

INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

S O C I A L A N D E C O N O M I C S T U D Y O F
M E D I E V A L L O N D O N

INTERIM REPORT ON THE STUDY

OF THE

BANK OF ENGLAND AREA

(July 1988)

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1. Objectives of the study and outline of results so far

The original objective was to map and reconstruct the histories, up to the Great Fire of 1666, of all the properties in the three parishes at the heart of the city of London where the Bank of England now lies. These are the parishes of St. Bartholomew the Less, St. Christopher le Stocks, and St. Margaret Lothbury. The study has been funded by grants from the Bank itself, the Stock Exchange, the National Westminster Bank, and other institutions in the area. It has been carried out by the Social and Economic Study of Medieval London, which now forms part of the Centre for Metropolitan History at the University of London, Institute of Historical Research.

As a result of the shortfall in funding it has not been possible to achieve this objective in its entirety. Nevertheless, a coherent and valuable study has been undertaken with the resources available. This has been based on the collection of all printed sources concerning the area up to 1550, a selection of later printed sources, on all the deeds and wills for the area enrolled in the city's court of Husting up to 1440, on the major groups of original title deeds up to 1550, on the records associated with the rebuilding immediately after the Great Fire, and on the Bank's own title deeds up to c. 1800. The aim was to cover the early period as fully as possible and to use the most readily accessible body of information which, with printed maps of the seventeenth century and later, would enable reconstruction maps to be compiled. The concentration on the earlier part of the period has been amply justified. It was originally anticipated that the study area, which in the medieval and early modern periods lay just outside one of the most densely settled commercial districts, centering on Cheapside, would reveal the early pattern of landholding in the city. In the more central areas studied previously this pattern had been largely obscured as a result of the increase in the density of settlement which took place before the period around 1200 when documentary sources begin to be available in quantity. Study of the Bank of England area did indeed reveal the early picture in a remarkable and unexpected way.

Should further money be forthcoming it will be possible systematically to add to the body of data already collected. By this means it would be possible to add a little to our knowledge of the area in the fifteenth century (not a well-recorded period) and a great deal to our knowledge of the many changes which took place

there during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A better knowledge of this later period would also enable some features of early medieval date to be mapped more precisely, although in general the twelfth- and thirteenth-century records of the area are exceptionally useful for this purpose.

The report which follows does not attempt to summarise the detailed findings of the study, but rather deals with a selection of particular topics relevant to the special character of the area or to an understanding of the city's general development. These topics are: the early patterns of landholding and the changes which were taking place by the early thirteenth century, including the colonization of hitherto marshy land; the Jewry, the Friars of the Sack and their successors; the social and occupational characteristics of the area in the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries; and the estate (or soke) of the king of Scotland, which included the area now occupied by the Stock Exchange. The last of these topics has been dealt with at greater length than the others because it represents the most original contribution of the study and provides a good illustration both of the research techniques used and of the way in which this highly localized investigation can lead to an understanding of wider historical development.

The detailed results of the study at present take the form of a collection of abstracts from documentary sources concerning the 98 property sites which have been identified in the area (see Fig. 1; each property has a unique number in the form 88/1, where the first element denotes the parish in which it lies). The sites vary both in size and in the quantity of surviving records which concern them, but there is no part of the area for which nothing has been discovered. Each set of abstracts is accompanied by an outline of the history of the site, and there is a series of reconstruction maps identifying the sites and the changing pattern of boundaries. The remaining time on the project will be spent on writing up some of this material more fully. If the resources are available, it will be possible on request to write a full account of any part of the area within the chronological limits indicated above. As will be seen below, it is already possible to come to a number of general conclusions concerning the overall character and development of this part of the city.

The detailed results are kept with the archive of the Social and Economic Study of Medieval London at the Museum of London and at the Centre for Metropolitan History (Institute of Historical Research).

2. The early layout and development of the area

The Bank of England area was bisected by the Walbrook stream, mentioned many times in the records of properties there. North of Lothbury, beyond the stream and its tributaries, was the area of marshy ground known as 'the moor'. Walbrook itself in this area was sometimes described as the 'moor ditch'. South of Lothbury, however, it was a faster-running stream, always described as Walbrook. The records show very clearly how between the early twelfth century and the late fourteenth the southern parts of the moor were gradually colonized, creating gardens, yards, and

houseplots, presumably by dumping soil and other material. The stream itself was confined to an increasingly narrow channel. "On the south side of Lothbury, for example, the occupiers of one property next to the stream (88/26) encroached upon it by about 6 feet between 1212 and 1227. During the fourteenth century several parts of the stream within the area seem to have been culverted over, and disappeared from view. These changes clearly reflect the increasing intensity of land use and the increase in the population of the area.

London's rapid growth is also apparent in the progressive subdivision of the early land units in the area (cf. Fig. 4). The largest of these, the 'soke of the king of Scotland', is discussed separately below, and indicates that the process of land division and subletting was well under way by 1100. A much smaller plot of land on the west side of the church of St. Margaret Lothbury measured 57 feet in width next to the street in about 1130 and extended to the north as far as the moor. By 1300 the site had been divided into three plots containing at least twice that number of houses. East of the same church in about 1210 a single house occupied a plot with an 80 foot frontage, where in 1300 there were at least three houses. The name Lothbury itself, first recorded in the 1180s in association with the church, probably originally denoted a large property in the neighbourhood, and was only later transferred to the street nearby. This was one of a number of 'bury' names recorded in London during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all denoting properties in locations similar to this one at the limits of the densely built-up central area where there was room for large, enclosed, and secluded plots of land. Some of these names certainly came into existence at this time and denoted the residences of wealthy families, others may have originated earlier. This study has not thrown any new light on the origin and significance of the name Lothbury, on which there has been much speculation in the past. If there ever had been a large property with this name, its identity had almost certainly been lost before the end of the twelfth century.

