Once thought to be widespread across England, reinterpretation of this type by Gardiner has shown it be to a localised form of dwelling, well suited to the requirements of upland pastoralists (Gardiner 2000; 2014b). In Devon and Cornwall, for example at Okehampton Park (Devon; Austin 1978), at sites on Dartmoor (Beresford 1979) and at Treworld (Cornwall; Dudley and Minter 1966), clear examples of byre houses exist, and similar types occur in Yorkshire, Northumberland and the north-west. The type appears to become common from the thirteenth century (Gardiner 2014b, 158), being one of a suite of solutions adopted by households for the sheltering of animals particularly during the winter months. As proposed by Dyer (2019a), this evidence demonstrates how in rural contexts, domestic architecture was adapted to the needs of agriculturalists, with different arrangements potentially reflecting both the general husbandry regime, but also the scale and organisation of animal ownership. It is to this variability that we can turn through a discussion of the evidence offered by the escheators' and coroners' records.

Households with small numbers of animals

In the escheators' records, most households that possessed five or fewer animals had total inventoried wealth of under 600d/£2 10s (Table 9.4). Similarly, the majority of those within this class in the coroners' records had total inventoried wealth of under 500d/£2 1s 8d. However, even within the broad categories of agriculturalist that we have applied to the escheators' and coroners' datasets, there is considerable variability in the number and range of animals possessed by households. This is well demonstrated by those households possessing few animals (Table 9.5). In 1428 John Vynche of Yalding (Kent) had two piglets (12d) and in 1383 Simon Brayn of Boddington (Northamptonshire) had one pig (12d).⁴⁰⁸ Vynch and Brayn both had total inventoried wealth of <100d and their limited holdings of livestock appear typical for the least well-off households within our sample; their lists probably reflect the archetypal pig-keeping economy of the poor cottager or labourer. We might anticipate that such households are underrepresented in the dataset, for example if an animal had recently been slaughtered and eaten, but was yet to be replaced. Any relationship between wealth and livestock ownership inevitably has a degree of circularity to it, as livestock often account for a significant proportion of inventoried wealth (see also Goldberg 2008, 128). We can see the profile of animal ownership changing in relation to household wealth. Among those households with total inventoried wealth of 100–299d, there are some, such as Nicholas

⁴⁰⁸ E101; E750.

Table 9.4: Relationship between the inventoried wealth and household economy of rural households in the escheators' and coroners' datasets. The percentages show the proportion of each category of household economy within each wealth class.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | Agriculturalists | | | | | | | Non-Agriculturalists | | | Total Lists | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Few animals | Few animals (with grain) | Arable | Grain | Pastoral | Pastoral (with grain) | Mixed | Artisan with agricultural interest | Artisan | No economic objects | | |
| Escheators: Rural | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <100d | 19.0% | 10.0% | 14.3% | 33.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.2% | | | | 38.8% | 16 |
| 100–299d | 38.1% | 20.0% | 42.9% | 50.0% | 15.4% | 0.0% | 3.2% | | | 33.3% | 27.8% | 26 |
| 300–599d | 33.3% | 40.0% | 42.9% | 16.7% | 53.8% | 10.0% | 16.1% | | | 33.3% | 16.7% | 33 |
| 600–799d | 4.8% | | | | 15.4% | 10.0% | 12.9% | 50.0% | | | | 9 |
| 800–1099d | | | | | | 10.0% | 9.7% | | | | 5.6% | 6 |
| 1100d–1499d | | | | | | 10.0% | 12.9% | | 16.7% | | | 6 |
| 1500–1999d | | 10.0% | | | | | 6.5% | | | | 5.6% | 4 |
| 2000–2999d | | 10.0% | | | | 30.0% | 6.5% | | 16.7% | | 5.6% | 8 |
| 3000–3999d | | 10.0% | | | 7.7% | 20.0% | 6.5% | 50.0% | | | | 7 |
| >4000d | 4.8% | | | | 7.7% | 10.0% | 22.6% | | | | | 10 |
| Total Lists | 21 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 31 | 2 | 6 | 19 | 125 | 125 |

(Continued)

Table 9.4: Continued.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | Agriculturalists | | | | | | | Non-Agriculturalists | | | Total Lists | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------|----|
| | Few animals | Few animals (with grain) | Arable | Grain | Pastoral | Pastoral (with grain) | Mixed | Artisan with agricultural interest | Artisan | No economic objects | | |
| 100-499d | 66.6% | | | | 50.0% | | | 4.5% | 50.0% | | 33.3% | 11 |
| 500-999d | 33.3% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | | | | 4.5% | | | 33.3% | 10 |
| 1000-2999d | | | | | 50% | 100.0% | | 31.8% | 50.0% | | 16.7% | 12 |
| 3000-9999d | | | | | | | | 40.9% | | | 16.7% | 10 |
| >10000d | | | | | | | | 18.2% | | | | 4 |
| Total Lists | 9 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 22 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 47 | |

Coroners: Rural

Table 9.5: Patterns of livestock ownership by rural households with few animals in the escheators' records. Values = number of lists containing specific combinations of animals.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | Pig | Cattle | Horse | Pig & Sheep | Cattle & Pig | Cattle & Horse | Horse & Pig | Total Lists |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| <100d | 4 | | | 1 | | | | 5 |
| 100–299d | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 10 |
| 300–599d | 1 | 4 | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| 600–799d | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| 1500–1999d | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| 2000–2999d | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| 2000–3999d | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| >4000d | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Total Lists | 7 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 31 |

Foscote of Cosgrove (Northamptonshire) whose livestock were similar to those of the poorest households; he possessed a single piglet (18d) in 1424.⁴⁰⁹ Others had cows, perhaps for domestic milk production. John Walssh of Tamerton (Devon) had one cow (8s) in 1430, while in 1380 Hugh of St Albans of Apethorpe (Northamptonshire) had a calf (40d).⁴¹⁰ These represent different types of investment: cow ownership involved a large investment in an animal which can produce milk over a long period of time, but which required care, grazing and large quantities of food, while pigs represent a lower-level investment in an asset which was essentially disposable but required minimal care. We can see this spectrum of animal ownership continuing among those households with total inventoried wealth of 300–599d, for whom cattle ownership was of considerable importance. Households typically possessed one or two cows, presumably for domestic dairying. William Shepherd of Holcot (Northamptonshire) had a cow (7s 4d) and a mare (6s 8d) in 1403, and Ralph Tyryngton of Lund, Yorkshire, had a cow (9s) and two sows (20d each) in 1418.⁴¹¹ Similarly, the chaplain Simon Hull of Blatherwick (Northamptonshire) had one cow (8s) among goods worth £2 in 1410, and another chaplain, John Curson of Gateforth (Yorkshire) had a cow (5s 6d) and a horse (2s) among goods worth 27s 2d in 1415.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ E631.

⁴¹⁰ E746; E1502.

⁴¹¹ E1604; E277.

⁴¹² E299; E400.

Additional evidence for this small-scale, domestically focussed mode of animal husbandry is provided by two artisans with animals. Thomas Isenden of Sutton Valence (Kent) was clearly a tailor or mercer as his list contains large stocks of cloth, specifically described as ‘in the shop’ (Chapter 8). In 1383 he also possessed a single pig (18d), a cow (5s 6d) and two horses (15s) (the cow and horses being described as *debilis*). Similarly, the smith Robert Smyth of Sutton (Wiltshire), had two horses and a sow in 1422.⁴¹³ These instances suggest a model whereby households with low or modest levels of wealth were able to acquire small numbers of animals for domestic level production or consumption. This was a mode of husbandry that was also utilised by wealthier artisans (like Isenden) to supplement their main income, with animals perhaps kept within the house compound, or message.

Among the coroners’ records, the animals possessed by households with small numbers of animals are typically cattle, but usually held alongside other animals. For example, when he committed suicide in 1543, John Hudson of Kirk Hammerton (Yorkshire) had a cow (10s), heifer (3s 4d) and two sheep (2s), and in 1580 Miles Backhouse of Preston (Westmorland) had a cow (16s), swine and poultry (valued together at 5s).⁴¹⁴ Occupations are provided for three individuals: all are labourers rather than being identified as agriculturalists, supporting the suggestion that this small-scale animal ownership was largely intended to support the needs of a household as a supplement to other sources of income.

The wealthiest households in the escheators’ dataset display a somewhat different pattern of animal ownership. The wealthy franklin William Leder of West Lavington (Wiltshire) had possessions worth just over £13 15s in 1404. His animals are distinctive, comprising only three horses (40s).⁴¹⁵ Similarly, the clerk, John Waryn of Cardinham (Cornwall), had six high value horses (£12) among goods valued at £93 13s 4d in 1419.⁴¹⁶ Horse ownership was not unique to these households, for example William Alleyn of Sancroft (Suffolk) had one horse (5s) and one cow (6s) among goods valued at 20s 4d in 1384,⁴¹⁷ but the number and value of the horses kept by these wealthier households is distinctive.

Most surprising are households possessing bullocks rather than cows. These may have been acquired as potential traction animals, or retained as stud animals, which could potentially deliver some income to the household. Examples are John Stoyle of Charlton (Worcestershire) who had three bullocks (5s 4d each) in 1420, and the husbandman Richard West of Watford (Northamptonshire) who in 1447 possessed three bullocks (18d each, a strikingly lower value) and two mares (2s).⁴¹⁸

⁴¹³ E768; E1281.

⁴¹⁴ C42; C271.

⁴¹⁵ E28.

⁴¹⁶ E1503.

⁴¹⁷ E777.

⁴¹⁸ E364; E123.

Pastoral agriculturalists

This group comprises households that possessed six or more animals, with no clear evidence for engagement in arable agriculture. Across the rural escheators' sample, there are 23 households which can be identified as primarily pastoral agriculturalists, of which 13 possessed small quantities of grain (Table 9.6). These are spread across the spectrum of household wealth, with variation exhibited around the number of animals and level of specialisation. For example, in 1389 Thomas Burmond of Gaywood (Norfolk), whose goods were worth 13s 4d, had three sheep (20d), two piglets (16d) and one pig (20d), and two calves (2s 4d).⁴¹⁹ As such, he might be considered a small-scale domestic agriculturalist, like those already encountered. Similar examples are present in the coroners' records; the shepherd Richard Webbe of West Lavington (Wiltshire) had nine sheep (18s) and poultry (6d) in 1565.⁴²⁰

In the escheators' records, the stated occupations of those who were pastoralists suggests a degree of agricultural specialisation. The pastoralists comprise four husbandmen and a yeoman, as well as five clergymen (three parsons and a clerk) and a butcher, Roger Harre of Herne (Kent) whose two heifers with calves (valued together at 13s 4d) and five bullocks (20s) might be considered a form of stock for his business.⁴²¹ The coroners' records offer a similar picture: the three pastoralists whose occupation is stated comprise two husbandmen and a shepherd.

In the escheators' evidence, it is only in households with a total itemised wealth of over 600d/£2 10s that we see larger-scale, specialist pastoral husbandry. In 1402 John Shepherd of West Acre (Norfolk) had goods valued at over £2 16s, including 40 sheep (£2) and two pigs (6s 8d).⁴²² However, others, such as John Bowyer, probably of Great Wishford (Wiltshire), had a wider range of animals: 10 sheep (10s), three bullocks (10s), two cows (12s) and a horse (10s), his goods being worth 60s 4d in 1433.⁴²³ The possession of large sheep flocks, typically with a variety of other animals, is also a feature of the wealthiest households. For example, Henry Sparowe of Blacktoft (Yorkshire) whose goods were valued at £10 12s 6d in 1417, had 24 sheep (40s) and 35 ewes and hoggets (6d each), as well as a horse (3s 4d), a mare (6s 8d), three calves (6s) and two pigs (5s).⁴²⁴ Similarly wealthy agriculturalists with large sheep flocks can be observed in the coroners' sample. John Jacson, a husbandman of Bampton (Westmorland) had 20 sheep (40s), a heifer (5s), two bullocks (20s), a cow (16s), two oxen (40s) and two horses (26s 8d) in 1575, for example.⁴²⁵

⁴¹⁹ E841.

⁴²⁰ C158.

⁴²¹ E900.

⁴²² E1422.

⁴²³ E1530.

⁴²⁴ E583.

⁴²⁵ C215.

