



# The Economy of Devotion in Northwest Iberian Sanctuaries

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In the Modern Era, devotional practices at sanctuaries in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula left an economic trail associated with fulfilment of *promesas* or vows, which tended to be local in nature. Behind this devotion or curiosity, the Church and its lay and ecclesiastical administrators found a religious universe in which local devotion in the form of offerings or *ex-votos* obtained validation from the community, which accepted it as a bridge between the earthly and the divine. The administration of the material goods left at the sanctuaries in thanks was governed and managed hierarchically. Material profit often took precedent over spiritual gain, detracting from religious aspects in favour of internal control groups based on economic factors.

**Key words:** *Modern Era, Galicia, sanctuaries, administration, vows, alms*

## INTRODUCTION

The impact of the sanctuaries on their *land of grace* transcended the religious realm and extended into the local socioeconomic context (Moroni, 2000). Sanctuaries took on a devotional character, differentiating them from neighbouring places of worship and providing for the maintenance of their material structure, celebrations and religious functions “according to their means” (Iglesias, 2011). Any investment of the proceeds was intended to show “the devotes evidence of the true necessity of their alms and discharge of their consciences”<sup>2</sup>; this is particularly relevant given the importance of pilgrimages to the sanctuaries, whereby “cessando l’afflusso dei pellegrini cessa anche il santuario” (De Fiores, 1984, p. 26).

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<sup>1</sup> “Culturas urbanas y resistencias en la Monarquía Hispánica en la Edad Moderna. Subproyecto: Orden, conflicto y resistencias en el Noroeste peninsular ibérico en la Edad Moderna”, PGC2018-093841-B-C31.

<sup>2</sup> Archivo Histórico Diocesano de Santiago de Compostela (A.H.D.S.), P014460, MONFERO (San Fiz), *San Xían* (1860-1880), ff. 1-2r.

Looking beyond their religious nature, the organisation and management of the sanctuaries was underpinned by an administrative structure with well-defined functions and duties (Fatjó, 2001, p.2). Despite their heterogeneous origin, sanctuaries in Galicia all followed the same model of economic organisation and their accounting ledgers allow us to establish links between their finances and their liturgical and religious activity via the “devotional surplus” that began to be “produced with divine endorsement” in earlier religions (Alvar, 1999).

The sanctuaries were managed using a framework linked, either directly or indirectly, to a “trading in faith” that was not always viewed favourably. As institutions governed by the charters of a brotherhood, the rules of a consistory, monastery or cathedral, or the “age-old custom” of the community (Landi, 1999), these *houses of devotion* were controlled by the diocese, which, as devotional practices proliferated, ordered “a record book to be created to account for the alms collected from rents and property on a periodic basis”. All books and receipts were inspected by the diocesan secretary or visitor to “balance the accounts” with their income and expenditure, assess the deficit or surplus and sanction them when they were “correctly and faithfully recorded”.

Bookkeeping for the sanctuaries on Galicia’s Atlantic coast displays clear similarities with other parish fabrics, albeit with “less devotion and religious festivity”. In truth, the only difference between sanctuaries and other clerical institutions in terms of their bookkeeping was the volume of income and expenditure and parallels can even be observed with the cathedral fabric in Santiago de Compostela, whose example was followed by smaller entities (Rey, 2010). Donations from devotees, regardless of their size, were deemed to require economic governance as part of the socioeconomic relationship defined in the Holy Scriptures with regard to the sacred (Aerts, 2012). The visit by the diocese to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Boat in 1720 reported that “it was maintained with the alms donated by Christian worshippers and devotees, moved by their devotion to this Sanctuary frequented by inhabitants of this Kingdom and pilgrims from different nations”<sup>3</sup>. As well as boosting the sanctuaries’ symbolic influence in the local context, the arrival of devotees also enabled them to be maintained and provided economic support in the form of offerings.

### **Hermits and stewards: administrators of Galicia’s sanctuaries**

Many chapels and shrines in Galicia were managed by laypeople who had retired as hermits. Responsible for maintaining, cleaning and tidying the sanctuaries and enduring “hard work to earn the glory of God”, the hermits served “with assistance from certain neighbours” and under the oversight of the parish priests until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hermits were regulated in Castile from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the legislation covered their growing numbers and the need to bring order to their way of life (William, 1991, p. 137). Galician dioceses forbade hermits

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<sup>3</sup> A.H.D.S., FONDO GENERAL, Visita pastoral, 1262 (1493-1794).

from living and sleeping in the shrines without a licence issued “upon examination of their life and habits”, limited hermit couples to those who “build and cause no damage with their work”<sup>4</sup>, and condemned *santeros* who scandalised “those around them with their vices”<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, the synodal statutes for the diocese of Santiago in 1746 allowed only graduates and those with a profession “that would sustain them” to join the order, banning them from “bringing any women into their rooms” and from publishing indulgences and jokes that contravened Tridentine protocol<sup>6</sup>.

Alongside the hermits, stewards were sometimes responsible for managing the sanctuaries’ finances (González, 2009). Stewards were either members of the clergy such as chaplains or “trusted” laypeople, and their administrative duties were regulated by the Council of Trent. They differed from parish *luminarios*, as they were elected each year to keep accounts, maintain and lease assets and safeguard ornaments (Calvo, 2005). The *mayordomo de santuario* or sanctuary steward performed the role “out of devotion” and was selected by vote from among the residents, the village council and the parish warden to represent ordinary people. The appointment of the steward was based not on skill or proficiency (most were illiterate) but on good conscience or economic solvency, especially among the men, as women were broadly overlooked for stewardship. On an exceptional basis, women had to take on the role on behalf of their husbands who were absent “from the Kingdom” or who had died before completing their mandate (Barreiro, 1977). However, the parish priests had the last word. The synodal statutes for the bishopric of Tui in 1761 described the stewards as “ex officio administrators” and stated that all the offerings belonged “to the abbot in whose parish the sanctuaries are located, so the neighbours may interfere in these donations in no way whatsoever”<sup>7</sup>. The collection process was supervised by the Church from the counting of the alms through to their conversion into money<sup>8</sup>.