The focus of the Lothbury property may have been the church of St. Margaret, which belonged to the nunnery at Barking, but there are no signs of other Barking properties in the neighbourhood which might have indicated the extent of the property. An alternative early name of the church was Froscherche, meaning 'frog church', a vivid evocation of the watery character of the area and of the church's setting on the Walbrook stream.

One of the early large holdings which has been identified lay within the site now occupied by the Bank. It included the church and cemetery of St. Christopher, perhaps once the private chapel of the property, and measured about 100 feet next to Threadneedle Street, from which it extended back about 250 feet to the Walbrook stream. In the twelfth century this land probably belonged to Gervase of Cornhill (d. 1182-3), a leading financier and landowner with an extensive scatter of properties in the city. The land passed from Gervase's heirs into the possession of a wealthy family, the Blunts, several members of which during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries built up in piecemeal fashion a substantial block of properties next to Walbrook, extending nearly 300 yards along the street frontage from the church of St. Mildred Poultry to that of St. Christopher. The Blunt family residence was

next to St. Mildred's church. The rest of the property, where by c. 1300 there was at least a dozen houses and perhaps twice that number of shops, was presumably intended to provide an income. The Blunts owned lands and rents in many parts of the city, but their gradual acquisition of this very large block appears to have been a deliberate expression of the family's identity and standing. It certainly reflects the impact on the city of a family which rose rapidly to wealth and power in late twelfth-century London, and then, by means of members who pursued careers in the church and in royal government, was able to consolidate its position outside the city.

The apparent ease with which the Blunt family put together this block of properties is matched elsewhere in the area. Before 1271 the king's surgeon, Thomas of Weseham, was able to acquire all the houses lying on the north side of Lothbury between Coleman Street and the church of St. Margaret, and to grant this block of land to the Jew, James of Oxford. During the early fourteenth century the block was broken up again into separate units of ownership. This type of development appears to be in sharp contrast to the pattern near Cheapside, where between the twelfth and the fourteenth century blocks of land tended to be progressively and irreversibly subdivided. In this more outlying area, with fewer houses and lower land values, wealthy men probably found it easier than in Cheapside to accumulate such blocks of holdings.

3. The Jewry, the Friars of the Sack, and their successors

The western part of St. Margaret Lothbury parish lay within the main Jewish quarter of medieval London. This quarter was not an exclusive ghetto, for Jews and Christians lived side by side and houses passed from Jewish into Christian hands and back again. Nevertheless the principal focus of the Jewish community lay just to the west - and later to the north-west - of the Bank of England site, and the Walbrook seems to have marked the south-eastern limit of the area where they congregated. In the twelfth century the Jewry extended down to Cheapside, but afterwards, with the progressive impoverishment of the community during the period up to its expulsion in 1290, it contracted northwards.

There was a great synagogue on the east side of Old Jewry, which in 1272 the king granted to the Friars of the Sack, who had recently been established on a large plot of land (itself a former Jewish property) extending from the synagogue down to Walbrook on the east (Fig. 4). At one point the friars' land extended as far as Lothbury on the north. This order of friars was suppressed, and by 1303 they had lost their land in London. The property in Lothbury came to be used as private houses and gardens, while the remainder of the site, including the friars' former church, became the London house of the fitzWalter family. In the fifteenth century the fitzWalters sold the site to Grocers' Company, which built its hall there and has owned the land ever since (Fig. 2).

4. The social and occupational character of the area c. 1250-1350

There were two distinct occupational zones within the area, corresponding to the two street axes which ran across it (see Fig. 5). The zone along the Broad Street (now Threadneedle Street) axis was distinguished for its concentration of distributive traders: this was an extension of the Cheapside shopping district, and owed much of its custom to its location on a busy through route leading to Bishopsgate. In contrast, the zone served by Lothbury and Broad Street (now Throgmorton Street: both this and Threadneedle Street were known as Broad Street) was relatively secluded and was characterized by its concentration of manufacturing crafts, some of them making use of the ready supply of water in the Walbrook stream.

By the 1270s the frontages of Broad Street (Threadneedle Street) were lined with shops, and, to judge from the occurrence of the personal name 'shopkeeper' (sopparius), there had been many shops in the area fifty or sixty years previously. The concentration of retail trading was not as intense as in Cheapside: individual shops seem to have been more spacious and there were few, if any, of the private bazaars known as selds which in Cheapside occupied nearly every site behind the shops. There was, however, a notable concentration of shops in the western part of St. Christopher's parish, both on the narrow, triangular plot between Broad Street and Cornhill and on the north side of Broad Street, where there were several alleys of shops or small houses leading off the street (eg. in properties 48/2 and 3). Further east, away from Cheapside and from the neighbourhood of the Stocks Market, the concentration of shops decreased. In the early fourteenth century the characteristic trader in the western part of the area was the fripperer, a dealer in second-hand clothing and bed furnishings. Indeed, the shops between Broad Street and Cornhill at this time were almost all occupied by fripperers. Fripperers also held a notorious street market in Cornhill. Further east the resident shopkeepers were a more diverse group, including traders such as fishmongers and butchers who provided for the day-to-day needs of the neighbourhood, and craftsmen such as cutlers, saddlers, tawyers, and cofferers who made and sold metal and leather goods, some of them perhaps supplied from workshops in Lothbury.