Table 9.6: Livestock ownership by rural pastoralist households in the escheators' and coroners' datasets.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | List No. | Value of Forfeited Property (d) | Name | Year | Occupation | Cattle | Fowl | Horse | Pig | Sheep | Total Animals |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|------------|--------|------|-------|-----|-------|---------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 100-299d | 841 | 160 | Thomas Burmond | 1389 | - | 2 | | | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| | 886 | 160 | Richard del Cote | 1392 | - | | | | | 6 | 6 |
| | 405 | 300 | John Ruthland | 1435 | Husbandman | | | | 28 | | 28 |
| 300-599d | 311 | 409 | Walter Fox | 1420 | - | 1 | | 1 | | 8 | 10 |
| | 612 | 462 | Thomas Taliour | 1423 | - | 2 | | 3 | 4 | | 9 |
| | 108 | 480 | John Gange | 1428 | Husbandman | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 |
| | 625 | 496 | John Balle | 1424 | Yeoman | 3 | | 1 | 6 | | 10 |
| | 1538 | 500 | Richard Penying | 1434 | Husbandman | | | | | 8 | 8 |
| | 900 | 560 | Roger Harre | 1398 | Butcher | 9 | | | | | 9 |
| 600-799d | 363 | 568 | John Style | 1420 | Husbandman | 6 | | | | | 6 |
| | 1422 | 680 | John Shepherd | 1402 | - | | | | 2 | 40 | 42 |
| | 1530 | 724 | John Bowyer | 1433 | - | 5 | | 1 | | 10 | 16 |
| | 127 | 763 | Robert Larke | 1448 | - | 7 | | 1 | | 11 | 19 |
| 800-1099d | 773 | 960 | Richard Sexteyn | 1384 | - | 5 | | 2 | 8 | 15 | |
| 1100d-1499d | 1 | 1204 | William Moldessone | 1372 | - | 1 | | | 1 | 30 | 32 |

(Continued)

Table 9.6: Continued.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | List No. | Value of Forfeited Property (d) | Name | Year | Occupation | Cattle | Fowl | Horse | Pig | Sheep | Total Animals |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|------------------------|------|------------|--------|------|-------|-----|-------|---------------|
| Escheators' | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2000–2999d | 399 | 2600 | Richard Ellughton | 1415 | Parson | 6 | | | | 60 | 66 |
| | 37 | 2780 | Henry Milner | 1404 | – | 9 | | 3 | 4 | 26 | 42 |
| | 728 | 2874 | John Rennewey | 1422 | Parson | 3 | | 2 | | 211 | 216 |
| 3000–3999d | 185 | 3140 | John de Stonton Wyuill | 1379 | Parson | 2 | 29 | 4 | 10 | | 45 |
| | 217 | 3976 | John Plumme | 1412 | – | 4 | | | 5 | | 9 |
| | 583 | 3976 | Henry Sparowe | 1417 | – | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 59 | 66 |
| >4000d | 785 | 4417 | William de Brereton | 1383 | – | | | | 12 | | 12 |
| | 215 | 5702.5 | Hugh Cetur | 1414 | Clerk | | | 11 | | | 11 |
| Coroners' | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 300–399d | 158 | 369 | Richard Webbe | 1565 | Shepherd | | 2 | | | 9 | 11 |
| 1600–1999d | 173 | 1752 | Walter Barnard | 1566 | Husbandman | 5 | | | | 40 | 45 |
| | 428 | 2004 | Nicholas Cussyn | 1597 | – | 5 | 5 | | 1 | 6 | 17 |
| 2000–2999d | 215 | 2620 | John Jacson | 1575 | Husbandman | 6 | | 2 | | 20 | 28 |

The largest-scale pastoralist within the coroners' sample is Walter Barnard of Erlestone, Wiltshire, who had three cows (58s), two bullocks (8s), 28 wethers and 12 ewes (£3 6s 8d) in 1566.⁴²⁶ In such households we might see animals being possessed for different reasons: sheep for wool production, providing an important source of household income, and the pigs and cows providing for the subsistence needs of the household.

Mixed agriculturalists

This group comprises households with evidence for both arable cultivation and pastoral husbandry. Within both the escheators' and coroners' datasets, mixed agriculturalists are typically the wealthiest agriculturalists in the samples (Table 9.4). At the lower end of the spectrum, John Reynekyn had goods worth 6s 8d in 1384 (Table 9.7).⁴²⁷ These include 2s 4d-worth of barley in sheaf and a yearling calf (2s), suggesting a household primarily concerned with cultivation and keeping a cow for domestic use. Similarly, John Beneyt of Shaw (Wiltshire) had wheat worth 3s 4d in stack, and two heifers (2s 8d) in 1421.⁴²⁸ A similar individual among the coroners' records is Robert Davys of Wroughton (Wiltshire) who possessed a cow (10s), a mare (3s 4d), a pig (2s) and a 'yarde' of barley (12d) in 1565.⁴²⁹

There are examples of households of middling wealth who appear to have engaged in larger-scale arable and pastoral husbandry. In 1393 William Watte of Whitstable (Kent) had goods worth 34s 2d, including 12 ewes (8s) as well as a wheat crop (2s), peas and vetch in sheaf (2s) and further quantities of wheat (3s) and oats (16d).⁴³⁰ In contrast, John Chyddeston of Royton (Kent) had three acres of wheat (40d per acre), four acres of peas and vetch (12d per acre) and three 'yards' of barley (18d total), in addition to the yield of 0.5 acres of hay meadow (20d), but his animals were limited to a sow and seven piglets (4s 4d), a cock and six hens (14d) and four geese (12d) when he was indicted for treason in 1381.⁴³¹ Similarly, William Newman of Boughton Mallard (Kent) had a cow (23s 4d) and three small hogs (8s), as well as an acre and a 'yarde' of wheat (13s 4d), an acre and a half of beans (10s) and an acre of oats (6s 4d) when he committed suicide in 1550.⁴³²

The evidence shows two general models for middling agrarian households in the dataset. The first is characterized by the pastoralists specialising in sheep husbandry, but with small numbers of other animals discussed in the previous

⁴²⁶ C173.

⁴²⁷ E717.

⁴²⁸ E528.

⁴²⁹ C172.

⁴³⁰ E902.

⁴³¹ E669.

⁴³² C104.

Table 9.7: Continued.

| Total Inv. Wealth | List No. | Name | Year | Occ. | Animals | | | | | | Crops | | | | | | P? | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|------|------|---------|---|---|---|----|-----|-------|----|--------|----|---|-----|--------|---|----|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|--------|---|
| | | | | | C | F | H | P | S | N/S | B | Ha | Ma | Ms | O | B/L | | R | St | V | W | U | | | | | | |
| 300–399d | 172 | Robert Davys (alias Peters) | 1565 | - | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 104 | William Newman | 1550 | - | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | H | | | C | C | | | | | | | | | C | | |
| 1100–1599d | 184 | Walter Poynerche | 1566 | - | 2 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | C | | |
| | 280 | Nicholas Hillez | 1584 | - | 5 | | 3 | 8 | | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | C | | |
| | 431 | Robert Hunter | 1597 | - | 3 | | | | | | | | H | | | | | | | | | | | | | C | H | |
| | 230 | John Wyvenden | 1576 | L | 9 | 5 | 4 | | | | | | H | | | C | & H | | | | | | | | | C | & H | |
| 2000–2999d | 185 | Peter James (alias Vyncent) | 1566 | H | 2 | | 2 | | 32 | | | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | C | |
| | 194 | Robert Crowne | 1567 | - | 3 | | 2 | 3 | | | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | X | |
| | 183 | Edward Burges jnr | 1566 | | 4 | | 1 | 6 | 4 | | | C | H | | | C | C | C | | | | | | | | | C | |
| | 289 | Anthony Curlynge | 1585 | L | 3 | | 5 | 6 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | H | Y |
| 3000–3999d | 121 | William Abbot | 1552 | H | 4 | | 3 | 9 | X | | | C | & H | | | | | | | | | | | | | | C | Y |
| | 202 | John Sperenge | 1569 | - | 4 | 4 | 2 | | | | | C | & H | | | C | | | | | | | | | | | C | Y |

(Continued)

section. For instance, in 1404 John Gobyon of Duston (Northamptonshire) had an acre of peas (22d), 4 acres of barley (8s 6d), one rod (0.25 acres) of rye (12d) and an acre of wheat (2s), as well as 20 ewes and 12 lambs (22s), a cow (4s), two mares (5s) and two horses (6s), among goods worth 67s 3d altogether.⁴³³ Similarly, Peter James of Tollard Royal (Wiltshire) had a flock of 32 sheep (£3), two geldings (20s), a cow (13s 4d), a bullock (5s), five acres of wheat and five of barley (each valued at 33s 4d) in 1566.⁴³⁴ The second is typified by mixed husbandry, specialising in arable cultivation with small numbers of animals, typically working animals or those required to meet the household's subsistence needs. For example the yeoman John Margretson of Market Overton (Rutland) had goods valued at over £4 in 1445, including wheat (6s 8d), barley (20s) and peas (10s) in stacks, and four pigs (2s each), while Nicholas Hillez of Colbury (Hampshire) had half an acre of wheat (6s) and half an acre of oats (2s), as well as three cows (60s), two 'litle calves' (5s), a mare (6s) eight pigs (6s), and two colts (6s 8d) in 1584.⁴³⁵

Among the very wealthiest households, large cattle herds could also be possessed. John Moigne of Warmington (Northamptonshire) had goods valued at over £75 in 1405.⁴³⁶ These include 84 heads of cattle (£33 12s), as well as 14 bullocks (70s) and 14 calves (23s 4d). The coroners' records provide the example of Henry Cooper of Cowlinge (Suffolk), who in 1595 had 14 cows (£30), three calves (24s) and six two-year-old bullocks (£7 10s), as well as pigs, horses and a variety of crops growing in named fields.⁴³⁷ However, of the four wealthiest households within the coroners' records, the remaining three specialised in sheep husbandry, having substantial flocks, with smaller quantities of cattle, pigs, horses and poultry.⁴³⁸ Even when operating at this scale, however, some households seemingly kept livestock purely for domestic consumption. In 1418, the yeoman William Wodeward of Abbots Morton (Worcestershire) had only a single cow (6s) and three yearling calves (6s), a sow and seven piglets (3s) and six hoggets (3s 6d), in addition to oxen and horses and a large quantity of produce and fanning equipment among goods valued at just over £20.⁴³⁹

As with the pastoralists, where occupation is stated, the mixed agriculturalists appear to largely be agricultural specialists. In the escheators' group, the most common occupation is husbandman (four), followed by two yeomen and two clerics. A more unusual case is the carpenter John Ingram of Nursling (Hampshire) who had eight oxen (eight marks, or £5 6s 8d), 10 cows (100s), six bullocks (30s) and six calves (18s), as well as four acres of wheat, nine acres

⁴³³ E1275.

⁴³⁴ C185.

⁴³⁵ E1558; C280 (here '*shutt.*' is understood to mean pigs, though it is possible the reference is to sheep).

⁴³⁶ E45. See Chapter 2 for Moigne and his list.

⁴³⁷ C447.

⁴³⁸ C358; C382; C458.

⁴³⁹ E348.

of barley and five acres of oats and pulses, suggesting that he was a well-established agriculturalist despite his stated occupation.⁴⁴⁰ The mixed agriculturalists in the coroners' sample include two husbandmen, a yeoman and a clergyman. However, as with the escheators' records, there are individuals who are associated either explicitly or implicitly with other occupations. Thomas Thomas of Longbridge Deverill (Wiltshire), treated here as a tanner on the strength of his tan-vats and hides, had a small number of animals, conceivably to serve the needs of his household (seven pigs worth 14s, a cow worth 20s, and three geldings worth £3). However, he also had cartloads of wheat, barley and maslin, as well as plough, indicating cultivation.⁴⁴¹ The lists of two labourers, John Wyvenden of Hawkhurst, Kent and Anthony Curlynge of St Lawrence, Kent, are also suggestive of small-scale mixed agriculture to supplement their wage. Both had cattle and pigs, and Curlynge also possessed three ewes and two lambs.⁴⁴² Wyvenden had four acres of wheat 'in the ground' as well as in the sheaf, while Curlynge had a crop of corn in a barn.

Arable agriculturalists

The evidence relating to arable agriculturalists is limited, but demonstrates a problem with utilising lists of goods and chattels as a measure of household wealth, due to the exclusion of land, itself inconsistently mentioned. This is well illustrated by the list of Richard Cogayn, who has inventoried wealth of only £1, yet was cultivating five acres with mixed crops (Table 9.8).⁴⁴³ We know the value of his crops, but not of the land on which they grew. The wealthiest arable agriculturalist is John le North, who possessed three horses. He had grain growing, valued at over 20s, but no detail about acreage or crop type appears.⁴⁴⁴ The list of husbandman Simon Bolt of Shell (Worcestershire) does not contain any crops, but he possessed three horses and a plough, suggesting, perhaps, substantial arable acreage.⁴⁴⁵ While these households appear poor on the basis of their household goods, the range of crops cultivated and the information on arable acreage implies the opposite. This is also likely to be the case for some mixed agriculturalists, who may have held significant proportions of their wealth in land. Among the coroners' records there is only one arable agriculturalist, William Bridge of Stelling (Kent). His list follows the trend evident in the escheators' data: he is apparently of modest wealth (total inventoried wealth 872d) but farmed at least 1.5 acres.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁰ E1213. The description of the wheat indicates that the crop had been 'entered into the barn in sheaves.'

⁴⁴¹ C126.

⁴⁴² C230; C289.

⁴⁴³ E1461.

⁴⁴⁴ E840. The legibility of the crop valuation is poor.

⁴⁴⁵ E360.

⁴⁴⁶ C309.