### **The sanctuaries’ main source of revenue**

In the Modern Era, many Galician sanctuaries depended on the granting of licences for alms rounds by prelates or by the Council of Castile itself to fund worship, aid, proper liturgical practices and repairs to church buildings (Hespanha, 1993). Although the true returns on these practices are unknown, they played a fundamental role in strengthening the brotherhoods and references to seeking alms appear to be structural given their persistence, frequency and spread across different archpriesthoods in Modern Galicia, where the bishops sought to prevent their proliferation (Lobo, 2019). Sanctuaries such as Saint Peter of Rubieiro (Sumio, Carral) leased their money boxes to the highest bidder at an annual auction upon payment of a fixed or “set”

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<sup>4</sup> *Constituciones sinodales del obispado de Orense*. Madrid: Vda. de Alonso Martín de Balboa, 1622, p.98.

<sup>5</sup> *Constituciones Synodales con algvnas declaraciones...*, Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1618, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> *Constituciones Synodales del Arzobispado de Santiago...*Santiago: Buenaventura Aguayo,1747, pp. 271-273

<sup>7</sup> *Constituciones synodales del obispado de Tuid...* Santiago: Ignacio Aguayo, 1761, pp. 96-99 y 74-75

<sup>8</sup> A.H.D.S., P011542, FREIXEIRO (San Félix), Cofradías, San Adrián (1716-1767), núm.4, f. 41r.

deposit. Traversing the Val de Barcia at the foot of the old Camino de Santiago between 1734 and 1746, the alms round supplied 93% of the revenues for the Sumio sanctuary, to which “both locals and neighbours from the surrounding area are particularly devoted because they have received unique favours for their afflictions and diseases”, according to parish priest Don Bernardino Joseph Veloso Araújo<sup>9</sup>.

YEAR	ALMS ROUNDS	RENTS	CANDLES	TOTAL
1734	176			176
1735	220			220
1736	196			196
1737	35			35
1738	275			275
1739	159			159
1740	159			159
1741	143		70	213
1742	277			277
1743	272			272
1744	121	3	41	165
1745	137	13	34	184
1746	105			105
TOTAL	2275	16	145	2436
%	93.39	0.66	5.95	100

As well as these supposedly fixed alms rounds, which were leased for greater convenience, other rounds emerged over time in response to the sanctuaries' needs. A Royal Decree from 16 September 1757 aimed to bring an end to the excesses committed by the “numerous people who go around seeking alms with requests from different sanctuaries” without a licence. The Royal Council extended the alms round for Our Lady of the Pillar and Saint James the Apostle to the whole Kingdom. Montserrat was reserved for the bishoprics of Catalonia. While seeking to impose control in the Tridentine spirit by limiting licences to the “precise bounds” of the territory of the bishopric where the sanctuaries were located, the Council also protected local sanctuaries as they expanded. Despite this, small shrines continued to spring up in a “devotional dumping” (Julien, 2016, p.78), seeking alms locally during the harvest with their polychrome boxes despite the restrictions. In 1777, the Sanctuary of the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra was obliged to spend twenty-four *reales* in compensation for “those who were apprehended in La Lanzada pretending to seek alms for the Virgin”<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> A.H.D.S., P021427, SUMIO (Santiago), Cofradías, San Pedro (1734-1881), núm.2

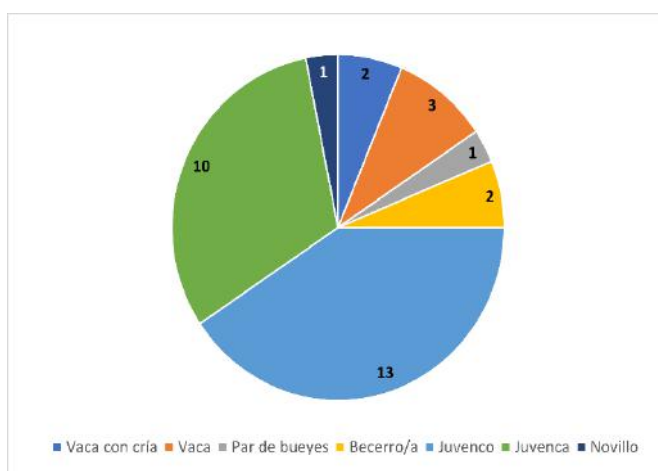
<sup>10</sup> Archivo Histórico Provincial de Pontevedra (A.H.P.P.), Ca.2169, LEG.1-CARP.4, letra G.

### Vows fulfilled at the Sanctuary of the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra

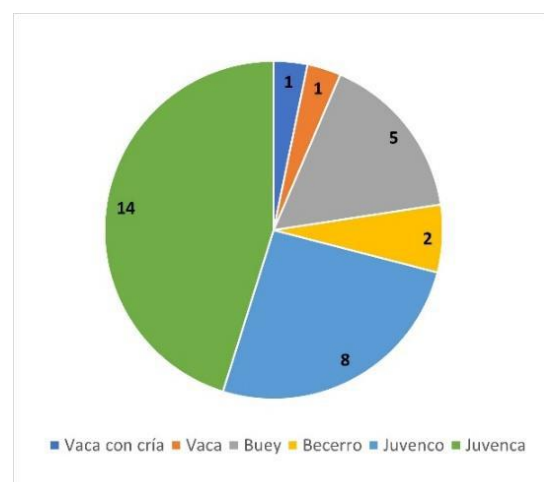
The ledgers from the Sanctuary of the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra cast some light on the complex matter of vow fulfilment. The income listed from 1780 to 1785 allows devotion at this Marian sanctuary to be tracked in terms of the type of offerings received, their value (listed for more than 99% of the donations) and the social and even geographic origin of the *ofrecidos* [offerers].

YEAR	TOTAL NAMED ENTRIES
1780	41
1781	73
1782	104
1783	109
1784	98
1785	107
TOTAL	532

Despite the limitations of the debit entries due to the lack of “individual records resulting from the heavy flows of people” in years like 1781, the people making offerings to the Pilgrim Virgin preferred to lend support or fulfil their vows in cash. Money in cash accounted for up to 74.06% of entries from 1780 to 1785, with animals (25.56%) and ex-votos such as the “box” left by Don Manuel Senra de Vigo in 1782 and the shroud hung by Gregorio Garrido de Xustáns in 1783 upon being “spared from death” coming far behind. With regard to cattle, the donated animals were sold on by the sanctuary although it was more common for their value to be deposited by the offerer so that they could recover their animal.