In the course of the fourteenth century the fripperers, as named property holders, disappeared from the area, to be succeeded by members of the Drapers' Company who in this neighbourhood probably carried on a similar trade. One wealthy fripperer, Thomas Legge, occupied two large houses (known as The Worm and as The Leadenporch) behind the shops on the north side of Broad Street, occupying the site of Sir John Houblon's mansion (approximately properties 48/6-10), where the Bank of England was established in 1734, and of the then Crown Tavern (property 48/11) next door. Legge ended his career as a member of the Skinners' Company, an unusual transition for a fripperer (that to draper being documented in a number of individual instances). Legge may have been inclined to diversify his business from clothing to the fur trade and the preparation of skins because his property backed on to the Walbrook stream. The houses of other skinners in the area at this time also adjoined the stream, and in the thirteenth century the Blunt family, whose property straddled the stream (see above), seem to have had an interest in the fur trade.

In 1300 Lothbury contained many fewer shops than Broad Street, but the residents practised a wide variety of manufactures in their houses and workshops. One of the distinctive groups of trades in this street was concerned with the preparation of skins and leather. Tanning was not practised here: this heavy-duty, and smelly, industrial activity appears, by the thirteenth century at least, to have been confined to the suburbs. It is possible that at an earlier date tanning had been undertaken in this neighbourhood, for in the twelfth century the city's tanners had their guildhall in the nearby parish of St. Peter in Broad Street. The leather-making craftsmen of Lothbury were concerned with lighter-weight products than the tanners, or with later stages in the process of leather preparation. They included parchment-makers, curriers, tawyers, and 'kissers'; as well as crafts like saddlers, cofferers (who made boxes), glovers, and armourers, who used leather. Another important group were the metal workers. Many of these were concerned with copper or copper-alloy products. These included 'beaters' (probably the most numerous group), who hammered out thin-walled vessels, and potters who cast more substantial ones. In 1531 the founders, a later name for those who practised the same trade as the potters had done, established their company hall in Lothbury, where Founders' Court now lies. About 1300 other Lothbury craftsmen, including girdlers and buckle-makers, used small metal castings which they or the potters could have produced. Men using or dealing in iron seem to have appeared in Lothbury later than the other metal workers, although they were well established by 1300. There were several ironmongers, one of whom built up a large block of holdings extending from Lothbury to Broad Street. Smiths were rare: situations near the city gates and the market places were more favourable for their trade. The most numerous of the Lothbury ironworkers were the cutlers, who in the fourteenth century developed (or had already established) an entrepreneurial role, coordinating the manufacture of blades, handles, and scabbards. They probably found it convenient to be situated near the leather producers. The small number of armourers in Lothbury probably used an increasing amount of iron in this period, and the furbishers polished both armour and blades.

Witness lists to deeds indicate that all these trades (except those using iron) were practised in the Lothbury area at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In addition, some textile manufacturing was carried out there at that time, indicated by the presence of a few makers of coverlets or chalons. This activity then faded away, perhaps as the neighbourhood became increasingly specialised in its crafts and maybe also increasingly polluted.

Two other tradesmen characteristic of Lothbury and Throgmorton Street in the fourteenth century were the carpenter and the brewer. Carpenters occurred frequently as householders around the northern end of Bartholomew Lane: properties here were probably large enough to accommodate their framing-yards, yet close to the centre of the city where the demand for building was concentrated. In most medieval English towns the brewing of ale was a domestic activity. In London by the early fourteenth century, however, there are clear signs that this type of production was supplemented, and perhaps overshadowed, by that of the specialized brewers who ran the numerous distinctive establishments known as brewhouses (tenementa braccinae). At this time, brewhouses were to be found in most areas of the city, unlike the sixteenth century when they were much larger

establishments concentrated in a few areas. Even so, the earlier brewhouses were not evenly distributed. The large number of them in Lothbury, where there were at least eight in the first half of the fourteenth century, indicates that they tended to be located not in the busiest streets, where the demand for ale would have been greatest, but in peripheral areas where there was room for the installations they contained, and where the risk of fire was less than in more crowded district areas. Both these considerations would have favoured the other crafts to be found in Lothbury. The brewers did not congregate close to Walbrook, but the geological conditions near the stream appear to have been advantageous for digging wells, and it was probably from this source that the Lothbury brewers obtained their water.

The intermixture of trades which characterized the Bank of England area in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was typical of London and of medieval towns in general. Yet at the same time there were distinctive occupational zones within these towns, remarkable for their combinations of trades requiring similar resources, or with more direct economic links between them, rather than for their association with single dominant specialisms. Lothbury exemplified these characteristics very well: as one moved out of the area towards the west the textile and clothing trades would have become more obvious, while towards the south the skimmers became more predominant. In the contrast between Lothbury and Broad Street (now Threadneedle Street), the area illustrates another important feature of the organization of medieval towns. This was the location of manufacturing crafts in side streets and of distributive trades in the principal thoroughfares. The force of the market caused the distributive traders with a particular specialism to group together in a single place, as did the fripperers in Broad Street (Threadneedle Street), while the craftsmen in Lothbury were more intermixed. To passers by the two streets would have presented contrasting scenes: Broad Street busy with shopkeepers enticing custom and displaying their wares, and Lothbury, no doubt with many products for sale, but dominated by the din of hammers, by the scraping of files, by the smoke of furnaces, and by the smell and the wet wastes of leather making.