Table 9.8: The occurrence of crops in the lists of rural households identified as arable agriculturalists in the escheators' and coroners' records. C = Crop growing in fields; H = Harvested crop. These lists are limited to those where it is clear that the felon was engaged in the cultivation of these crops, and excludes lists which feature quantities of grain (the category 'grain' in Table 9.4).

| Total Value of Forfeited Property | List No. | Name | Date | Escheators' | | | | | | | | | | | Horse | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|------|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|--------|--------|---|---|-------|---|---|
| | | | | Barley | Wheat | Peas | Vetch | Oats | Grain | Hay | Plough | Cattle | | | | | |
| 100–299d | 1461 | Richard Cogayn | 1410 | C | C | C | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | 671 | John atte Ryzth | 1381 | C | C | C | C | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 360 | Simon Bolt | 1420 | | | | | | | | | | | | | Y | 3 |
| 300–599d | 99 | William Benet | 1428 | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | |
| | 904 | Richard Swetere (alias Mason) | 1393 | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | |
| | 840 | John le North | 1389 | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | 3 |
| Coroners' | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 500–999d | 309 | William Bridge | 1586 | | C | | | | | H | | | | H | Y | 2 | |

Summary: rural agriculturalists

This analysis demonstrates that while there may be a tendency for rural households to hold much of their wealth as economic goods, the reality is considerably more complex. Wealthier households often held higher quantities of wealth in animals than poorer households, while the evidence of animal ownership shows investment in livestock for a range of reasons, ranging from domestic consumption to large scale wool, dairy, or meat production across the social spectrum. Pastoralists, whatever their wealth, typically held higher proportions of their wealth as animals compared to other groups, although there is considerable variability. In contrast, those specialising in arable husbandry held lower proportions of their wealth in animals, only possessing draught or traction animals. It is clear that a generalisation which says rural households invested principally in livestock and land cultivation overlooks a number of important issues. While it is the case that wealthy households held large quantities of land (where it can be observed) and livestock, the analysis here highlights a trend for poorer households to invest primarily in domestic goods, and for those of middling wealth to specialise in agricultural production to varying degrees; economic specialisation was apparent in the proportion of household wealth held as economic, rather than domestic, goods. Goldberg (2008, 128) emphasises that the proportion of inside:outside goods only tells part of the story, and that a key difference between urban and rural value systems relates to *how* households consumed, what he characterises as systems of value. What this analysis demonstrates is that while Goldberg (2008) is correct in his general contention that rural households held significant proportions of their wealth as livestock and in objects connected with agrarian production, a detailed analysis demonstrates that precisely *how* this wealth was held varied considerably in relation to the type of agriculture practised, and a household's wealth. In other words, the analysis suggests that although a general contrast between Goldberg's urban evidence and the rural evidence presented here can be sustained, the rural 'signature' is highly variable.

Small-town agriculturalists

Small-town households could also have substantial agricultural interests, making it necessary to consider the extent to which the patterns of investment in livestock and agricultural production seen in the countryside apply to them, as is implied by Goldberg's (2008) analysis of lists from Northallerton. Archaeological evidence for 'urban' cultivation and pastoralism is more ambiguous than in rural contexts. At Low Fisher Gate, Doncaster (Yorkshire), excavated features include a corn-drying oven, dating to the later thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries (McComish *et al.* 2010, 84). At other sites, such as The Spinney, Sherburn-in-Elmet (Yorkshire), archaeobotanical evidence is suggestive of

the grazing of animals nearby (Antoni 2004), and at Stricklandgate, Kendal (Cumbria), the build up of subsoil points to horticultural activity (Whitehead, Williams and Mace 2013, 111).

Households with a small number of animals

The escheators' and coroners' records provide valuable information on the economic basis of small-town households that engaged in agricultural production. Among those households with few animals, there is a general level of correspondence between the small-town and rural datasets. Of the seven escheators' lists within this category, the majority have a total valuation of less than 350d/£1 9s 2d, and we can observe a similar pattern of animal ownership, whereby cattle and horses were more prevalent among the wealthier households. For example, Richard Bothe of Bingley (Yorkshire), whose goods were valued at 8s, had one pig (14d) in 1419 and Thomas Sugg of Kidderminster (Worcestershire), whose goods were valued at 13s 10d in 1404, had two piglets (20d).⁴⁴⁷ Others, such as Robert Fogheler of Seamer (Yorkshire) whose goods were valued at 4s 10d in 1394, had cattle, in this case a single calf (16d).⁴⁴⁸ Seamer is an interesting case: Everett considers it a sixteenth-century market town, but it only received its market charter in 1382, clearly placing it at the 'rural' end of the urban spectrum. Those of more modest wealth did sometimes possess horses. An example is the labourer William Chitynden of Cranbrook (Kent) whose goods were valued at 26s 4d, including one cow (6s) and two calves (3s) and a horse (5s) in 1435.⁴⁴⁹ Those with higher value lists have more diverse animals, for example Robert Durham of Aldbourne (Wiltshire). Aldbourne is a good example which demonstrates the ambiguous distinction between villages and small towns. It had 253 poll-tax payers in 1377 and a market was first recorded in 1311. It was identified by Everitt as a market town in 1600, but it was also a place where the community were involved in extensive arable and sheep husbandry (Hare 2011, 13). It is perhaps best characterised as a market village. Certainly Durham's animals – three horses (6s each), a cow (5s) and three pigs (20d each) among goods worth £4 6s 8d in 1426 – would not have been out of place among the rural households discussed previously.⁴⁵⁰ As mentioned in the Chapter 8, there are clear examples of small-town dwellers who were primarily artisans, but had animals. The tanner Thomas Knyth of Great Torrington (Devon) had a cow and calf (6s 8d) in 1422 and William Newton of Oakham (Rutland), seemingly a trader, had a horse (5s) and bull-ock (5s) in 1382.⁴⁵¹ The 1422 list of the goldsmith Richard Swalwa, also of Great

⁴⁴⁷ E505; E337.

⁴⁴⁸ E880.

⁴⁴⁹ E918.

⁴⁵⁰ E793.

⁴⁵¹ E736; E747.

Torrington, is useful in this regard.⁴⁵² The list is not suitable for detailed analysis of valuations due to the grouping of items, but he had two cows and a calf, plus at least one horse (6s 8d), plus a horse-mill (Chapter 8). Overall, while the data is limited for those households that possessed small numbers of animals, it appears that wealth was the principal variable determining the extent of animal ownership in both small towns and in the countryside.

Pastoral agriculturalists

Within the escheators' records, small-town households that engaged in pastoral husbandry with no substantial evidence of other economic activity fall into the range of total valuations above 800d/£3 6s 8d. The range and number of animals is generally limited. For example, in 1406 Thomas Serle of Liskeard (Cornwall) had goods worth £4 7s, including a horse (26s 8d, a high valuation), two oxen (8s), two cows (8s) and two bullocks (4s).⁴⁵³ Even the animals belonging to those among the wealthiest households represented in the coroners' records – such as Alexander Newbye of Dartford (Kent) – are relatively limited, in this instance to six 'small hackney nags' (£8), two milk cows (£3), three bullocks (£3) and 6 hogs (30s), suggestive of a smallholding.⁴⁵⁴ However, there are small-town pastoralists with substantial numbers of animals, suggesting specialisation. In 1419, John Forster of Thrapston (Northamptonshire) had two old horses (6s 8d), two cows (13s 4d) and 34 sheep (34s), matching the profile of a specialist sheep farmer with a small dairy stock, perhaps for household use.⁴⁵⁵ Similarly, in 1590 John Cosen of Ashburton (Devon) had 44 sheep (£5 12s), 14 wethers, ewes and lambs (36s), a nag and mare (33s 4d), a cow (40s) and pig (24d), showing that those living in small towns could hold considerable quantities of livestock, in this case accounting for 48.6% of his total inventoried wealth.⁴⁵⁶

Mixed agriculturalists

There are only two mixed agriculturalists from small-town contexts in the escheators' records for whom we have sufficient information to consider the value of goods. Both are identified as yeomen and provide further evidence of extensive engagement in pastoral husbandry, as well as arable cultivation. In 1451, Thomas Gribell of Tenterden had 10 pigs (15s 2d altogether), 100 sheep (12d each), 10 cows (6s 8d each), six calves (18d each), and four bullocks (5s each), among goods worth nearly £22. He also had a plough (4s) and six oxen

⁴⁵² E517.

⁴⁵³ E519.

⁴⁵⁴ C548.

⁴⁵⁵ E310.

⁴⁵⁶ C357.

(13s 4d each) and 20 quarters of wheat and oats.⁴⁵⁷ In 1443, Roger Lounde of Masham (Yorkshire) had similar agricultural stock: 80 sheep (30d each), seven cows (55s altogether), three bullocks (6s 8d each), a bull (10s) and 12 oxen (20s), as well as unthreshed wheat and barley to a value of £10, his total possessions being valued at £49 5s.⁴⁵⁸ Other small-town dwellers with mixed agricultural interests, but without sufficient information around valuation, include the husbandman Nicholas Gerard of Attleborough (Norfolk), John Godard of Sandwich and Thomas Cretynden of Cranbrook (both Kent).⁴⁵⁹ The evidence suggests the existence of a particular type of small-town, yeoman household, which engaged in fairly large-scale mixed husbandry, akin to that undertaken by the wealthiest rural households within our samples.

Summary: small towns and agriculture

Overall, there is little to differentiate the agricultural activities of small-town and rural households. There is a high degree of similarity in the pattern of animal ownership, with those categorised as pastoralists displaying the highest proportion of wealth held in animals in both contexts. Although based on a limited dataset, this emphasises how small towns were an integral part of manorial economies, in which many residents were engaged in agriculture (Goddard 2011). We can place some of these households in a broader context. Sandwich, the home of John Godard, was an important port town with a diverse economy, but even here open areas were used for grazing, townspeople leased grazing land on the surrounding salt marsh and local regulations prohibited grazing on the ramparts, emphasising the prevalence of animals within the townscape (Clarke *et al.* 2010, 118, 142, 225). A similarly close relationship has been demonstrated in the nearby port of Lydd, where the town dwellers had a range of agricultural interests (Dimmock 2001). The town of Thrapston was surrounded by open fields with small areas of woodland and clayland, perhaps the pasture used by John Forster, within the township (Foard and Ballinger 2000). Of course, some of the individuals stated as resident in a location containing a small-town may in fact have resided outside the urban portion of the township or parish, and there is no way of detecting this. This may in part help to explain our overall finding of a general correspondence between the small-town and rural datasets in terms of the proportion of wealth held as animals by households engaging in similar modes of agricultural production, although in general terms, a higher proportion of rural than small-town wealth was held in animals.

Although artisans resided in the countryside, one important characteristic of the lists from small towns is the presence of a range of crafts. There are a

⁴⁵⁷ E477.

⁴⁵⁸ E1178.

⁴⁵⁹ E10; E106; E284.

number of artisans within the small-town dataset whose possessions give no indication of engagement in agrarian activity. However, a further distinctive feature of this dataset is a group of artisans who possessed animals, on average accounting for around 7% of their inventoried wealth. This is much lower than other small-town agriculturalists. These small-town agriculturalist households can be loosely characterised into different ‘types’: a labourer with few animals; wealthy yeomen mixed agriculturalists; a butcher and a tanner who supplemented their incomes with small scale agrarian activity. While the dataset cannot reveal the ubiquity of agrarian activity among small-town communities, it does demonstrate the importance of animal and crop husbandry to the domestic economy of some households in such urban settings.

This in no way invalidates Goldberg’s contrast between investment in agrarian production between urban and rural households, but demonstrates that this specific ‘urban’ mode of consumption is likely to be limited to larger towns. It does, however, reiterate the conclusion drawn from the rural evidence, that how households engaged in agrarian activity varied, an observation as pertinent for small towns as more rural areas. Overall, our evidence emphasises the ambiguity of the dividing line between town and country.

Tools, materials and stock

Economic goods are not limited to animals, arable produce and farming equipment; some lists detail the tools and materials associated with craft production, or retail stock. These often account for the elevated investment in ‘outside’ goods among Goldberg’s (2008, 130–2) ‘mercantile’ group. Investment in tools and stock appears highly variable, being closely associated with the economic specialisation(s) of households in both town and country. Within rural households involved in intensive arable, pastoral or mixed husbandry, only small proportions of wealth were held as tools and materials. Where these items are present, they most typically take the form of equipment associated with brewing or textile manufacture, two activities commonly organised at the domestic scale (see Chapter 8). In some cases, this could account for considerable proportions of itemised wealth. For example, in 1420 Walter Fox of Brigstock (Northamptonshire) had four leads, including three ‘groutleedys’ (leads for grout, or malt infusion). These were clearly for brewing and account for over a quarter of the value of his goods.⁴⁶⁰ He was a small-scale pastoralist, with a flock of eight ewes and a cow. More typically, items associated with brewing or textile manufacture (including wool) account for less than 10% of a household’s inventoried wealth. There are a small number of instances where households possessed items associated with other economic activities. Most obvious is John Ingram, discussed earlier, who was a substantial agriculturalist

⁴⁶⁰ E311.

with a large flock of sheep, but is described in the records as a carpenter.⁴⁶¹ A quarter of his inventoried wealth was held as timber, presumably stock. In other cases, tools and materials may have been kept for general tasks, such as the ‘timber lying in the courtyard’, worth 5s, held by William Wodeward the Worcestershire yeoman.⁴⁶² This general pattern is reflected among the pastoralists and mixed agriculturalists in the small-town sample; for example John Forster of Thrapston had two leads, presumably for brewing, as well as fleeces and wool (likely from his own sheep) and firewood. These items, along with ‘other household utensils’, accounted for a quarter of John’s inventoried wealth.⁴⁶³ Among the rural lists, it is also the case that only a limited range of tools and materials were held by those households with few animals, again typically associated with brewing and textile production or working. Others, such as Robert Wysman of Thompson (Norfolk) had general tools (an axe; 6d), but none demonstrate any evidence of a specific economic specialism.⁴⁶⁴

This data suggests two things. Firstly, in small towns as well as villages, those specialising in agriculture only invested low proportions of household wealth in items associated with craft production, typically activities such as brewing or textile production which provided supplementary income, or materials and basic tools which could be used around the home. Secondly, among the poorest households, specifically those with few animals, there was also limited ownership of items associated with production, suggesting that these households relied on waged labour, perhaps as agricultural labourers rather than investing domestic income into economic activities. These households would likely have struggled to raise the capital required to acquire specialist tools, materials or spaces for craft production, as discussed in relation to textile production, metal and leather working in Chapter 8.