Graph 1. Cattle in 1782 ledgers



Graph 2. Cattle in 1785 ledgers

The arrival of livestock at the sanctuaries followed the development of the Galician livestock population itself: in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the region had 31.2% of the cattle in the Crown of Castile, 21.4% of the pigs and 11.1% of the sheep and goats. However, most of the *ofrecidos* came from the Atlantic coast of Galicia, where livestock was more scarce. The average livestock population on the land around Santiago de Compostela in 1752 was 2.9 head of cattle and 10.5 head of sheep/goats, compared to 2.1 and 3.9 on the land surrounding Tui (Rey Castelao, 1998, pp.35-42).

**Table 3.** Vows made to the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra by item, 1780-1785

YEAR	CASH	ANIMALS	SHROUDS & COFFINS	TOTAL
1780	35	6		41
1781	49	24		73
1782	67	36	1	104
1783	88	20	1	109
1784	80	18		98
1785	75	32		107
<b>TOTAL</b>	394	136	2	532
%	74.06	25.56	0.38	100

**Source:** AHPPO, CA.2172.

As for the value of the offerings, 6.3% were valued at under 50 *reales*, 76.32% were between 50 and 200 *reales* and 14.47% were between 200 and 500 *reales*. Only 12 entries exceeded that sum (2.26%) and only one, in 1784, was over 1,000 *reales*: a one-off donation of 3,000 *reales* bequeathed in his will by Don Pedro Antonio del Sobral, a merchant in Cádiz who was originally from Pontevedra.

**Table 4.** Values of vows made to the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra according to named entries, 1780-1785

YEAR	<50	50-100	100-200	200-300	300-400	400-500	500-1,000	>1,000	Unknown	TOTAL	%
1780	6	9	14	5	5		2			41	7.71
1781	5	23	31	9	2	2	1			73	13.72
1782	5	48	40	4	2	2	2		1	104	19.55
1783	7	56	28	10	2	3	2		1	109	20.49
1784	6	45	32	5	2	3	4	1		98	18.42
1785	5	49	31	11	9	1	1			107	20.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	34	230	176	44	22	11	12	1	2	532	<b>TOTAL</b>
%	6.39	43.23	33.08	8.27	4.14	2.07	2.26	0.19	0.38	100	%

He was referred to as ‘Don’ due to his profession as “one of those authorised to sail to the Indies” and shared the title with 17.14% of the men listed, more than 30% of whom were from the ecclesiastical establishment, including presbyters and abbots (24.36%) and canons and

prebendaries (6.41%)<sup>11</sup>. Although the reason for the use of the title is unclear for more than half of the men, many held public office or exercised liberal professions. Don Manuel Troncoso de Lira, Lord of A Picoña (Salceda de Caselas), appears to be the only man of privilege in an area where nobles were scarce in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (Rey, 1994, p.206).

**Table 5.** Sample of occupations held by *ofrecidos* to the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra

Title by occupation	Number	%
Presbyter, abbot	19	24.36
Canon, prebendary	5	6.41
Public office (notary, collector, etc.)	2	2.56
Apothecary	1	1.28
Surgeon	1	1.28
Royal Hospital baker	1	1.28
Merchant	1	1.28
Captain of Dragons	1	1.28
Nobleman	1	1.28
Unspecified	46	58.97
TOTAL	78	100

With regard to their sociological composition, the *ofrecidos* were largely of modest means: 85.5% of the men and still more of the women were from humble families, with only 8.2% of women addressed as ‘Doña’ as the wives of titled men. Alongside individual donations, joint offerings were made by couples and neighbours. Due to its coastal location in the Rías Baixas in Galicia, the sanctuary also received collective vows from sailors: “Bernardo San Jorge and colleagues” entrusted themselves to the Virgin as they faced danger on board a *dorna* sailing from Marín and gave 90 *reales* in thanks in 1783, while the crew of the Nossa Senhora do Cabo bergantine sailing from Lisbon donated 400 *reales* “for the cost of the mainsail”.

<sup>11</sup> Archivo General de Indias (A.G.I.), CONTRATACIÓN, 5504, n. 92, f.92r.-96v.

**Table 6.** Sociological composition of *ofrecidos* to the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra, 1780-1785

YEAR	MEN	DON	WOMEN	DOÑ A	JOINTLY	UNKNOW N	TOTA L
1780	36	10	4		1		41
1781	62	14	10	1		1	73
1782	90	12	11			3	104
1783	89	15	16	2	2	2	109
1784	84	10	10		2	2	98
1785	94	17	10	2	2	1	107
TOTAL	455	78	61	5	7	9	532
%	85.53	17.1 4	11.47	8.20	1.32	1.69	100