These effects were created primarily by the activities in the shops and small houses on the street frontages. To the rear lay the larger-scale residences of wealthy men like Thomas Legge, whose business probably had a larger-scale, wholesale character and who may have engaged in long-distance and international trade. Several other well-known London figures of this period had similar houses in the area. They included the property dealer John Pyel, founder of the college at Irthlingborough (Northants), who lived on the site of the modern Angel Court (at property 32/10a), and a Lucca merchant, Bartolomeo Bosano, who married the daughter of one of the king's sergeants-at-arms and lived in Bartholomew Lane (at property 32/6). East of the lane in the mid and later fourteenth century was a group of houses notable for their occupants with royal connections (see below, 5).

On the whole, with the possible exception of Pyel and one or two others, the area was not in this period noted for its concentration of figures with extensive financial interests. The life of the financial heart of the modern city was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries firmly based on manufacturing and on the

distributive trades, among which that in second-hand goods was important.

The space which made it possible to create the large houses could also be used in other ways. During the late thirteenth and the early fourteenth century, as the city neared a peak in its population, this back land was brought into more intensive use by creating rows of small houses along lanes or alleys where larger houses and gardens had once stood. Such developments included Love Lane leading off Broad Street near St. Christopher's church (property 48/6-7), Slaper's Lane near the modern Angel Court (property 32/11), and Legge's Alley which led off Bartholomew Lane to the back gate of Thomas Legge's house (property 32/7). The houses of some of the poorest inhabitants of the area were thus juxtaposed with those of the richest. These alleys were often laid out on the site of the great gateways which led to the large houses behind. Depopulation in the fourteenth century brought this process to a halt, but it was renewed again with the city's rapid growth during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This created the network of alleys and courts which were a distinctive feature of the neighbourhood of the Bank of England at the time it was established, and which persisted into recent times. Some of these alleys, certainly those which adjoined the Bank's first building, had been first created before the Black Death of 1348-9. The layout of all of them was influenced by a pattern of landholding which had been established in the thirteenth century and before.

5. The soke of the king of Scotland

The history of the triangular block of land between Throgmorton Street, Threadneedle Street, and Bartholomew Lane, now best known for containing the Stock Exchange and the headquarters of the Sun Alliance Insurance Group, can almost certainly be traced back before the Norman Conquest. The eastern end of the block, in St. Benet Fink parish, lies outside the area of this detailed study, but the block as a whole can confidently be identified as the nucleus of the soke of the king of Scotland. The London sokes, one of the more perplexing features of the city's early history, were units of land ownership and jurisdiction, although the distinction between these two aspects was not always clear. In the face of the increasing cohesiveness of city government, especially after 1200, the jurisdictional functions of the sokes withered away, leaving residual bundles of property rights of little monetary value. Notable London sokes were those belonging to the king (probably the largest of them), to the bishop of London, to a small number of lay magnates and leading royal servants, and to a few religious houses in or close to London. This pattern of ownership suggests that in the late eleventh and in the twelfth century the sokes played a significant part in the government of London at the neighbourhood level, exercising powers which otherwise were in the hands of the king. Some sokes occupied compact blocks of territory, while others appear to have consisted of a widespread scatter of interests. The contribution of this study has been to define the extent of one of the most well-known of the sokes, which seems to have been of the compact variety, and in so doing to throw new light on its role both within the city and within the wider network of interests of its owner.

The king of Scotland's soke was part of the honour of Huntingdon, and as such was closely associated with the manor of Tottenham in Middlesex, also in that honour. For much of the twelfth century the honour and earldom of Huntingdon were in the possession of the kings of Scotland.

At some time between 1114 and 1124, when he became king of Scotland, David earl of Huntingdon notified the reeve of his land and soke in London and Tottenham that he had given a piece of land forming part of the soke to Roger the archdeacon. Among the witnesses to this transaction was the priest of St. Bartholomew, suggesting that the land was near the church of St. Bartholomew in Broad Street, where, from later evidence, we know the king of Scotland's soke to have been. There seem to have been sitting tenants on part of the land assigned to the archdeacon, and in the grant provision was made for the archdeacon to uphold the earl's interests in several ways. When he was in London the archdeacon was to maintain the earl's pleas, that is to exercise the earl's jurisdiction on his behalf. The archdeacon was to have a house on the site for his own use, except that the earl's steward and his squires and any bishop or churchman visiting the earl were to be put up there. It seems likely that on the part of the soke retained by the earl there was a house for his use when he was in London, while the archdeacon was to be responsible for accommodating the earl's servants and some other visitors. David had acquired the earldom by his marriage, in 1113, to the widow of the former earl, daughter of the Earl Waltheof who had been beheaded in 1076. In 1086 Tottenham was in the hands of Countess Judith, Waltheof's widow and a niece of William the Conqueror. Domesday Book records that Waltheof himself had formerly held the manor. It makes no mention of any associated property in London, but this is not conclusive evidence that the lord of Tottenham at that time lacked land in London. When Waltheof acquired Tottenham is unknown. The manor may have been part of the estate once held by his father Siward earl of Northumberland, to which Waltheof had succeeded in 1065, or it may have been a later gift from the Conqueror.