A contrast is provided by those households which clearly specialised in craft production. In these cases, limited investment in animals and agricultural equipment suggests that any agricultural activity was a supplementary economic activity. As demonstrated in Chapter 8, those engaged in metal, leather or textile crafts could all have agricultural interests. In the countryside, items associated with craft production of various sorts typically account for around 20–25% of household wealth among those identified as artisans. In urban contexts this figure is much higher, for example 51.3% of the inventoried wealth of John Coupere of Wellingborough (Northamptonshire) was held as timber, a lead and hoops for barrel manufacture.⁴⁶⁵ Although the dataset is small, higher proportions of the inventoried wealth of urban artisans appears to have been invested in goods associated with their trade than in rural contexts, perhaps

⁴⁶¹ E1213.

⁴⁶² E348.

⁴⁶³ E310.

⁴⁶⁴ E846.

⁴⁶⁵ E304.

implying a higher intensity of manufacture (and therefore greater ability to stockpile resources) and a greater level of household specialisation.

We have observed previously (Jervis, Briggs and Tompkins 2015) that the escheators' records typically list specialist tools, while a wider range of more common and multipurpose items are present in the archaeological record. The larger dataset presented in this book supports this suggestion. If we look at axes, for example, which we might anticipate were common tools for chopping firewood or undertaking domestic repairs, these occur in only 21 lists. One of these is the list of a carpenter, Thomas Partrik, who had a broad axe and a two-edged axe (*twybutte*, i.e. twibill), specialist tools associated with his trade.⁴⁶⁶ We can anticipate therefore that the proportion of household wealth invested in tools which could have been used both domestically and by those undertaking waged labour is underestimated. This view is supported archaeologically, for example, by evidence from West Whelpington (Jarrett 1970). Tools associated with textile production, woodworking and stonemasonry, as well as metalworking waste and agricultural equipment, were recovered from the houseplots of a rural agricultural community, revealing a diversity of small and inexpensive tools rarely, if ever, recorded in the escheators' and coroners' datasets.

Finally, investment in tools and materials only represents one element of craft production. Many crafts, such as tanning or smithing, also require physical infrastructure. As discussed in Chapter 8, there is strong evidence for industrial processes being undertaken in distinctive spaces and these would have required households to acquire, or negotiate access to, further land while also investing in the creation of infrastructure such as tanning pits or furnaces, much of which was temporary and would have therefore required periodic investment in labour.

Summary: investment in economic goods

The overwhelming picture presented by the escheators' and coroners' data is one of variability; in accordance with wealth, economic specialisation and, to a lesser degree, between (small) town and country. In both town and country, the poorest households were unable to invest in more than a few animals, most likely for consumption within the home. The proportion of household wealth invested in livestock varies considerably, with wealthier households typically both having the largest stocks and investing the highest proportion of income in agricultural production. Even within small towns, wealthier households invested in agricultural production, either as a primary source of income or to supplement a craft. However, non-agrarian economic specialisation appears stronger in small-town contexts. While some rural agriculturalists engaged in

⁴⁶⁶ E1210.

textile manufacture or brewing at the household scale, they did not typically invest heavily in specialised tools or stocks of craft materials, as is the case for a number of small-town craftsmen. This data shows that a simplistic division between small-town and rural households is not tenable, but rather that investment in economic goods is dependent on household economy and structure. While a contrast can be drawn between certain urban households such as those examined by Goldberg (2008) and rural consumption at a general level, the data presented here suggests a considerably more contextually varied and nuanced approach to consumption, a reality acknowledged by Goldberg in his discussion of the variation within urban inventories. Furthermore, archaeological evidence from craft production, and references to cultivated land, remind us that inventoried movable wealth excludes investment in land and infrastructure, which demanded different levels of investment by households depending on where they lived, but also the economic activities which they undertook. With this in mind, we can turn to a further area of investment apparent archaeologically, but largely invisible in the archival datasets – domestic buildings.

Beyond production: investment in housing fabric

Houses were both domestic and economic spaces. Therefore, the distinction between domestic tools and equipment and items associated with the household economy is blurred by a range of objects that are absent from the historical records: the fixtures and fittings associated with the houses themselves. The role of tenants in the upkeep and building of houses has recently been the subject of debate. Slocombe (2018) contends that while there is clear evidence that both leasehold and copyhold tenants had a level of responsibility for the upkeep of properties, the building of houses was undertaken and funded by landowners. Both Currie (2018) and Dyer (2019b) contest this, drawing on numerous examples to show that while in some cases some funds for building or rebuilding may have been provided, it was usual for the tenant to take on the financial burden of construction and repair (Dyer 1986, 22). In addition to the materials, these costs would typically include the employment of professional craftsmen, with the cost of building a typical peasant dwelling estimated at £2–£4 (Dyer 1986, 34). In the case of freehold tenancies, the situation was much clearer, with tenants having greater freedom over building activities (Dyer 1986, 23). The situation in boroughs, where houses were often rented from an intermediary, was different in that it was the holder of the property, rather than the renter, who shouldered this cost (Currie 2018, 38). The general picture appears to be that in the countryside tenants typically funded the erection, rebuilding or maintenance of houses, while in towns, including smaller boroughs, there might be a more mixed picture. It is well established that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw substantial rebuilding and modification in both urban and rural areas and this work would therefore represent substantial investment by households (e.g. Alcock 2010; 2015; Johnson 1993; 2010; Mileson 2015; Roberts 2003).

Occasional references to the room in which items are stored in the coroners' records shows this transformation, including mentions of parlours and kitchens, as well as specialist spaces such as brewhouses and woolhouses; however, these references are too scarce to allow for detailed analysis. The modification of houses is most clear through the dendrochronological analysis of standing buildings, which allows the date of alterations to be obtained through the dating of timbers. This shows regional variability in the timing and pace of this change; however, excavated evidence also provides insights into a longer process of modification and repair in domestic architecture.

Investment in domestic structures is well demonstrated at Foxcotte, where a complex of buildings dated to the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries and destroyed by fire was excavated (Russel 1985). These comprise a large structure, divided into three rooms and incorporating an oven, interpreted as a malting kiln (Russel 1985, 183), in the westernmost room. Another structure to the north incorporates an oven and is interpreted as a detached kitchen, while a smaller and more slightly built structure to the west is discussed as a stable above. The finds from the building itself principally comprise structural metalwork: over 50 nails, principally from the western and eastern rooms, a wall hook and two pintles, a hinge and latch which indicate the presence of a door. The Foxcotte complex is important because it demonstrates investment in infrastructure for production which may exceed the needs of the household, in this case malting and, perhaps, baking. While tenants may have been granted access to woodland on the manor, it was usually necessary to turn to the market for timber (Dyer 1986, 27). As with tools, structural metalwork could be salvaged and reused or recycled (see Britnell 2015). The value of structural ironwork is shown by the systematic clearance of houses. For example, at West Cotton, the hamlet was abandoned around 1400 and the occupied area seems to have been largely stripped of any structural metalwork; indeed most of the excavated objects were small items such as belt fittings, perhaps lost and not recovered, or improvised objects such as a bone flute and two stone gaming boards, which had no salvage value.

The metal fittings from both small-town and rural households are overwhelmingly nails. Ironwork typically relates to internal fittings, such as wooden doors or window shutters, with nails used to attach door furniture, or potentially to secure boards or laths to internal walls. It is unfortunate that nails are rarely identified to a particular type by archaeologists, either due to a lack of resources or high levels of corrosion. Deposits associated with the street frontage at the County Sports site, Staines (Middlesex; Jones 2010) demonstrate how understanding variability in the nails present can provide insights into domestic structures. While most of the nails could not be identified, the majority of those which could are flat-headed with a square or rectangular shape (Goodall Type 1; Figure 9.3). The remainder comprise three narrow flat-headed nails (Type 3), 10 with a faceted rectangular head (Type 5) and five with a flat-headed figure of eight shape. It has been suggested that this latter type was used in the securing of internal panelling (How *et al.* 2016), while the predominant use of

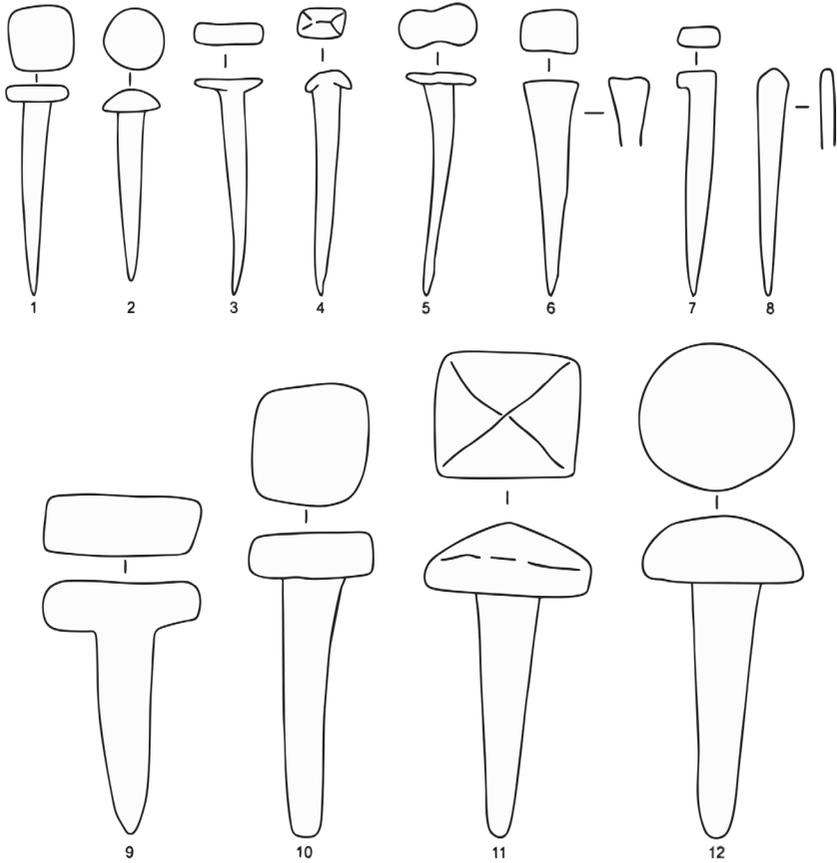


Figure 9.3: Nail types from archaeological contexts. 1: Flat head of square, rectangular or rounded shape; 2: Raised head of circular or rounded shape; 3: Flat head of narrow, rectangular shape; 4: Faceted or rectangular head; 5: Flat head of figure of 8 shape; 6: Flat rectangular head formed by flaring, wedge-shaped shank; 7: Flat L-shaped head; 8: Headless nail; 9: Stud with long flat rectangular head; 10: Stud with rectangular or occasional rounded flat or faceted head; 11: Stud with rectangular pyramidal head; 12: Stud with circular head (Goodall 2011, figure 9.1. © Society for Medieval Archaeology and Ian H. Goodall, Reproduced by Permission Society for Medieval Archaeology).

flat-headed nails suggests a general use of nails for securing panels or laths in place, as those used to secure door and window furniture are typically larger, with domed or faceted heads (see Goodall 2011 163–4). A different range of nails came from the rural site at Parlington (Yorkshire; WYAS 2010). The majority are flat-headed with an L-shaped profile (Type 7; typically used today for securing floorboards), while other types present include a wedge-shaped flat-headed nail (Type 6) and nails with a circular, domed head (Type 2). While

a much larger sample of nails needs to be identified to type for meaningful comparisons between buildings and contexts to be possible, it is clear that the range of specialised nails used in vernacular building, as well as the common occurrence of items such as hinges and pivots, hasps and latches, points to structures with a variety of interior fittings, which could have facilitated comfort (e.g. insulation, privacy) and display (e.g. decorative panelling) in ways which are not visible in the consideration of portable goods alone.