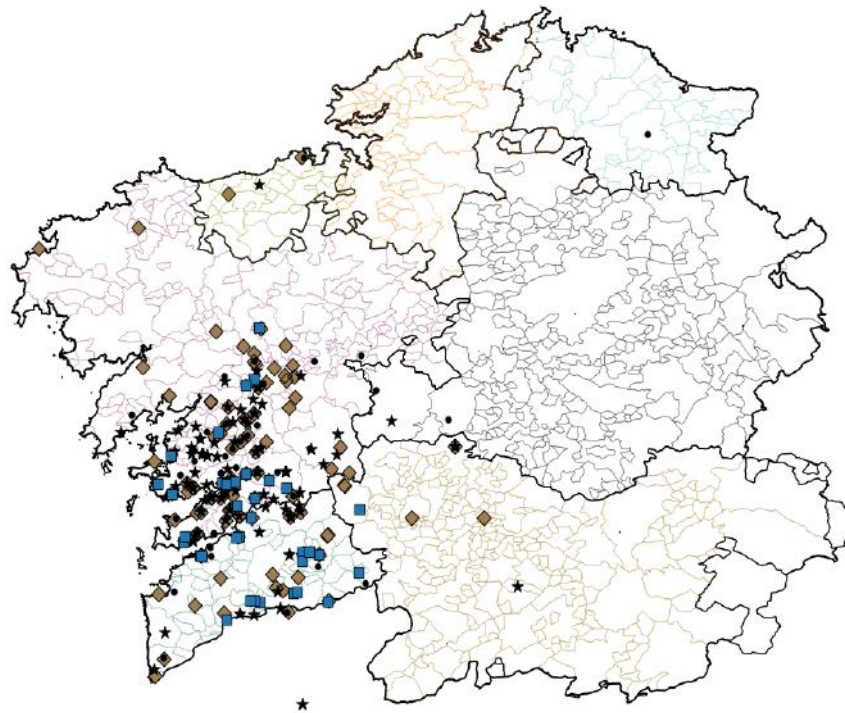
Indeed, 3.2% of the *ofrecidos* between 1780 and 1785 were Portuguese sailors docked at A Moureira, who were devotees or visitors to the sanctuary. However, the almsgivers were mostly Galician, with 89.47% of those whose geographic origins are known coming from the Atlantic coast. Between 1780 and 1785, 63.91% of devotees came from the diocese of Santiago de Compostela where the city of Pontevedra was located, followed by Tui (24.4%), Ourense (2.8%), A Coruña-Betanzos (1.1%), Mondoñedo and Lugo.

**Table 7.** Geographic origin of *ofrecidos* to the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra, 1780-1785

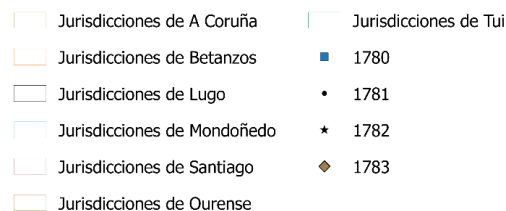
YEAR	CORUÑA- BETANZO S	SANTIAGO	LUGO- MONDOÑEDO	OURENSE	TUI	PORTUGAL	CÁDIZ	UNKNO WN	TOTAL
1780		20		1	20				41
1781	1	53	1	1	13	1		3	73
1782	1	80		3	11	4	1	4	104
1783	3	66		7	27	3		3	109
1784		57		1	27	5	1	6	98
1785		64	1	2	32	4		4	107
TOTA L	6	339	3	15	130	17	2	20	532
%	1.13	63.91	0.38	2.82	24.4 4	3.20	0.38	3.76	100



**Map 1.** Origin of almsgivers at the Sanctuary of the Pilgrim Virgin of Pontevedra, 1780-1783



**Procedencia de las limosnas a la Divina Peregrina de Pontevedra**



### Selling the devotional surplus: auctions, sales and bids

In the words of cardinal Jerónimo del Hoyo, Our Lady of Pastoriza inspired “a great deal of devotion and abundant attendance and religious festivity”. The resulting economic gains were “of great benefit to the priest and to the fabric”, symbolising the institutionalisation of devotional offerings<sup>12</sup>. It is difficult to separate the sacred from the profane in the case of Galician sanctuaries, where fairs sometimes took precedence over pilgrimages – the profane over the religious – albeit supplementing and expanding their role as a venue for conviviality rather than displacing or diminishing it (Saavedra, 1994). Fairs and markets benefited sanctuaries such as Our Lady of Rial, which vendors passed on their way to A Serra de Outes

<sup>12</sup> DEL HOYO, Jerónimo (1607), *Memorias del Arzobispado de Santiago*, f.237v.

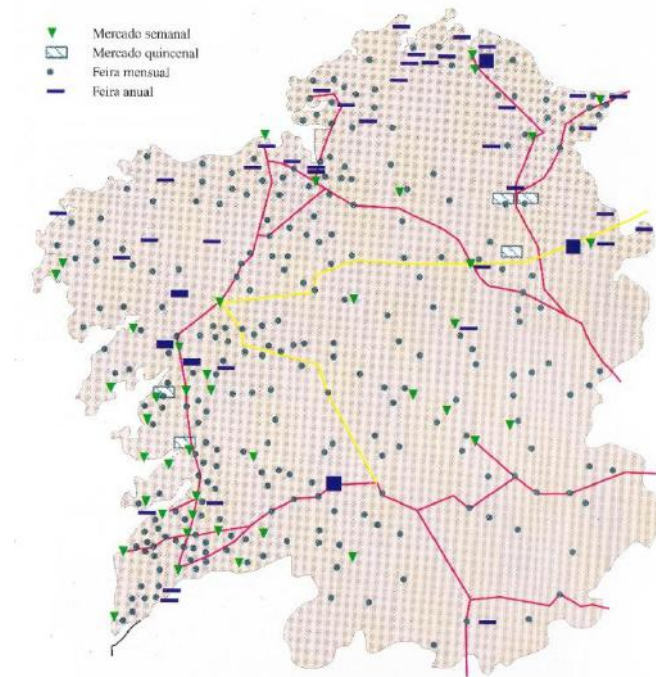
every second Sunday of the month, as well as the Pilgrim Virgin of A Pobra do Deán (A Coruña) between 1785 and 1801, where the sanctuary's normal revenues, which were usually in cash, were supplemented by the *reales* spent by the merchants who visited the town each month<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 8.** Summary of accounts for the Sanctuary of the Virgin of A Pobra do Deán, 1785-1802

YEAR	SEAMEN'S GUILDS	IN-KIND	ANIMALS	FISH	CASH	SHROUDS	JEWELLERY	WAX	FAIRS	WINE	TOTAL
1785	842	19	108	56	126		37		49		1237
1786	644	6	114	37	600	60	7				1468
1787			1045		172	46					1263
1788											
1789			708		2487	5	34		951	300	4485
1790			853		879	79			325		2136
1791		79	120		407	34	282	8	351		1281
1792		56	688		291	22			248		1305
1793		45	256		271	104			204		880
1794		62	363		308	114	134		279		1260
1795			289		663	463			357		1772
1796			176		494	44			412		1126
1797					443	16			247		706
1798			210		659				245		1114
1799			30		91	21			249		391
1800					536	8			167		711
1801					306				127		433
1802			18		446	40			39		543
TOTAL	1486	267	4978	93	9179	1056	494	8	4250	300	22111
%	6.72	1.21	22.51	0.42	41.51	4.78	2.23	0.04	19.22	1.36	100

Contributing to an increase in trading, public auctions or sales depending directly on the sanctuaries were held on the premises to sell the offerings received, such as livestock, textiles and other items, which contributed to an economy that relied upon the monetisation of vows made by devotees. With no apparent formal or legislative framework, the impact of public auctions as an economic and organisational strategy and as an additional source of funds for some sanctuaries is difficult to quantify in most cases, as the forms and characteristics of these exchanges in the context of the sanctuaries' economic structures is unknown. An apparently ordinary business, albeit one that was not focused on the ordinary lives of devotees, these purchases appear rather out of the ordinary in a subsistence economy that allowed material donations to be transformed into cash (Eiras, 1984).