Whatever the association between Tottenham and the land in London before Earl David's time, there can be little doubt that the earl's soke in the neighbourhood of St. Bartholomew's church played a distinctive role in his affairs. The site within the city walls was within easy reach of Bishopsgate, from which a road led directly to Tottenham, evidently chosen then or at some earlier time as a base and as a source of income within striking distance of London. Beyond Tottenham the road led to the main concentration of the earl's estates in the East Midlands, and then on to Scotland.

The soke was thus the metropolitan base of a powerful magnate with extensive landed interests which were located sixty miles and more from the city. It may have served an economic as well as a political function, both as a storehouse for goods and money acquired in the city and as a means by which the produce of its lord's estates were distributed to the London markets. There are some reasons for believing that the soke may in particular have had a role in the cattle trade. In the later Middle Ages Tottenham was one of the places close to London where drovers and butchers fattened animals before bringing them to the city for slaughter. Tottenham fields may have been used in the same way during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, possibly as part of a system of

livestock production operated within the lands of the honour of Huntingdon. The dedication of the church of St. Bartholomew, made before 1114 x 1124, provides another clue, for the emblem of the saint was a butcher's flaying knife, and the only other occurrence of the dedication in London is in connection with the priory and hospital at Smithfield, an area which was certainly associated with livestock marketing in the twelfth century, if not before. Whether the soke in Broad Street was ever the site of an unrecorded cattle or meat market in early medieval London, however, must remain a speculative interpretation of the evidence. There is an alternative, or supplementary, explanation of the dedication to St. Bartholomew. The apostle played an important part in the life of St. Guthlac (d. 714), founder of the original monastery at Crowland in Lincolnshire, and was among the saints to whom the later abbey was dedicated. Before the Norman Conquest Earl Waltheof was a major benefactor of the new church then being built at Crowland, and after his execution his body was taken there for burial. The church of St. Bartholomew the Less may thus have been Waltheof's church in London, or that of his widow, who was instrumental in securing his burial place. This suggests that there was a connection between the site in the city and the lands of the honour of Huntingdon before the time of Earl David.

Between 1161 and 1164 King Malcolm IV gave part of his soke in London to Ely Priory. In or soon after 1174, the king of Scotland having lost the earldom of Huntingdon for the time being, the then earl granted the soke to Roger son of Rainfrid. From this time onwards neither the earls of Huntingdon nor the kings of Scotland had any interest in this particular London estate, although it continued to be described as the soke, or former soke, of the king of Scotland even into the fourteenth century. The lord of the soke probably continued to exercise some form of local jurisdiction, perhaps most notably in the minor regulation of trade. In 1228, for example, he appears to have played a part in regulating the bakers who operated within his territory, for these bakers were to join with those of the bishops' soke nearby in making an annual payment to the sheriff of London.

Roger son of Rainfrid was a royal servant and an influential man in London during the later twelfth century. His son married the heiress of a landowning family in the county of Lancaster, and the issue of this marriage, William of Lancaster, another important royal servant, succeeded to the estate. Thus in about 1230 the sokage rent from a house next to the church of St. Bartholomew the Less, payable on the eve of the feast of Holy Trinity, was said to be due to the heirs of Roger son of Rainfrid, and in about 1240 William of Lancaster was named as the patron of the church itself. The church and the soke of the king of Scotland clearly went together, and it may be that the church of St. Bartholomew had originated as a chapel serving the town house of the earls of Huntingdon. In the mid thirteenth century, perhaps soon after William of Lancaster's death in 1246, the soke was disposed of. Soon afterwards it was in the possession of the London mercer, William Eswy, who in his will left it to be sold. By 1259 Eswy's executors had sold the soke to Geoffrey Godard, mercer, describing it as lying in Broad Street (a name which at that time was applied both to Threadneedle Street and to Throgmorton Street) and as having once belonged to Simon earl of Huntingdon (the earl who had disposed of it in 1174-5). By this sale Godard also acquired the advowson of

St. Bartholomew's church, which was associated with the soke, and another soke which had once belonged to William of Lancaster.

Both these sokes had probably once belonged to Roger son of Rainfrid. Roger is known to have owned a wharf in the parish of St. Benet Paul's Wharf and a sokage rent in the parish of St. Faith payable on the eve of Easter. These properties represent part of a soke or estate which Roger had acquired from some source other than the earl of Huntingdon. They appear to have passed intact to Geoffrey Godard, who in his will left to one of his daughters a wharf and other properties in St. Benet's parish together with his 'soke of Lancaster' which was collected in that church on Easter eve. Godard left to another daughter his 'soke of Scotland', collected in the church of St. Bartholomew on the eve of the feast of Holy Trinity. The difference in the seasons at which the sokage rents payable to the successors of Roger son of Rainfrid were due demonstrates that the two sokes were indeed distinct, and that the soke belonging to the earls of Huntingdon and the kings of Scotland was not an extensive estate in London corresponding to all the former possessions of Roger son of Rainfrid, but was rather confined to the vicinity of the church of St. Bartholomew.