While historical discussion of housing in our period has typically focused on the so-called ‘great rebuilding’ of the sixteenth century (Hoskins 1953), archaeological evidence presents a picture of continual and incremental modification, with occasional episodes of complete demolition and clearance throughout the middle ages (see also Dyer 1986, 40; Gardiner 2014a) (Figure 9.4). At Upton (Worcestershire) it is suggested that excavated houses (one of which may have had an upper storey) were modified in multiple phases. The first house in this sequence was of timber, being rebuilt in stone, with a further annexe being added in a third phase. An adjacent building was also modified in several phases. While the exact date of these construction episodes is unclear (the excavator suggests a thirteenth-century date, though reconsideration of the finds undertaken during data collection suggests a longer chronology), it is proposed that this example represents rebuilding within a single holding over several generations (Rahtz 1969, 93–8). Similarly, at Rowhope Burn (Northumberland) several phases of rebuilding were identified between c.1280 and 1550 (Dixon 2014; Figure 9.4). More strikingly, at Popham (Hampshire), several phases of building were excavated (Fasham 1987; Figure 9.4). No finds were associated with the first structural phase but the second, associated with the erection of a building with flint footings, has several finds associated with it. These include a large quantity of ironwork: 26 nails, a chisel tip and 36 further unidentified iron objects, as well as a horseshoe, arrowhead, iron buckle and copper alloy strip. The majority of these items are likely to be structural, potentially relating to the demolition of an earlier timber building or decayed elements of this building. In structural phase 3, this building was rebuilt on a different axis and post-holes indicate the presence of an ancillary structure. Similarly, at Wythemail (Figure 9.4) two phases of stone foundations were identified, a later building superimposed at right angles to an earlier structure (Hurst and Hurst 1969). The bulk of the finds relate to the later building. Both sites show evidence of extensive investment in the rebuilding of houses.

Similar evidence for modification can be seen among small-town sites (Figure 9.5). The strongest evidence comes from Low Fisher Gate, Doncaster, where plots were established in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries (McComish *et al.* 2010). Subdivision in the early fourteenth century stimulated the construction of new buildings, with further timber structures erected in the fifteenth century. Whether these houses were built by the households that occupied them, or were constructed as speculative rental properties is unclear, although the latter is likely. At Oyster Street, Portsmouth (Hampshire), an existing forge

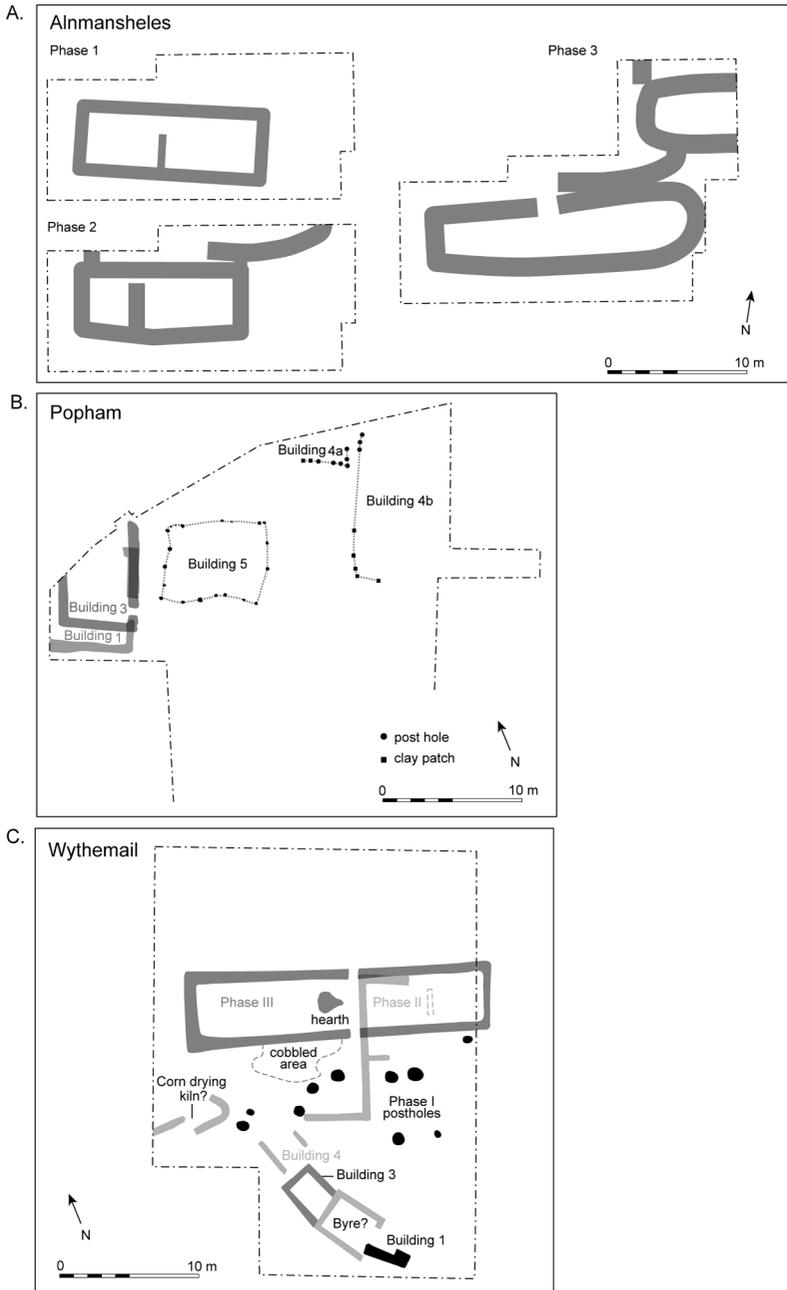


Figure 9.4: Examples of rebuilding at rural sites. Almansheles/Rowhope Burn, Northumberland (Dixon 2014); Popham, Hampshire (Fasham 1987) and Wythemail, Northamptonshire (Hurst and Hurst 1969). Redrawn by Kirsty Harding.

appears to have been incorporated into a domestic tenement during a period of substantial modifications to the waterfront (Fox and Barton 1986). Evidence of modification through the subdivision of previously open spaces can be seen in the excavated house at Fore Street, Exmouth (Devon) while at Wolborough Street, Newton Abbot (Devon) two buildings were excavated, one dating to the fourteenth century and the other to the fifteenth (Weddell 1985; Figure 9.5). Evidence of substantial modifications to domestic buildings can also be seen at Market Street, Alton (Hampshire; Millet 1983).

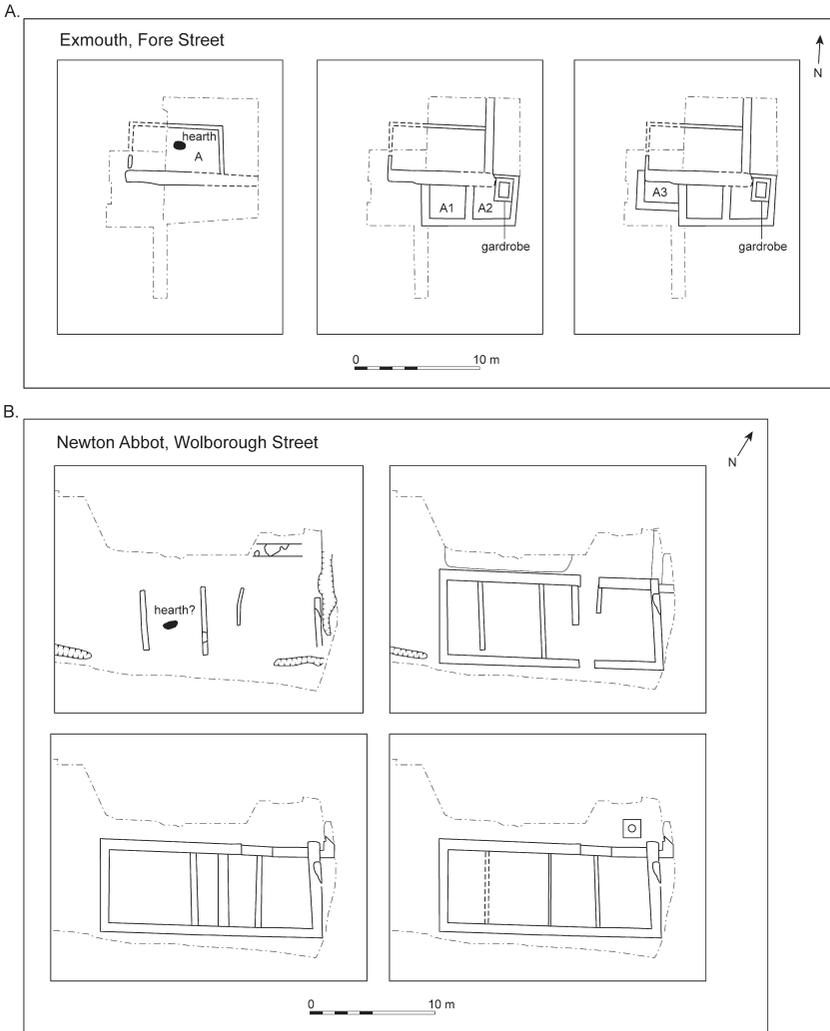


Figure 9.5: Examples of rebuilding at urban sites. Fore St, Exmouth (Weddell 1980) and Wolborough St, Newton Abbot (Weddell 1985). Redrawn by Kirsty Harding.

Although the average proportion of wealth accounted for by economic goods is higher in the countryside than in small towns, there are considerable similarities in the ways that households of similar socio-economic status acquired livestock and other economic goods. One explanation for the apparently higher consumption of domestic goods by those living in small towns may be the structure of property ownership. Dyer (2005, 153) notes how the erection of new peasant houses was likely undertaken on the initiative of peasants themselves, who employed specialist masons and carpenters, representing disposal of considerable household wealth, perhaps acquired through the consolidation of landholdings (itself representing a further means of disposing household wealth). In contrast, in towns there was a sizeable rental sector (Casson and Casson 2016; 2019), in which tenants might be expected to meet costs of modification or repair but would be less willing to do so given the comparatively short-term nature of leases. While this is particularly the case in larger towns, speculative building has also been proposed in some smaller towns, as might be the case, for example, at Low Fisher Gate. We might therefore anticipate that poorer or lower-middling urban households that occupied rented properties without the incentive or means to invest in property might disproportionately invest in portable domestic goods, particularly if they did not have the capacity to acquire or keep animals. While such households existed in the countryside too, the concentration of rental properties in towns might be one factor leading to an apparent polarisation between urban and rural consumption of domestic goods. In this case, the acquisition of domestic goods relates to a different set of circumstances than in those wealthy urban households analysed by Goldberg. While proportionally higher consumption of domestic goods may be a signature of urbanity common to larger and smaller towns, the causes and nature of that consumption are more variable.

The consumption of domestic goods

We have already determined that there is considerable variability in the proportion of inventoried wealth held as domestic goods, particularly in relation to household wealth and, to a lesser degree, between small towns and the countryside. In summary, we demonstrated that in both town and country, and in both the escheators' and coroners' records, there is a generally negative correlation between household wealth and proportion of inventoried wealth held as domestic goods; that is, the poorest households held the highest proportions of wealth as these items. We also demonstrated that, in general, higher proportions of wealth were held as domestic goods in small towns than in the countryside, and that this polarisation appears more marked among the coroners' records. In exploring these patterns further, we can consider ownership of particular types of domestic goods, specifically those discussed by Goldberg (cooking equipment, bedding and tableware; summarised in Table 9.9) and assess investment patterns in relation to the economic activities of households.

Table 9.9: The proportion of inventoried wealth held as domestic goods and as cooking ware, bedding and tableware (expressed as percentage of inventoried wealth held as domestic goods) in the escheators' and coroners' records.

| Total Value of forfeited Property | Mean Domestic Goods as %ge total Wealth | Mean as %ge domestic goods | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| | | Cooking Ware | Bedding | Tableware |
| Escheators' | | | | |
| Rural | | | | |
| <100d | 75.0% | 32.2% | 38.9% | 5.6% |
| 100-299d | 57.6% | 29.6% | 26.5% | 4.7% |
| 300-599d | 41.9% | 31.8% | 23.1% | 3.9% |
| 600-799d | 27.6% | 13.6% | 16.0% | 13.5% |
| 800-1099d | 49.9% | 21.0% | 10.8% | 5.7% |
| 1100-1499d | 36.5% | 20.9% | 14.4% | 9.0% |
| 1500-1999d | 52.2% | 14.8% | 23.9% | 6.8% |
| 2000-2999d | 37.3% | 14.3% | 19.9% | 15.9% |
| 3000-3999d | 28.2% | 21.7% | 35.2% | 5.4% |
| >4000d | 40.5% | 15.0% | 12.6% | 4.3% |
| Small-Town | | | | |
| <100d | 88% | 25% | 39% | 3% |
| 100-299d | 74% | 43% | 23% | 10% |
| 300-599d | 54% | 35% | 34% | 9% |
| 600-2999d | 44% | 26% | 31% | 5% |
| >3000d | 43% | 17% | 24% | 9% |
| Coroners' | | | | |
| Rural | | | | |
| 100-499d | 51.3% | 30.6% | 26.9% | 4.8% |
| 500-999d | 49.2% | 19.5% | 25.5% | 6.6% |
| 1000-2999d | 17.5% | 24.7% | 24.7% | 24.7% |
| 3000-9999d | 21.6% | 25.6% | 25.5% | 10.8% |
| >10000d | 11.7% | 21.6% | 24.7% | 6.8% |
| Small-Town | | | | |
| 100-499d | 84.2% | 10.3% | 39.5% | 8.5% |
| 500-999d | 53.7% | 12.8% | 31.9% | 11.0% |
| 1000-2999d | 59.6% | 25.8% | 19.6% | 4.5% |
| 3000-9999d | 29.6% | 49.8% | 32.4% | 6.7% |
| >10000d | 32.9% | 16.3% | 35.0% | 17.7% |

Cooking equipment

Goldberg (2008, 127–8) considers the relative value of bedding and cooking utensils to be a key marker of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ systems of value and modes of consumption. He argues that, together, these goods typically represent a lower proportion of rural than urban goods by value. A contrast is drawn between peasant households, who invested proportionally more in cooking, and urban households who invested proportionally more in sleeping. Furthermore, he suggests that rural households typically invested only in ‘essentials’ for eating and sleeping, while a greater diversity of goods were found in urban homes. In order to assess whether these observations are confirmed by the escheators’ and coroners’ dataset, we can consider the proportion of domestic goods held as cooking equipment, as well as the composition of cooking ware assemblages.