<sup>13</sup> MADOZ, Pascual (1849) *Diccionario Geográfico Estadístico Histórico de España y sus posesiones de ultramar*. T. XIII. Madrid: Imprenta de Pascual Madoz, p.252



**Map 2.** Location of fairs and markets in Galicia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century

As well as the fair held on the property and jurisdiction of Codeseda (A Estrada) every second Sunday of the month<sup>14</sup>, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Agrela offered another trading venue, which was intended as a market limited to purchases made “against payment”, that is, paid in cash<sup>15</sup>. However, several *llevadores* [buyers] left the atrium with a maximum period of one year to pay for their purchases. An analysis of some of the products sold at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Agrela shows the significance of animals among the transactions occurring between 1750 and 1778, ranging from 84.62% of sales in 1772 to a minimum of 41.18% in 1774, and from 66 animals sold in 1750 to 5 in 1773.

<sup>14</sup> LARRUGA, Eugenio (1798), *Memorias políticas y económicas sobre los frutos, comercio, fábricas y minas de España...* t. XLIII, Madrid: Antonio Espinosa, p.29.

<sup>15</sup> A.H.D.S., P008199 CODESEDA (San Xurxo), Administración, *Guadalupe* (1750-1840), n. 6, f.71v.

**Table 9.** Livestock auctioned at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Codeseda, 1750-1778 (according to accounting entries)

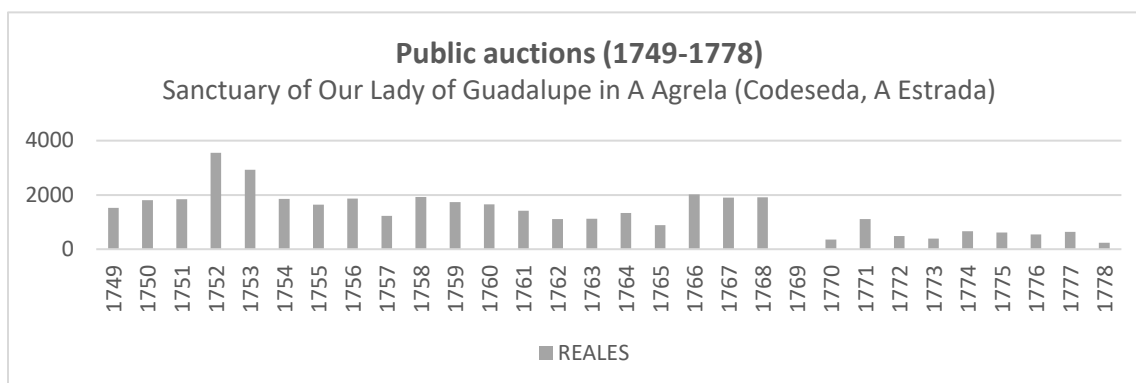
YEAR	POULTRY	%	PIGS	%	CATTLE	%	SHEEP	%	HORSES	%
1750	58	87.88	3	4.55	1	1.52	4	6.06		
1751	23	71.88	1	3.13	2	6.25	6	18.75		
1754			1	3.57	13	46.43	14	50		
1759					7	35	12	60	1	1.52
1760			1	3.45	6	20.69	22	75.86		
1761	1	3.23	1	3.23	7	22.58	22	70.97		
1768			1	4.17	7	29.17	16	66.67		
1772					1	9.09	10	90.91		
1773					2	40	3	60		
1774					2	28.57	5	71.43		
1775					6	40	9	60		
1776					4	40	6	60		
1777					1	6	15	93.75		
1778					1	14	6	85.71		

From 1751 onwards, poultry was overtaken by ovine livestock, mostly sheep and lambs, with a few “nanny goats with their kids”: this type of livestock grew from an initial 6% in 1750 to 94% in 1777. The number of rams (some of which were “in a poor condition”) also rose and they appeared in 18 of the 22 listings for animals for auction in 1760 (more than 80%). Cattle were also increasingly present: most were calves, heifers and steers, but one or two oxen were also sold in years like 1759 and 1768. Exceptional donations in terms of their value or ownership were also made, such as that of “a very small filly” in 1759. The absence of references to free-roaming cattle in Terra de Montes from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century suggests that some of the donations to Our Lady of Guadalupe were cattle that were permanently or partially stabled for “domestic use” (Fernández, 2012, p.317). Although it was “rare to find farm labourers without a pig at home”, there is anecdotal evidence of the presence of pigs in Xallas (Barreiro, 1977) and A Ulla (Rey, 1981).

By contrast, personal items such as clothing and jewellery played a minor role and some jewels, donated to decorate the sacred images, were auctioned to avoid them “being destroyed and no longer being of use”<sup>16</sup>. These jewels were purchased by silversmiths from Noia, Tui, Padrón and Santiago, who were also given them in payment for their work. Sales of unprocessed linen followed livestock as the main purchase among women, as spinning was a widespread occupation in Galicia in the Modern Era. Donations of fruit or cereals were highly dependent upon agricultural production, which, during the Old Regime, was exposed to highly volatile harvests. It is likely that a poor harvest in 1768 reduced the arrival of cereals in Codeseda until 1774 as part of a decline that began in 1754 (8.47%); it is no coincidence that this occurred following a period of impoverishment in agriculture that contrasts with the 1750 entry showing

<sup>16</sup> A.H.D.S., P008199, CODESEDA (San Xurxo), Administración, Guadalupe (1750-1840), ff. 98v. y 146r.