Godard's daughter who acquired the 'soke of Scotland' married Richard le Poter who presumably controlled the soke for a while. The soke then disappears from view until the mid fourteenth century, when Master Richard de Plessis, a canon of St. Paul's and archdeacon of Colchester, acquired an estate comprising several former properties of Geoffrey Godard. These were three houses lying in the parish of St. Bartholomew on the north side of Broad Street next to the parish boundary (property 32/28, possibly a part of the original estate which the lord had never alienated in return for a sokage rent), the advowson of the church itself, and the 'whole sokage of divers tenements in Broad Street and elsewhere in the city'. The last of these was evidently the former 'soke of Scotland'. In 1364, after de Plessis' death, an enquiry was made into his estate, listing the individual sokage rents which were then due. The six rents had a total annual value of 7s. 4d. The properties from which five of them were due can be identified: all five lay within the same block as the church of St. Bartholomew, and two of the five were due from properties in the parish of St. Benet Fink lying just east of the boundary with St. Bartholomew's parish. The largest of these five rents was due from the archdeacon of Colchester, who by virtue of his office had a substantial rent roll in the parish of St. Benet Fink and who at this time owned much of the eastern end of the block between Threadneedle Street and Throgmorton Street.

The distribution of these interests strongly suggests that the soke of the king of Scotland originally occupied most if not all of the block of land to the east of Bartholomew Lane. The only other sokage rent contributing to the 'soke of Scotland' which is known to be on record was one of 5d. p.a. due in 1309-10 due from a property in St. Christopher's parish lying a short distance east of that church (property 48/9). This rent was not listed in 1364, but the 2d. rent listed in that year as payable by the rector of St. Christopher's, and due from a property which cannot otherwise be identified, may have been connected with it. This may mean that the soke originally also included a block of land to the west of Bartholomew Lane, perhaps extending about as far as the church of St. Christopher. If this was so, it seems likely that Bartholomew

Lane came into existence as an entry, perhaps initially through the parish cemetery, which provided access to the middle of this large block of land and ultimately developed into a public highway bisecting it.

The archdeacon of Colchester had acquired his property in Broad Street in 1270 by means of an exchange of holdings with the dean of St. Paul's. It is not known when or how the dean acquired this land, but it is tempting to suggest that his interest may be traced back to the early twelfth century, when Earl David granted part of his soke to Roger the archdeacon (of Middlesex) from whom, or from whose heirs, the land may have passed into the general estate of St. Paul's. If Archdeacon Roger's acquisition corresponded to the later St. Paul's property and occupied the eastern end of the soke, the earl's house, if he had one there, presumably lay further to the west near the church of St. Bartholomew and may even have occupied part of the site where the Bank of England now stands.

The use of this block as a place of residence for men of high status persisted into the sixteenth century. On the northern frontage was a large house (property 32/19) which Sir Richard de la Vache, one of a distinguished group of knights in the household of King Edward III, used as his inn or London residence. Later the house belonged to, and may have been occupied by, Sir William Walworth, the mayor of London who struck down Wat Tyler in 1381. Adjoining this to the south, and opening on to Bartholomew Lane next to the churchyard, was another large house (property 32/25) occupied in the later fourteenth century by Sir Richard Sturry, another knight of the royal household. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century this house was the residence of successive members of the mayoral Capel family. This name was perpetuated in that of Capel Court where in 1802 the Stock Exchange found a home.

6. Conclusion

Despite a shortage of funds it has been possible so far to put together, from documentary sources, a coherent picture of the development of the Bank of England area of the city of London before the Great Fire of 1666, concentrating on the period between the Norman Conquest and 1400. With further resources it will be possible to add to this picture, but in the meantime the study has produced valuable new conclusions both on the character of this part of London in early times and on the development of London as a whole. Some of the topics covered by these conclusions concern:

- the early pattern of landholding and the growth of the city c.1100-1350;
- early industrial activity;
- retail trading, especially in second-hand goods;
- the social geography of the area;
- the London Jewry;
- the sokes of London, especially that of the king of Scotland.