Cooking equipment is defined here as pots and pans (including vessels such as posnets, skillets and kettles), roasting equipment and other utensils such as trivets and pot hooks.⁴⁶⁷ Among the rural households represented in the escheators’ records, there is considerable variability in the proportion of itemised wealth held as cooking ware, with this generally decreasing as wealth brackets increase (Table 9.9). The coroners’ records show a lower degree of variability than the escheators’ records, although a similar general trend can be distinguished. Despite this, in general terms, wealthier households had a more diverse range of cooking equipment. For example, 45% of the domestic goods by value belonging to John Coupere of Buckenham (Norfolk) in 1387 (a low total valuation at 6s 8d; 55% domestic goods) consisted of two brass pots and a pan, valued together at 20d.⁴⁶⁸ In contrast, two brass pots, three pans and a posnet, as well as several wooden containers, account for 35% of William Wodeward’s domestic goods by value (total valuation £20 13½d; 31% domestic goods).⁴⁶⁹ Similarly, among the coroners’ records, 52.9% of John Hudson of Kirk Hammerton’s domestic goods by value were cooking vessels (a pot and a pan) (total valuation of just £1 1s; 27% domestic goods), while 13.9% (by value) of the domestic goods of William Bachelor of Mereworth (Kent) in 1541 (total valuation £28 6s 10d; 8% domestic goods), were pieces of cooking equipment, including a brass pot, a cauldron, a kettle, a pan, a pot hanger, two trivets, an andiron and various pieces of processing equipment.⁴⁷⁰ In short, this data does not support a conclusion that rural households lacked diversity in the cooking equipment that they possessed.

Among the escheators’ records, items associated with roasting are typically found in those lists related to rural households of high and, to a lesser

⁴⁶⁷ Where inventories list spaces, Goldberg’s analysis focusses specifically on goods found in the kitchen, excluding those in spaces such as brewhouses and pantries.

⁴⁶⁸ E839. The remainder of his household goods are referred to simply as household utensils, and may conceivably include additional cooking equipment.

⁴⁶⁹ E348.

⁴⁷⁰ C42; C446.

extent, middling, wealth. It was generally also these households that possessed additional cooking items such as frying pans and posnets. It is also the case among the rural coroners' records that rural kitchenware assemblages generally become more complex in direct relation to wealth, with roasting equipment being more prevalent among wealthier households, although they appear to become more accessible to households of lower and middling wealth in the sixteenth century. As these were not expensive items, this likely relates to the increasing availability of meat or architectural changes to rural homes which created space where roasting could take place. Therefore, both datasets suggest that although the wealthiest households typically had the widest range of cooking items, this does not represent a particularly high investment in cooking equipment as a proportion of the total household goods.

The situation for small towns deviates slightly from the rural pattern in both the escheators' and coroners' datasets, with roasting equipment and additional cooking equipment such as posnets being a feature of households of lower levels of inventoried wealth. For example, in 1394 Robert Fogheler of Seamer (Yorkshire) had goods worth just 4s 8d, but these include a roast iron (2d) and brass pan (8d), while Richard Bothe of Bingley (Yorkshire), whose goods were valued at 8s in 1419, had a posnet (6d).⁴⁷¹ In both cases these goods account for around three-quarters of the wealth held as domestic goods. This pattern continues among those households with goods worth between 100d/8s 4d and 299d/£1 4s 11d, which include the butcher John Stanke, whose goods worth £1 4s 4d in 1404 included a gridiron (4d) and spit (6d).⁴⁷² As a butcher, Stanke would have had easy access to meat, and this may account for the presence of roasting equipment in his home. Yet other cases such as that of John Lebarde of Thrapston, whose goods worth 19s 4d in 1415 included an iron griddle (3d), cobbard and spit (9d), as well as three pans (22d) and two pots (3s), accounting for 58% of his domestic goods by value, may suggest that meat was generally more accessible to less wealthy small-town households than their rural counterparts.⁴⁷³

Within both datasets, the limited number of small-town lists present an opposing picture to the rural ones, in that the urban households of lower or middling wealth had the widest variety of cooking ware. This is reflected in the diminishing proportions of domestic goods (by value) held as cooking ware (Table 9.9). Indeed, the wealthiest small-town household to possess roasting equipment in the escheators' sample is that of Thomas Hert of Folkestone (Kent), whose (probably partial) list contains goods worth £5 10s in 1421.⁴⁷⁴ This data may present a false impression; several higher value lists include entries for 'other household possessions' which might include these low value

⁴⁷¹ E880; E505.

⁴⁷² E30.

⁴⁷³ E303.

⁴⁷⁴ E715.

items of kitchenware, although the majority do not, suggesting that this may be a genuine pattern. The archaeological data for cooking ware is extremely limited, but perhaps offers some support to this interpretation of small-town/rural contrast. For example, of the three skimmers in the archaeological sample, two are from small-town sites (the other being from the moated site at Wimbotsham (Norfolk)). One reason may be the lower proportional investment in domestic goods by wealthier households, with the bulk of wealth being spent on craft resources, animals or agricultural land, or the modification of domestic buildings. For those poorer households, who rented urban houses, or were unable to afford capital investment, equipment for cooking more elaborate meals perhaps allowed them to take advantage of the increasing availability of meat in the urban market.

It is therefore not the case that rural households simply invested higher proportions of their wealth in cooking ware than their small-town equivalents. Indeed, within the escheators' records the average values (Table 9.9) are remarkably similar between small-town and rural households. A stronger pattern of deviation can be seen among the *types* of kitchen equipment held by small-town and rural households, with less wealthy small-town households seeming to have more complex ranges of kitchen ware than their rural counterparts, with wealthy rural households being more likely to have complex ranges of cooking ware than their small-town equivalents. The analysis suggests a small-town signature which is, perhaps, related to the wider diversity of objects found in larger towns, but does not support a clear distinction between small towns and the countryside in relation to the proportion of wealth held as cooking equipment. Based on the observations made here, we might propose that the pattern observed by Goldberg is less of an urban/rural contrast but more an expression of the relationship between household wealth and the proportion of that wealth held as cooking ware given the character of his urban sample. This suggests that investment in cooking ware is more complex than a straightforward distinction between town and country, also fracturing along lines of wealth in a variable manner.

Cushions and bedding

Goldberg (2008, 127) argues that cushions are a key feature of urban consumption, being a 'predominantly urban phenomenon from at least the third decade of the fourteenth century until the second half of the fifteenth century'. As discussed in Chapter 5, cushions (a category into which we might also incorporate bankers, bolsters and pillows) are rare in the escheators' dataset. This absence might, in general terms, be interpreted as corroborating Goldberg's findings. Of the lists containing these items where the place of residence is stated, 9 relate to small towns and 12 to rural households. This evidence demonstrates that they were not exclusively the possessions of urban households, but also

that they were by no means ubiquitous among those living in small towns. It is noteworthy that cushions generally appear in lists from larger small towns, such as Basingstoke, Faversham, Rochester and Dartford, and that where they occur in the countryside, they are principally the possessions of wealthy agriculturalists or clergy. Goldberg's observation about the increasing prevalence of cushions in rural households is borne out in the coroners' dataset, where the majority of households possessing these items are rural.

A further characteristic of urban households in Goldberg's sample is a comparatively higher level of investment in bedding than is seen in the countryside, with a more diverse range of bedding being present in urban homes. Specifically, he highlights that the proportion of wealth held as bedding is higher in relation to that held as cooking ware in towns than in the countryside. This relationship is not clearly observable in the escheators' records other than among the poorest and wealthiest households (Table 9.9).

In the escheators' records, the proportion of interior items (by value) held as bedding follows a similar trend to cooking ware. The average proportion of inventoried wealth represented by bedding is highest among the poorest households (39%) but typically accounts for between 10% and 25% of household items by value (Table 9.9). As with the total proportion of interior wealth, there is stronger correlation between the poorest and wealthiest rural households, with those of middling wealth generally investing a lower proportion of wealth in bedding. In contrast, bedding consistently accounts for around a quarter of domestic goods (by value) among the rural households in the coroners' sample, and a third of the domestic goods (by value) of the small-town households within the same sample.

As might be anticipated, the rural households with the lowest levels of inventoried wealth in the escheators' sample typically possessed only basic items of bedding: sheets, coverlets and blankets. An exception is the chaplain John Lynde, who had a quilt and mattress (4s) and a canvas (8d) in 1432, in what is likely an incomplete list.⁴⁷⁵ Within the 100–299d category, the picture is much the same. Exceptions are, again, a clergyman; the clerk Isaak Grene of Great Walsingham (Norfolk), who in 1445 had an old tester (24d), a mattress (16d), a pair of blankets (2s), a pair of sheets (2s) and a bedcover (2s), and John Wryde of Ospringe (Kent) who in 1399 had two blankets, an old and worn mattress and two feather pillows (6s 8d) 1399.⁴⁷⁶ Wryde also had a spade, a dung-fork and a mattock, but no livestock, or items associated with a craft. Like those in the lower wealth category, he seemingly chose to invest his limited disposable income in items of comfort; in addition to his bedding, he also had a dorser, banker and four cushions. A similar case is the Wiltshire husbandman and civil outlaw John Ferrour, whose list contains goods worth £2 2s 4d, but features no items associated with agricultural or craft production. Ferrour had at least

⁴⁷⁵ E983.

⁴⁷⁶ E1548; E901.

four coloured coverlets with testers (64d in total), five worn sheets (10s, a high value), accounting for 36% of his interior goods by value in 1416.⁴⁷⁷ More elaborate bedding is a more regular feature of the lists detailing higher quantities of itemised wealth. For example, William Mandevile of Colnbrook (Middlesex) had goods worth 101s 10d including a quilt, curtain and pillows, in addition to sheets, blankets, coverlets and mattresses in 1419.⁴⁷⁸ Similarly, in 1412 John Plumme of Cliffe at Hoo (Kent) had a featherbed (5s), and a tester, coverlet, three pairs of sheets and three blankets valued at an impressive 26s 8d among goods valued at just over £16 10s.⁴⁷⁹ The general picture is therefore one of bedding becoming increasingly elaborate in line with household wealth, but with some poorer households, particularly those not engaged directly in agricultural activity, displaying ownership of these items. There are similar exceptions among the coroners' records. Thomas Bullock, a tailor of Hawkhurst (Kent) had two painted ceilings (6d) in 1577, and the husbandman William Bridge of Stelling (Kent) had a bed with a bolster and tester within the 'widow's bed chamber' in 1586. However, more elaborate items such as bedsteads, pillows and testers only begin to appear with regularity among lists with a total valuation above 3000d/£12 10s.⁴⁸⁰

For the small-town households in the escheators' sample, there is a general trend of declining proportional investment in bedding as wealth increases. This is in line with that for investment in interior goods as whole, although the average of 26.5% for the 100d–299d range is perhaps anomalously low. The poorest household with a tester is that of Thomas Dodmere of Rochester (Kent), whose goods worth 36s 10d in 1381 included a tester (valued with three coverlets at 6s), a worn mattress (12d) and three worn sheets (3s).⁴⁸¹ Also in 1381, Geoffrey Potet of Dartford had two pillows (valued with a featherbed at 20d), as well as three coverlets (10s) and two pairs of sheets (5s) among goods worth 42s 10d.⁴⁸² In neither case is there evidence of engagement in agricultural production, although Potet possessed tippler's vessels, suggesting he may have been in the brewing or victualling trade. Overall, however, the small number of small-town lists do not show the general trend towards wealthier households possessing more elaborate bedding observed in the countryside, with pillows, quilts and elements of hanging beds appearing in lists with relatively low total values. However, this may be a result of the small number of usable lists. The coroners' records are striking in that all but one of the small-town lists include bedsteads, standing in contrast to the rural lists, and that pillows are common, even among the least wealthy households. Like the escheators' records, the small-town coroners' records show no correlation between household wealth

⁴⁷⁷ E237.

⁴⁷⁸ E712.

⁴⁷⁹ E217.

⁴⁸⁰ C457; C309.

⁴⁸¹ E668.

⁴⁸² E656.

and the level of elaboration in the bedding present. For example, the widow Catherine Goodale of Ludgershall (Wiltshire) had two pillowcases, one bolster and three feather pillows in 1569.⁴⁸³ The data therefore shows that among small-town households, there was investment in a greater and more elaborate range of bedding by those of lower levels of wealth than in the countryside. As with cooking ware, polarisation between urban and rural households is therefore most apparent among those with the lowest levels of inventoried wealth, while the bedding used in wealthier rural households is perhaps more comparable with that found in equivalent urban homes, reflecting the observations made in relation to cushions.

Overall, the data presented here suggests that even for small towns, Goldberg's suggestion that urban bedding was more varied than rural bedding is borne out. Yet they show also that wealthy rural households exhibit diversity, and were able to acquire typically 'urban' objects such as cushions. The data suggests, however, that when bedding is expressed as a proportion of inventoried wealth, with the exception of the poorest and wealthiest households, small-town households had more in common with their rural than urban counterparts.