7.94%, compared to subsequent data showing 2.56% in 1768 and 2.33% in 1760 (Eiras, 1984). In 1769, there were no alms nor auctions “due to misfortune”.



**Graph 3.** Evolution of revenues from public auctions at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Codeseda in *reales*, 1749-1778

In the early years, transactions were paid in cash and no guarantor was needed: there is no sign of any such figure in 98% of the transactions from 1750 and 1751. However, 91% of transactions in 1754 and 100% of the few carried out between 1772 and 1774 feature a guarantor, indicating that they were paid on credit. From 1754, the use of a guarantor to provide additional security was a common practice. Against this backdrop, 9,000 *reales* were found to be non-collectible in 1757, suggesting that some believers were not what they seemed to be. Overbidding did not always entail responsibility for payment. Although some of the auctions studied occurred during a period of rising prices observed in 1728-1817, the products selected here display price movements that are dependent on each bidder, their household finances and their desire to stand out from others in their community at these second-hand sales (Eiras, 1977).

YEAR	NO GUARANTOR	%	GUARANTOR	%	TOTAL	MEN	%	WOMEN
1750	80	98.77	1	1.23	81	1	100	
1751	62	98.41	1	1.59	63	1	100	
1754	5	8.77	52	91.23	57	50	96.15	2
1759	16	38.10	26	61.90	42	25	96.15	1
1760	9	21.43	33	78.57	42	33	100	
1761	20	39.22	31	60.78	51	31	100	
1768	22	57.89	16	42.11	38	16	100	
1772			13	100	13	13	100	
1773			6	100	6	6	100	
1774			18	100	18	18	100	
1775	9	45.00	11	55.00	20	11	100	
1776	4	28.57	10	71.43	14	10	100	
1777	9	45.00	11	55.00	20	11	100	
1778	5	55.56	4	44.44	9	4	100	

All of those who acted as guarantors or *cumplidores* for another individual were men, with the exception of two cases in 1754: a widow served as a guarantor for a married man, who was mediating in a purchase of linen made by his wife, and Gregorio García de Vilboa's mother-in-law acted as guarantor for the cereals acquired by her daughter against her husband's will. Meanwhile, in 1759 Gabriel de Souto from Currelos purchased a steer in Codeseda with "his widowed mother" serving as guarantor. With the exception of these cases, no other men had women as guarantors.

**Table 11.** Guaranteed transactions at auctions at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Codeseda, 1750-1778 (according to accounting entries)

YEAR/ GUARANTOR	MAN	%	WOMAN	BETWEEN MEN	%	BETWEEN MAN & WOMAN	%	BETWEEN WOMEN	%
1750	1	100		1	100				
1751	1	100				1	100		
1754	50	96.15	2	43	82.69	8	15.38	1	1.92
1759	25	96.15	1	21	80.77	5	19.23		
1760	33	100		31	93.94	2	6.06		
1761	31	100		26	83.87	4	12.90		
1768	16	100		16	100				
1772	13	100		12	92.31				
1773	6	100		6	100				
1774	18	100		15	83.33				
1775	11	100		9	81.82	2	18.18		
1776	10	100		8	80.00	2	20.00		
1777	11	100		7	63.64	4	36.36		
1778	4	100		4	100				

Although most transactions were carried out by men, one purchase in 1754 involved two women, one of whom acted as a guarantor for the other who was purchasing linen. The absence of women in these transactions does not appear to be due to any official restriction, but rather to the prevailing custom whereby women would participate in selecting the product, which was then bid for by a man.

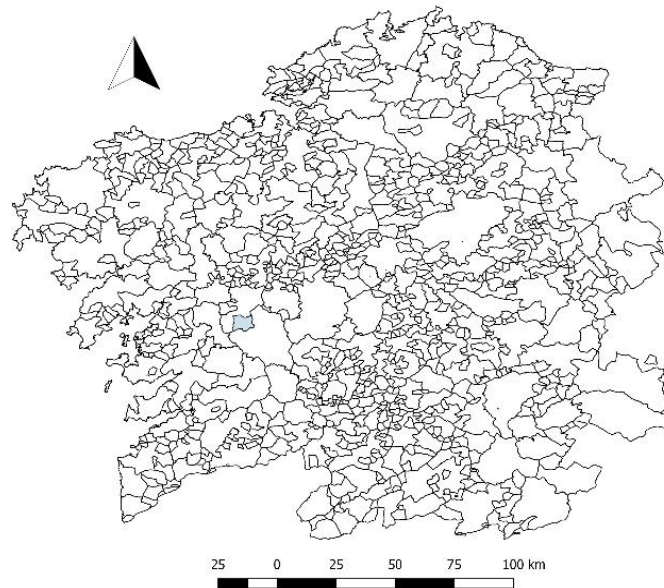
**Table 12.** Proportion of male and female *llevadores* at the auctions in Codeseda, 1750-1778

YEAR	DON	NO TITILE	TOTAL MEN	DOÑ A	NO TITILE	TOTAL WOMEN	TOTAL BUYERS	% MEN	% WOMEN
1750	4	25	29	1	3	4	33	87.88	12.12
1751	7	37	44		12	12	56	78.57	21.43
1754	8	34	42	1	8	9	51	82.35	17.65
1759	2	35	37		5	5	42	88.10	11.90
1760	2	38	40		2	2	42	95.24	4.76
1761	4	40	44		8	8	52	84.62	15.38
1768	5	33	38		1	1	39	97.44	2.56
1772	1	11	12		1	1	13	92.31	7.69
1773	1	5	6				6	100	-
1774		15	15		3	3	18	83.33	16.67
1775		17	17		3	3	20	85	15
1776		12	12		2	2	14	85.71	14.29
1777		16	16		4	4	20	80	20
1778	2	7	9				9	100	-

With regard to the origin of these *llevadores*, our survey shows that between 1750 and 1778 residents of the parish of San Xurxo de Codeseda outnumbered “outsiders”. These outsiders came from within the jurisdiction of Codeseda, where the sanctuary was located, from neighbouring jurisdictions such as Tabeirós, Montes and Baños, and, more rarely, from more distant locations such as Carboeiro and Deza. The auctions’ appeal, therefore, did not extend particularly far.