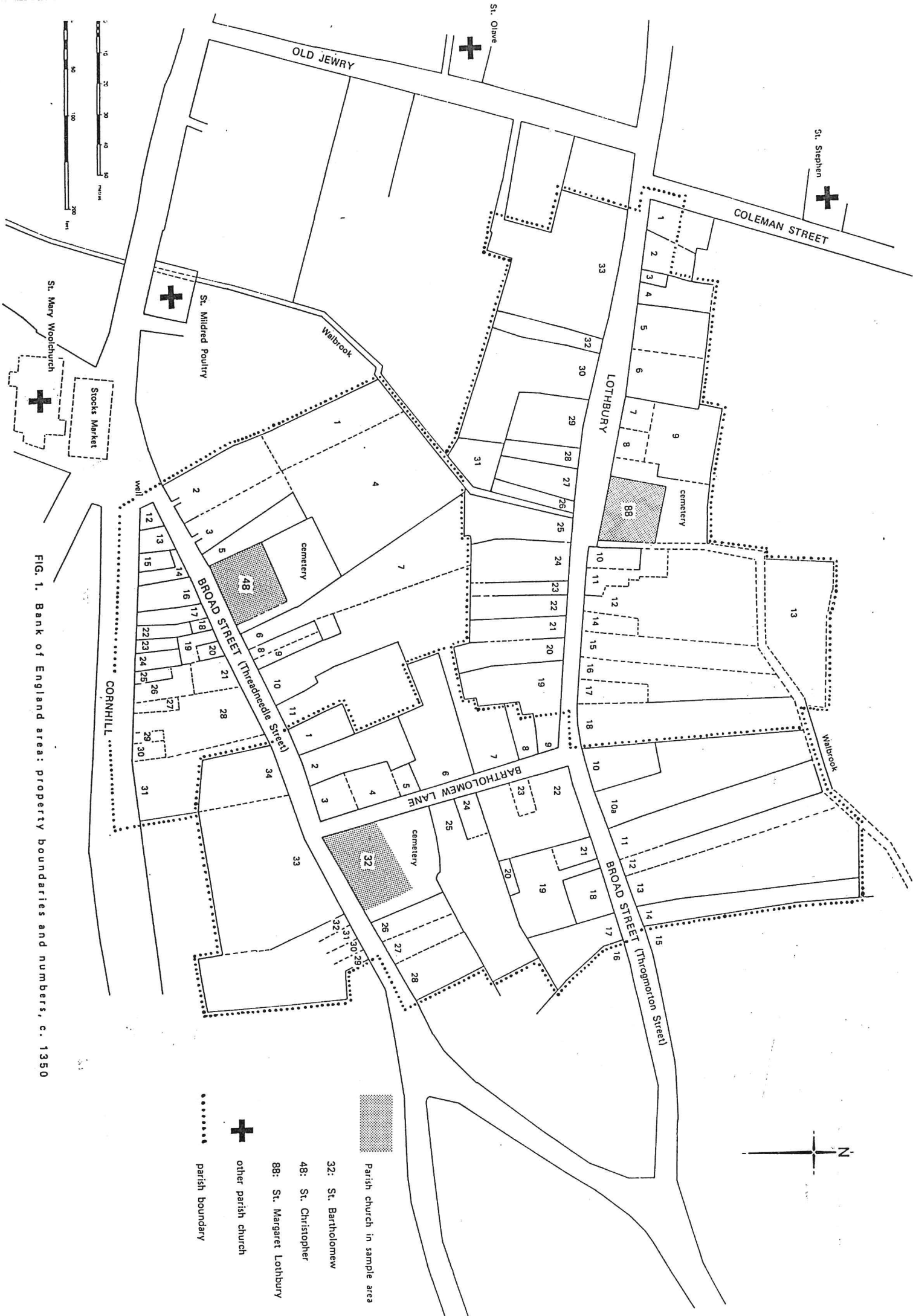


FIG. 1. Bank of England area: property boundaries and numbers, c. 1350



FIG. 2. Bank of England area: medieval property boundaries with sites of principal modern buildings