Silver spoons and tableware

A further object identified by Goldberg as a particular feature of urban households is the silver spoon. Here it is useful to consider this alongside other metallic tableware such as pewter dishes. As with cushions, the low numbers of spoons occurring in the escheators' lists might be interpreted as supporting this argument. Spoons occur in lists from both small towns and the countryside. Around half of the lists with silver spoons relate to small towns, and in both town and country typically occur in groups of 6 or 12. Where profession is stated, spoons typically belonged to wealthy agriculturalists, artisans or members of the clergy. The escheators' evidence suggests that the difference between urban and rural consumption of silver spoons is not as marked as Goldberg would suggest, but that these objects occur only in particular types of rural and small-town household.

Goldberg does not discuss the relative quantities of tableware in relation to total inventoried wealth. However, it is instructive to discuss the occurrence of pewter ware, alongside that of silver spoons, as this might be understood as a luxury good when compared to the bedding and cooking ware which Goldberg treats as essential. Tableware is not listed in a large proportion of escheators' lists, and where it does occur the proportion of wealth that it accounts for varies considerably, with there being no correlation between the total value of a list and the proportion held as tableware (Table 9.9). A similar observation can be made for the coroners' records, albeit with a stronger trend in the latter sample towards

⁴⁸³ C207.

wealthier households investing a higher proportion of domestic goods (by value) as tableware in both small towns and the countryside (Table 9.9). Variability can be seen, however, in the character of tableware assemblages. For example, the fuller Clement Vynche had goods worth 3s 10d in 1428, which included two tin dishes (3d) as well as a tablecloth, and John Greynour of Langley Burell (Wiltshire), whose goods were worth 5s 2d in total in 1421, had four pewter dishes worth 12d.⁴⁸⁴ Among the households with goods valued between 100d and 299d, tableware typically takes the form of napery and/or a ewer and basin, although the suicide John Wryde of Ospringe, who as we have seen had more elaborate bedding than is typical, also possessed three chargers, 15 dishes and four salt cellars (all apparently pewter, and valued together at 2s 6d) (Table 9.10).⁴⁸⁵ This is an unusually high quantity even for a wealthy household, but there is no evidence that his possessions include stock-in-trade. Even among rural households with goods valued at 1100d/£4 11s 8d–1499d/£6 4s 11d, full sets of pewter dishes are unusual. William Mandevile of Colnbrook (Middlesex) had six pewter saucers and six pewter platters, as well as well as a single charger and single dish (valued together at 2s), a basin and ewer (valued with a latten candelabra at 2s) and three salt cellars (2d).⁴⁸⁶ Similarly mixed assemblages occur in the coroners' records. For example, in 1570 the chandler Reynold Carter of Chiddingstone (Kent) had pewter comprising three platters, two dishes, two saucers, two salt cellars and two pots (2s in total).⁴⁸⁷ Overall, there is a persistently high variation in the composition of these tableware collections.

Where the rural escheators' records are concerned, it is only in those households with goods worth over 1200d/£5 that sets were a more common occurrence (among the coroners' records, a similar threshold appears around 3000d/£12 10s, but even so, groups of silver spoons and/or pewterware are considerably mixed in character). For example, George Braweby of Old Malton (Yorkshire) had 12 silver spoons (24s) in 1426 and John Rennewey of Dummer (Hampshire) had 12 pewter pieces (20d) in 1422.⁴⁸⁸ Even so, the range of tableware in the wealthiest households is variable. This is well demonstrated by the yeoman William Wodeward, who had 6 pewter dishes, a platter and charger (2s), but also 12 wooden dishes (2d) in addition to other items of napery and a salt cellar in 1418.⁴⁸⁹ Even so, there is a tendency for wealthier rural households to have both a higher quantity and wider variety of plate (Table 9.10). The most diverse range of tablewares belonged to the Wiltshire clergyman John James, who had specialist items for the serving of eggs and custard, as well as a range of plate including a silver salt cellar and a range of pewter items for the serving and eating of food.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁴ E102; E535.

⁴⁸⁵ E901.

⁴⁸⁶ E712.

⁴⁸⁷ C208.

⁴⁸⁸ E789; E728.

⁴⁸⁹ E348.

⁴⁹⁰ C382.

Table 9.10: Summary of possession of tableware by rural and small-town households in the escheators' records.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | List No. | Name | Year | Napery | Ewer and/or Basin | Plate | | | Silver Spoons |
|--------------------------|----------|------------------|------|--------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | No. Items | No. Types | Set of 6 or 12 | |
| <100d | 649 | John Grayn | 1382 | X | | | | | |
| | 846 | Robert Wysman | 1390 | | X | | | | |
| | 102 | Clement Vynche | 1428 | X | | 2 | 1 | | |
| | 535 | John Greynour | 1421 | | | 4 | 1 | | |
| | 111 | John Gundry | 1428 | | X | | | | |
| | 356 | Simon Wodeley | 1418 | X | | | | | |
| | 841 | Thomas Burmond | 1389 | | X | | | | |
| | 843 | Henry Thomesson | 1389 | | X | | | | |
| | 557 | Nicholas Gulot | 1420 | | | 6 | 1 | Y | |
| | 631 | Nicholas Foscode | 1424 | | | | | | |
| 100-299d | 901 | John Wryde | 1393 | X | X | 22 | 3 | Y | |
| | 671 | John atte Ryzth | 1382 | X | | | | | |
| | 670 | John Meller | 1382 | X | | | | | |
| | 664 | John Spenser | 1382 | | X | | | | |
| | 120 | Agnes Wacy | 1447 | | | 6 | Not Specified | Y? | |
| | 311 | Walter Fox | 1420 | | X | 2 | 1 | | |
| | 1609 | Richard Walsh | 1425 | | X | | | | |

(Continued)

Table 9.10: Continued.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | List No. | Name | Year | Napery | Ewer and/or Basin | Plate | | | Silver Spoons |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------|------|--------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | No. Items | No. Types | Set of 6 or 12 | |
| | 1538 | Richard Penyng | 1434 | | X | | | | |
| | 237 | John Ferrour | 1416 | X | | | | | 2 |
| | 307 | Robert Tyuerton | 1419 | X | | 11 | 4 | | |
| | 609 | John Tye | 1422 | | X | | | | |
| | 556 | John Spark | 1420 | X | X | | | | |
| | 720 | John Mason | 1385 | | X | | | | |
| 600–799d | 1281 | Robert Smyth | 1408 | X | | | | | |
| | 127 | Robert Larke | 1448 | | | 20 | Not Specified | Y? | |
| | 407 | John Northern | 1437 | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 800–1099d | 773 | Richard Sexteyn | 1384 | | X | | | | 3 |
| | 1 | William Moldessone | 1372 | | X | | | | |
| | 712 | William Maundevile | 1419 | X | X | 17 | 5 | Y | |
| 1100d-1499d | 492 | Richard Talmage | 1417 | | X | | | | |
| | 314 | ? Bassyngham | 1438 | | X | 10 | 2 | Y | |
| | 525 | Malet Malet | 1419 | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 1500–1999d | 677 | Robert Senyng | 1382 | X | X | 15 | 3 | Y | |

(Continued)

Table 9.10: Continued.

| | Total Inventoried Wealth | List No. | Name | Year | Napery | Ewer and/or Basin | Plate | | | Silver Spoons |
|--------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------|--------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | | No. Items | No. Types | Set of 6 or 12 | |
| Rural | 2000-2999d | 1193 | Henry Hole | 1439 | | | 1 | 1 | | 12 |
| | | 1174 | Richard Kyng | 1443 | | | 24 | Not Specified | Y? | |
| | 789 | George Braweby | 1426 | X | | 3 | 2 | | 12 | |
| | 728 | John Rennewey | 1422 | X | | 12 | Not Specified | Y? | | |
| | 185 | John de Stonton Wyuill | 1379 | | | X | | | | |
| | 768 | Thomas Isenden | 1384 | X | | X | 8 | Not Specified | Y? | 4 |
| | 28 | William Leder | 1404 | X | | | | | | |
| | 217 | John Plumme | 1414 | X | | X | | | | |
| | 785 | William de Brereton | 1383 | X | | X | 8 | 2 | Y | |
| | 348 | William Wodeward | 1418 | X | | X | 12 | 5 | Y | |
| >4000d | 215 | Hugh Cetur | 1414 | | | X | 8 | 5 | | 7 |
| | 45 | John Moigne | 1405 | X | | X | 8 | 2 | | |
| | 1503 | John Waryn | 1430 | X | | X | 16 | Not Specified | Y? | 12 |
| | 100 | John Gardiner | 1428 | X | | X | 7 | 2 | | |
| Urban | <100d | 1552 | William Strode | 1445 | | | 12 | 1 | Y | |
| | | 667 | Richard Bocher | 1382 | | | X | | | |
| | 489 | John Mone | 1417 | | | X | 10 | 2 | Y | |
| | 303 | John Lebarde | 1416 | X | | X | | | | |
| | 30 | John Stanke | 1404 | | | | 3 | 1 | | |

(Continued)

Table 9.10: Continued.

| Total Inventoried Wealth | List No. | Name | Year | Napery | Ewer and/or Basin | Plate | | | Silver Spoons |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------|--------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | No. Items | No. Types | Set of 6 or 12 | |
| Urban | 918 | William Chitynden | 1435 | X | | | | | |
| | 638 | John Tiler | 1420 | | X | | 7 | 2 | Y |
| | 419 | John Noreys | 1468 | X | | | | | |
| | 748 | Richard Dawe | 1383 | | X | | | | |
| | 668 | Thomas Dodmere | 1382 | | X | | | | |
| | 656 | Geoffrey Potet | 1382 | X | | | | | 6 |
| | 747 | William Neweton | 1382 | | X | | | | |
| | 793 | Robert Durham | 1426 | | X | | 1 | 1 | |
| | 519 | John Serle | 1422 | | X | | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| | 1130 | John Alman' | 1441 | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| 20 | John Poughole | 1404 | X | | | 14 | 4 | | |
| 3000–3999d | 736 | Thomas Knyth | 1422 | | X | | | | 6 |
| >4000d | 820 | Thomas Tylthe | 1426 | X | | | 7 | 2 | Y |
| | 477 | Thomas Gribell | 1451 | | X | | 8 | Not Specified | Y? |

A similar general pattern and degree of variability can be seen in the urban lists. Among those in the escheators' sample with the lowest levels of itemised wealth, the clerk William Strode of Fordingbridge (Hampshire), whose goods were valued at 7s in 1445, is remarkable in having 12 pewter plates (12d).⁴⁹¹ The only other household with tableware is that of the butcher John Gardiner of Dartford, who had a ewer and basin (18d), four tin dishes and three saucers (8d), a worn tablecloth and a napkin (4d) in 1428.⁴⁹² Typically, those of middling wealth do not seem to have possessed items of plate. John Tiler of Odiham (Hampshire), whose goods were worth 26s 8d, is exceptional in having six pewter dishes (6d), a salt cellar, ewer (3d) and six 'worn' silver spoons (3s 8d). His was also one of the few households within the sample to possess cushions.⁴⁹³

Overall, wealth enabled the acquisition of sets of plate, but households could also invest in occasional items, either sufficient to meet household need or as stores of wealth. As with bedding, some poorer households appear to have acquired unusually high quantities of plate, reflecting a general pattern whereby these households invested in goods for comfort and display, rather than economic production – perhaps because they worked as waged labourers or did not have access to sufficient land to support agricultural enterprise. This stands in strong contrast to the 'peasant' mode of consumption, characterised by the acquisition of 'essential' household goods and a limited diversity of possessions, defined by Goldberg. The latter mode perhaps most comfortably fits those households of middling wealth within the escheators' dataset. The general trend identified here is apparent in both the small-town and rural escheators' datasets and can also be traced in the very limited sample of coroners' records. Ownership of sets of plate, as well as of silver spoons, appears to vary in accordance with household wealth, rather than whether households resided in small towns or the countryside. Furthermore, at least one item of tableware, which is likely to have been of pewter or a silver spoon, occurs in 16% of the rural escheators' records considered here and 7% of small-town lists, with the same feature occurring in 70% of the rural coroners' records considered here and 93% of the small-town lists. The data therefore shows an increasing investment in plate across society, with it initially being rare in both small-town and rural contexts, but potentially becoming more strongly associated with small-town households by the sixteenth century.

Investment in small things: archaeological evidence for market engagement

While archaeological evidence does not allow us to present a quantitative view of consumption and investment, it does permit us to consider the extent to which rural households engaged with the market. We have already seen

⁴⁹¹ E1552.

⁴⁹² E100.

⁴⁹³ E638.

through the discussion of objects such as padlocks (Chapter 5) and buckles (Chapter 6) that many small objects permeated rural markets and households, with little distinction apparent between urban and rural consumption. Of particular value in this regard are objects which can be provenanced, as we can be sure that they were obtained from a non-local source. Ceramics have not been considered in detail in this study; however, previous work on pottery provides a starting point for considering the structure of local marketing networks as revealed through archaeological evidence.