**Table 13. Origin of buyers at the auctions in Codeseda, 1750-1778**

YEAR	CODESEDA (San Xurxo)	%	OTHER LOCATIONS	%	TOTAL
1750	53	71.62	21	28.38	74
1751	40	72.73	15	27.27	55
1754	33	57.89	24	42.11	57
1759	24	57.14	18	42.86	42
1760	31	73.81	11	26.19	42
1761	28	53.85	24	46.15	52
1768	26	61.90	16	38.10	42
1772	10	76.92	3	23.08	13
1773	5	83.33	1	16.67	6
1774	13	72.22	5	27.78	18
1775	13	65	7	35	20
1776	10	71.43	4	28.57	14
1777	14	70	6	30	20
1778	5	55.56%	4	44.44	9



**Map 3.** Location of the jurisdiction of Codeseda in Galicia's jurisdictional network, 1753.





**Map 4.** Jurisdictions neighbouring the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Codeseda (A Estrada, Pontevedra)

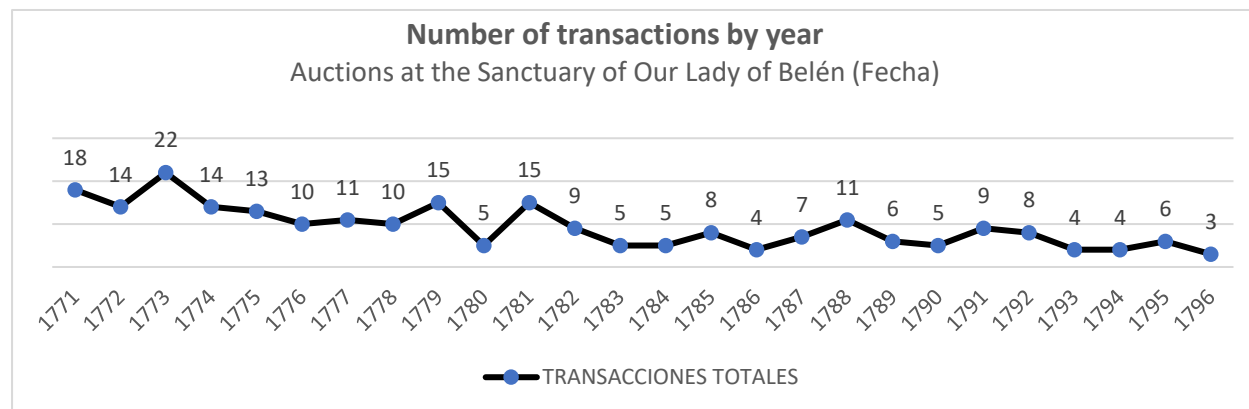
At the auctions, people from different social classes mixed and were assigned different titles according to their profession or status. Nevertheless, the majority of the men and women attending had no title: in 1750, only 14% of buyers were titled, while in 1773 the figure stood at 17%. The titled buyers were presbyters, priests and a few “smallholders”. The fact that payment in cash was not required, however, allowed members of the community with little available cash to participate<sup>17</sup>.

The frequency of the auctions was not determined by the size of the population surrounding the sanctuary, but rather by the number of donations in stock deriving from a modest flow of devotees. These auctions were held at a time when fairs were proliferating in Galicia, with monthly fairs scheduled in 264 locations in around 1790, reaching a total of 57,000 days a year by the end of the century (Saavedra, 1994). With their auctions, the sanctuaries gave parishes that were unable to hold markets on public land on designated days an opportunity to carry out transactions via bidding. Economic crises transformed devotional practices as the economy expanded and contracted (William, 1989). At the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Belén in Fecha, the number of days when “raffles of the items brought by devotees” were held reduced considerably from 1780<sup>18</sup>. With the exception of 1781 and 1788, when there were more than 10 days of auctions, purchases and sales at the sanctuary in Fecha appear to have declined, coinciding with an “inter-cycle” in good harvests and low prices between 1780 and 1787. Poor harvests in 1788-1789, as well as mediocre or inadequate harvests up to 1811, led to fewer

<sup>17</sup> A.H.D.S., P017390, Ponte do Porto (San Pedro), Administración, Fundación (1781-1892)

<sup>18</sup> A.H.D.S., P017158 FECHA (Santa Cristina), Administración, Almonedas (1771-1841), f. 1r.

donations. From 1790, these donations were most commonly sold on between September and the first few months of the year. Generally speaking, records show that more than half of the auctions held between 1771 and 1796 took place during the first six months of the year (January to June).



**Graph 4.** Evolution of transactions at the Sanctuary of Belén by year, 1771-1796

Transactions at the sanctuary’s auctions tended to be sporadic and spaced out over time; this may have been due to an intentional decision to accumulate a wider variety of jewellery for auction or simply due to a lack of stock. These auctioned alms, which depended on the *austerity of the times*, the economic situation and even the weather, are not indicative of a greater or lesser degree of devotion depending on the season, as devotees made donations when they had the most, not when they believed the most. Father Juan de Villafañe echoed this idea when discussing the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Franqueira, which received offerings of the goods that their land bears and that they are able to donate: those who have the most contribute the most to demonstrate their tender affection for the Holy Image and those who are poor offer some gift nonetheless, sharing something of their poverty<sup>19</sup>.

Some of the ex-votos donated in fulfilment of vows were sold “by announcement”<sup>20</sup>. Wax was usually hung on the walls in the form of candles and kept for some time before being resold to waxworkers as “it seem[ed] superfluous to store a pile of wax”<sup>21</sup>. Some wax items were lent to wardens and stewards of other parish brotherhoods. In general, this was limited to *cera labrada* [moulded wax] and not to raw or unworked wax (*en panal*), which was rarely donated to the sanctuaries<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> VILLAFANE, Juan (1726), *Compendio histórico en que se da noticia de las milagrosas y devotas imágenes de la Reyna de los Cielos y Tierra, María Santísima, que se veneran en los más célebres santuarios de España*, Salamanca: Imprenta de Eugenio García de Honorato, p.222.