Pottery is valuable to archaeologists because it can be both closely dated and related to production centres, revealing the extent of local marketing networks. Studies of imported pottery show how those living in coastal locations had access to a range of goods otherwise only available to higher status households inland. This has been shown through the distribution of imported wares in south-west England (Allan 1994) as well as in Hampshire and the south-east, where Jervis (2017b) proposes that this distribution does not relate to the intrinsic worth of these objects but the ways in which larger households dealt directly with merchants in larger urban centres. Pottery distributions show how regions were served by particular industries. In Devon, for example, assemblages from the north of the county are characterised by the presence of products from the kilns at Bideford and Barnstaple, while in east Devon it is wares from the Blackdown Hills which are the predominant type (Allan, Dawson and Mephram 2018). Similarly, in Wiltshire and western Hampshire, Mephram (2018) has mapped the distribution of products from the Laverstock kilns near Salisbury, which principally served the city but were also exchanged through surrounding markets, making up over 98% of the medieval pottery from excavations in Fordingbridge, for example. In Hampshire, Jervis (2011) has identified marketing networks centred on major centres, which seemingly became subsumed into a wider network in the fifteenth century. Particularly sophisticated mapping of market regions in Kent by Streeten (1982) shows similar sub-regionality, but with wares produced at Tyler Hill and marketed through the principal town of Canterbury having a much wider distribution. In the midland and northern counties considered here, the distribution of pottery has been less intensively studied. In Norfolk, Jennings and Rogerson (1994) have shown that Grimston ware has a distribution focussed in the north-west of the county, but is found more widely in smaller quantities, having been traded out of King's Lynn along the coast and through the river systems.⁴⁹⁴ At the national scale, pottery distributions therefore provide valuable insights into the local marketing networks of which rural households were a part, and the dominance of larger towns such as Canterbury and Salisbury in these networks. Further insight into these networks is provided by three types

⁴⁹⁴ Note major studies of medieval ceramics in Norfolk and Suffolk (Sue Anderson) and Northumberland (Andrew Sage) are ongoing.

of stone objects which can be provenanced and their trajectories of exchange reconstructed to varying degrees: Norwegian schist whetstones, quernstones and stone mortars.

Whetstones of Norwegian schist⁴⁹⁵ are particularly illustrative. Prior to the thirteenth century, imported whetstones are primarily of Purple Phylite, with Eisborg Schist becoming the dominant stone used after this point (Moore 1978; Crosby and Mitchell 1987). Recent scientific analysis of archaeological fish remains shows that this corresponds with the expansion of the North Sea stockfish trade (Barrett *et al.* 2011; Orton *et al.* 2014) and the presence of whetstones can be understood as a by-product of the intensifying trade in English grain and Norwegian fish (Hybel 2002). Norwegian schist whetstones dominate the excavated whetstone assemblages from east coast towns such as Colchester, York and Ipswich, and are also common in Winchester (Crummy 1988, 76–9; Ottaway and Rogers 2002, 2793–7; Williams *nd*). Prior to the fourteenth century, Kings Lynn had strong trading links with Norway, but from the 1280s restrictions imposed by the Hanse saw Boston rise to prominence as the main port trading with Norway (Carus-Wilson 1962; Reed 1994, 63–4). Through our period, trade continued between east coast ports, including London and Hull, and Norway, with German merchants also engaging in the re-distribution of goods through the Hanseatic network. While not trading regularly with Norway, both Berwick-upon-Tweed and Newcastle were integrated into east coast trading networks, with links between Berwick and King's Lynn demonstrated by stone ballast from the Berwick region being reused as building material in the Norfolk port (Fraser 1969; Hoare *et al.* 2002). The distribution of whetstones is strongly skewed towards eastern England (Figure 7.2). Findspots at Wythemail (Hurst and Hurst 1969), Weekley Wood Lane (Northamptonshire; Molloy 2015) and Oakham (Rutland; Gathercole 1958) are within 10 miles of Northampton and Stamford respectively, locations of major fairs through which goods imported into Boston were redistributed (Carus-Wilson 1962), while sites at Wimbotsham (Shelley 2003) and Walpole (Norfolk; Clarke 2009) are situated within the river systems feeding King's Lynn, while Capel-St-Mary (Suffolk; Tabor 2010) is close to Ipswich, another North Sea port with Baltic links (Bailey 2007, 269) and Wharram Percy (Yorkshire) and Doncaster are within the hinterland of Hull (Chadwick 2008; Harding, Marlow-Mann and Wrathmell 2010). Strong links between Boston and Coventry may have provided a means for these stones to penetrate the market in Worcestershire, where they have been excavated at Goldicotte and Upton (Palmer 2010; Rahtz 1969) These may also have been derived from the London market, with merchants who took wool to the capital returning with a variety of goods for resale (Dyer 2012b, 118). In Wiltshire, the established trade between Southampton

⁴⁹⁵ A fuller analysis of the distribution of whetstones can be found in Jervis (2023).

and Salisbury, which included herring from the east coast (Hare 2015a) as well as the major fair at Winchester likely accounts for findspots in the county.

The majority of quern fragments within the archaeological sample are of German lava, which was the principal stone type used for hand querns in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries, particularly in eastern England; however, some examples may be residual as the type is also common in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods (see Pohl 2010). The distribution of these lava querns is focussed on East Anglia and Kent, areas in which suit of mill was weak, but also with access to North Sea trading networks (see Chapter 3; Fig 3.3). Unlike whetstones, these were bulky items which could be more easily transported over water than land, creating a demand for these stones in areas in which local stone was not suitable. In Yorkshire, Northumberland and Rutland the small number of querns are more commonly of locally sourced sandstone or Derbyshire millstone grit, which was also exchanged westwards into Worcestershire, as demonstrated by an example from Upton. However, Worcestershire also had access to red sandstone, used for querns at Goldicotte and Whittington (Hurst 1998; Palmer 2010).

The distribution of stone mortars provides a further perspective on these regional economic networks (Figure 3.7). Within the dataset, there is a single example of a Caen Stone mortar, from Wimbotsham, presumably imported via King's Lynn (Shelley 2003). The majority of mortars in the dataset are of Purbeck stone, being found at sites in southern England in Kent (Lydd, Greenwich; Barber and Priestly Bell 2008; Cooke and Philpotts 2002), Middlesex (Staines; Jones 2010), Hampshire (Foxcotte, Fordingbridge; Russel 1985, Harding and Light 2003) and Devon (Newton Abbott; Weddel 1985). This closely matches the distribution of Purbeck stone used in the construction of monastic, ecclesiastical and secular buildings which cluster in south-central England (Leach 1978). Beyond the counties included in this survey, mortars are most abundant in non-elite contexts within this core zone of Purbeck stone use. This suggests that the trade in building stone made mortars accessible to a wider range of households than further north and west, where they almost exclusively occur in elite or institutional contexts (Dunning 1966; Jervis 2022d). The production of mortars was likely a side-industry for the Purbeck stone industry, and the distribution suggests that these items travelled with building stone. This is supported by recent finds from the Mortar Wreck excavated in Poole Harbour, from which Purbeck stone grave slabs, mortars and blocks were recovered. Some more localised networks can also be identified: at Gomeldon, a mortar of local Chilmark stone was excavated, as were examples identified as being of Quarr Stone from the Isle of Wight (Musty and Algar 1986). At Goldicotte (Worcestershire) a mortar fragment of white lias was recovered (Palmer 2010). While a soft stone, probably not well suited to the production of mortars, this stone outcrops in the immediate region, running north-easterly between Bristol and Stratford-upon-Avon (Swift 1995), while Oolitic limestone outcrops in the Cotswolds

and this is the likely source of the mortar from Upton (Worcestershire; Rahtz 1969). At Doncaster and Wharram Percy, mortars of dolomitic limestone were also likely produced from stones outcropping locally. The mortars show a strong relationship with the building stones used locally, particularly in the case of Purbeck stone in the ecclesiastical architecture, as well as in the construction of church monuments (Badham 2007). The circulation of mortars is likely supplementary to that of building stone; however, investment in these items represents the acquisition of a specialist vessel for the processing of condiments, and may imply the availability of these, as well as a desire to produce flavoured foods (see Chapter 3). The low quantity of mortars suggests that these bulky items were not readily available on the local market, perhaps only becoming available when building work was undertaken locally, bringing a supply of building stone to an area and, with it, small quantities of mortars for resale or creating opportunities for stone masons to make use of waste fragments.

The distribution of these three types of stone object show how rural households were enfolded into trading networks in a variety of ways, and were able to source commodities from distant locations. They likely represent low level investments in useful objects. While querns were a major imported commodity and widely traded, whetstones and mortars perhaps represent more opportunistic commercial activities; mortars perhaps associated with the movement of building stone, and schist whetstones being exchanged through the fairs which redistributed the commodities imported into Boston and other east coast ports through the Scandinavian, German and Baltic trading networks. These stone objects present a picture of the integration of rural households into commercial networks at a level not immediately discernible from the objects listed in the escheators' and coroners' records.

Summary: domestic goods

Our datasets show a complex relationship between consumption in the countryside, in smaller towns and in the larger towns which are the subject of Goldberg's thesis. Key variables include household wealth and the accessibility of markets. The evidence provided by stone objects from archaeological excavations helps us to perceive the complex redistributive networks in which both urban and rural households were engaged, with market access likely being a key determining factor in the variety of objects which households were able to obtain, a theme explored further in Chapter 10.

In general terms, we can perceive small-town and rural households possessing increasingly similar ranges of goods, and disposing of wealth in increasingly similar ways, as we move up the scale of wealth. However, differences can be observed in relation to the three modes of urban and rural consumption defined by Goldberg. To summarise:

- Small-town and rural households held similar proportions of wealth as cooking ware relative to bedding. This is in contrast to Goldberg's evidence from larger towns, where cooking ware typically accounts for a lower proportion of inventoried wealth than bedding.
- In both town and country, wealthier households had a wider range of cooking ware than less wealthy households. However, poorer, small-town households appear to have had a wider range of cooking ware and bedding than their rural counterparts.
- Wealthier households in both small towns and the countryside had a wider variety of bedding than poorer households, but poorer, small-town households had a wider range of bedding than equivalent rural households. This suggests some similarity between larger and smaller towns, given that Goldberg proposes that a feature of urban modes of consumption is substantial investment in a diverse range of bedding. It is noteworthy that cushions occur rarely in the escheators' records, supporting Goldberg's association of these with households residing in larger towns.
- In both small towns and the countryside, the range and value of tableware increases in relation to household wealth. This implies that the acquisition of luxuries was a component of rural life, and contrasts the rural mode of consumption defined by Goldberg, which is characterised by the acquisition of essential items associated with cooking and sleeping. The evidence supports Goldberg's association of silver spoons with urban consumption, with them occurring only in a small number of lists, related to specific types of consumer.

Conclusion: patterns of investment and consumption

In concluding this chapter, we return to the model presented by Goldberg, to examine the extent to which his observations about rural households are sustained by our evidence, and to assess whether models of consumption in larger towns can be applied to their smaller counterparts.

At a general level, Goldberg's rural mode of consumption is reflected in the escheators' and coroners' records and can be applied both to rural households and to many of those residing in small towns. In general terms, a difference can be observed in the proportion of inventoried wealth held as livestock and equipment, with this being higher among rural households. On close inspection, the data does not support a clear distinction between rural and small-town experience. It should be noted that urban agriculturalists are a feature of Goldberg's dataset and their goods are recognised as appearing more 'rural' than 'urban' in character. The escheators' and coroners' records are revealing in regard to the extent to which small-town households engaged in agriculture and, particularly, wealthier households held significant proportions of their inventoried wealth in livestock. The data suggests that Goldberg's modes of consumption

relate to the extremes of urban and rural consumption. The evidence presented here suggests a more complex and diverse picture, and supports the notion that rather than there being a stark dichotomy between urban and rural consumption, there is a spectrum of consumer behaviour, which diffracts in relation to factors such as household economy, market accessibility, property ownership and, critically, wealth.

Good examples of this diffraction are the acquisition of cooking ware and bedding. In small towns, poorer households had a wider variety of cooking equipment than their rural counterparts. This accords with Goldberg's observations about larger towns, whereby urban households more typically possessed a wider range of goods beyond the essential pots and pans required for basic cooking. However, the evidence also demonstrates how the diversity of cooking ware increases in relation to household wealth in both small towns and in the countryside, even as the proportion of that wealth held as cooking ware decreased. In general, though, cooking ware accounts for a higher proportion of domestic goods by value in small-town households than in Goldberg's urban sample, situating these households closer to the rural mode of consumption. Similarly, in regard to bedding, greater polarisation between small towns and the countryside is seen among the poorest households, with bedding becoming more numerous and diverse in line with household wealth. Both the small-town and rural households contrast with Goldberg's urban sample, but in both small towns and in the countryside, investment in bedding appears more significant than Goldberg's model of rural consumption implies.

In summary, as might be expected, the data shows that while clear differences between the, predominantly wealthy, urban households and rural households are demonstrated by Goldberg, the inclusion of smaller towns and a more diverse range of rural households reveals that urbanity was not the only factor shaping domestic consumption. The archaeological evidence helps us to consider one of the reasons for this complexity – the varying networks through which goods circulated. Market access was not simply a case of proximity to a market, but to types of market and commodity chains, as seen in the case of whetstones and querns in particular. In order to better understand this patterning we can move to look at a single region in greater detail. This is the county of Wiltshire, which forms the basis of Chapter 10.