<sup>20</sup> A.H.D.S., P000550, AMIL (San Mamede), Administración, Milagros (1864-1919)

<sup>21</sup> A.P.S.P., *Libro de qventas de la Virgen de la Salvd* (1802-1973), ff. 15r. y 42r.

<sup>22</sup> A.H.D.S., P008199, CODESEDA (San Xurxo), Administración, Guadalupe (1750-1840)



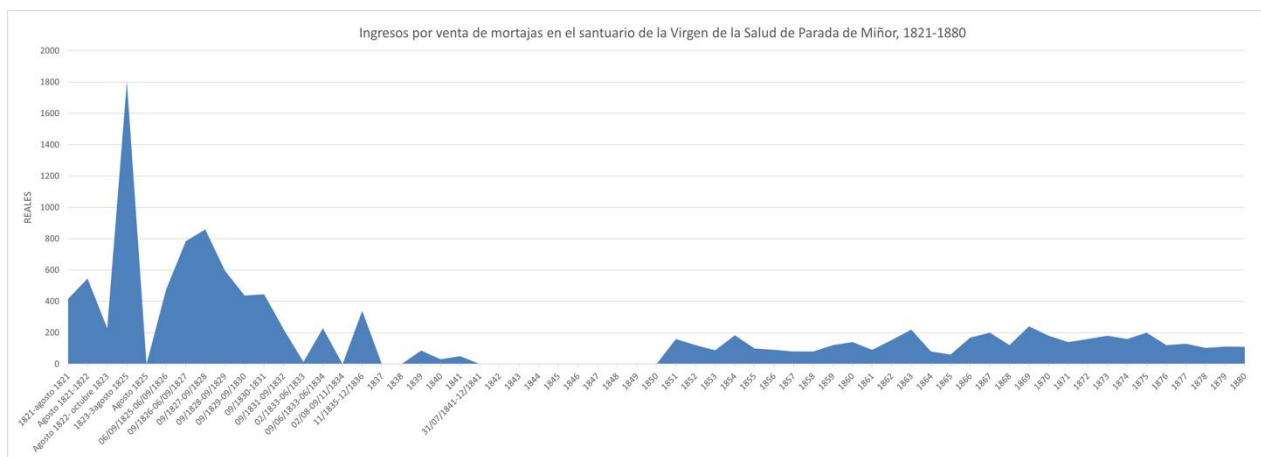
**Graph 5.** Evolution of revenues from the resale of wax at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Good Health, 1851-1880

Shrouds and coffins were left at the sanctuaries by those “spared by death” throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the coffins were even rented out to be carried by offerers during the procession. The accounts for the 1878-1892 period at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Miracles in Araño (Rianxo) show the sale of shrouds offered to the Virgin as a biannual revenue from 1880, followed by the sale of coffins from 1881: this appears to have been a common practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>.

YEAR	ADULT SHROUDS	CHILDREN’S SHROUDS	TOTAL IN REALES
1878		18	72
1879	-	-	-
1880		14	56
1881		10	
1882	1	9	98
1883		10	
1884	3	8	81
1885	2	10	
1886	1	17	81
1887	1	10	
1888	1	15	72
1889	2	9	
1890	3	6	61
1891		3	
1892			89

<sup>23</sup> A.H.D.S., P001044, ARAÑO (Santa Baia), Administración, Milagros (1878-1902)

By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, shrouds had become “very short and small, and besides this inadequacy, their value has fallen considerably as traffic in this industry in the town has dropped”<sup>24</sup>. This decline in “traffic” may explain the reduction in the numbers of shrouds donated to sanctuaries such as A Lanzada (Noalla) and Our Lady of Good Health in Parada (Nigrán), where revenues from their resale represented 5.42% of total sales from 1851 to 1861, falling from 17.95% in 1821-1831 and making the sale of shrouds the second most important pillar of the sanctuaries’ economy following alms in cash. In 1831, an inventory at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Miracles in Amil (Moraña) counted only 16 shrouds in the sacristy: two were made from sackcloth and another from goat’s hair, while there were also four small shrouds, “one of which [was] made from silk and was reported to have cost eight *pesos* by the devotee who donated it”. Despite this, “no-one would give a single *peseta* for it”<sup>25</sup>.



**Graph 6.** Evolution of revenues from sales of shrouds at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Good Health, 1821-1880

## Conclusion

By harnessing the potential of the sacred, Galician sanctuaries were able to sustain themselves through an *economy of offerings* whose risk lay in its dependence on alms that fluctuated according to “the austerity of the times” and the economic situation. Hermits and stewards were responsible for the material side of the sanctuaries, collecting payments, safeguarding rents and jewels and monitoring income and expenditure, and played a very important financial role despite their apparent “ignorance”. Depending on the local context, the desire to monetise devotional practices, rooted in the thaumaturgical power of their image, obliged sanctuaries to resell the offerings they received. Galician dioceses began to “channel worship” at sanctuaries initially managed by laypeople due to the incompetence of the latter, on the one hand, and to a desire to control devotional offerings on the other. The proceeds were redistributed to cover

<sup>24</sup> A.H.D.S., P015088, MUXÍA (Santa María), Administración, A Barca (1851-1911), f.6r.

<sup>25</sup> A.H.D.S., P000549, AMIL (San Mamede), Administración, Milagros (1818-1870), f.38r.



the churches' expenses, funding religious festivities or annual maintenance of the buildings such as cleaning, whitewashing or repairs to the roof. Revenues depended largely on the alms rounds, which were limited territorially throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the *land of the sanctuary*. However, excess demand continued and led to an apparently uncontrolled overlap that diminished the parishes' ability to "give more to one because [they] had to give to many".

Alongside the spiritual dimension of their work, parish priests, friars, nuns, canons and bishops coordinated the sanctuaries, which differed from their peers in terms of an internal economy based on almsgiving rather than on the inaccessible options of land ownership and livestock farming. The presence of potential common ground between the clergy and worshippers did little to prevent confrontation at the sanctuaries as the result of a certain anti-clericalism or, at the very least, a *devout distrust* towards those who administered the goods or promoted a specific form of devotion. This criticism was not aimed at the religious institution itself, but at mercenary members of the clergy.



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