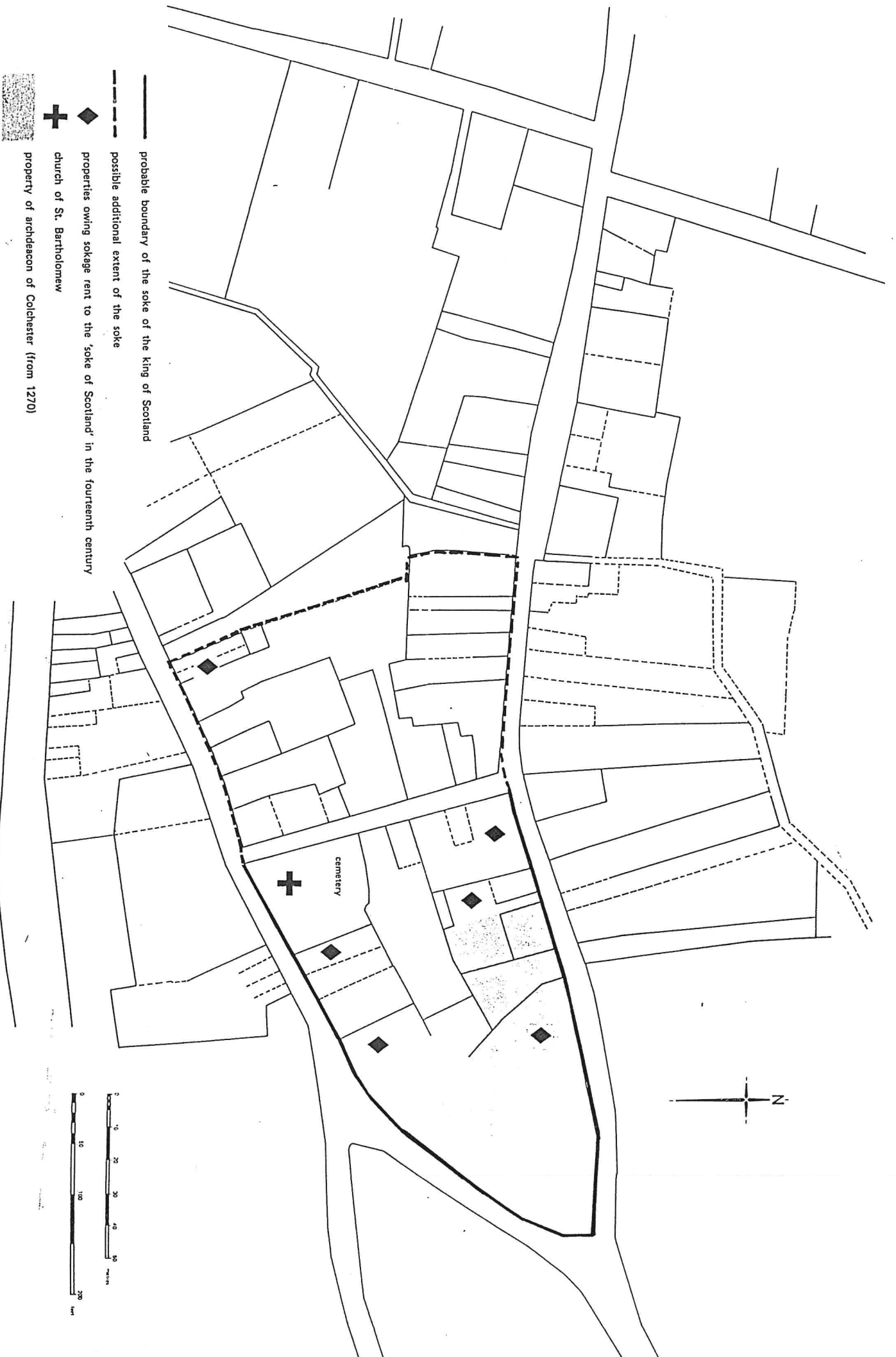


FIG. 3. Bank of England area: the soke of the kings of Scotland, eleventh to thirteenth century

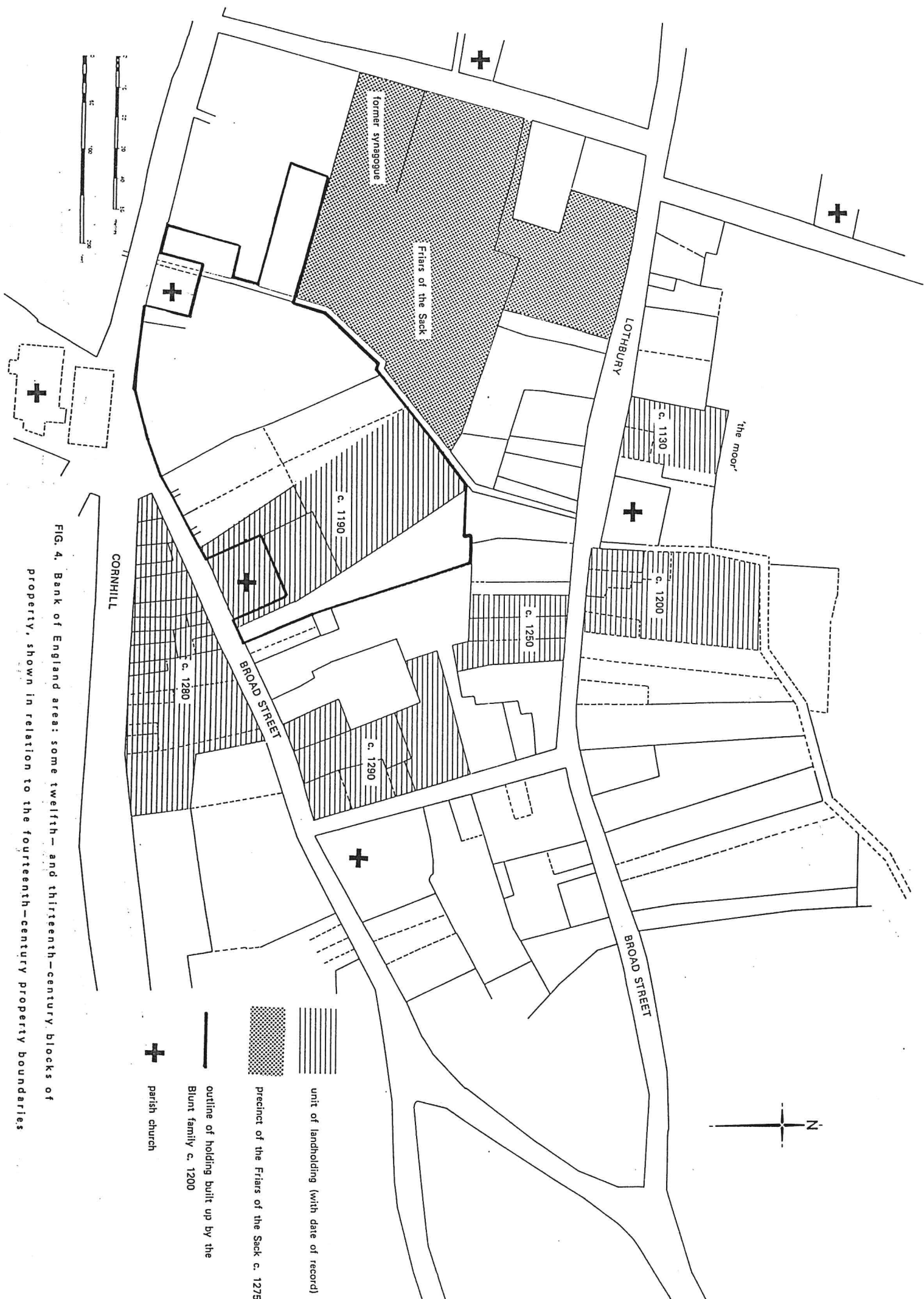


FIG. 4. Bank of England area: some twelfth- and thirteenth-century blocks of property, shown in relation to the fourteenth-century property boundaries

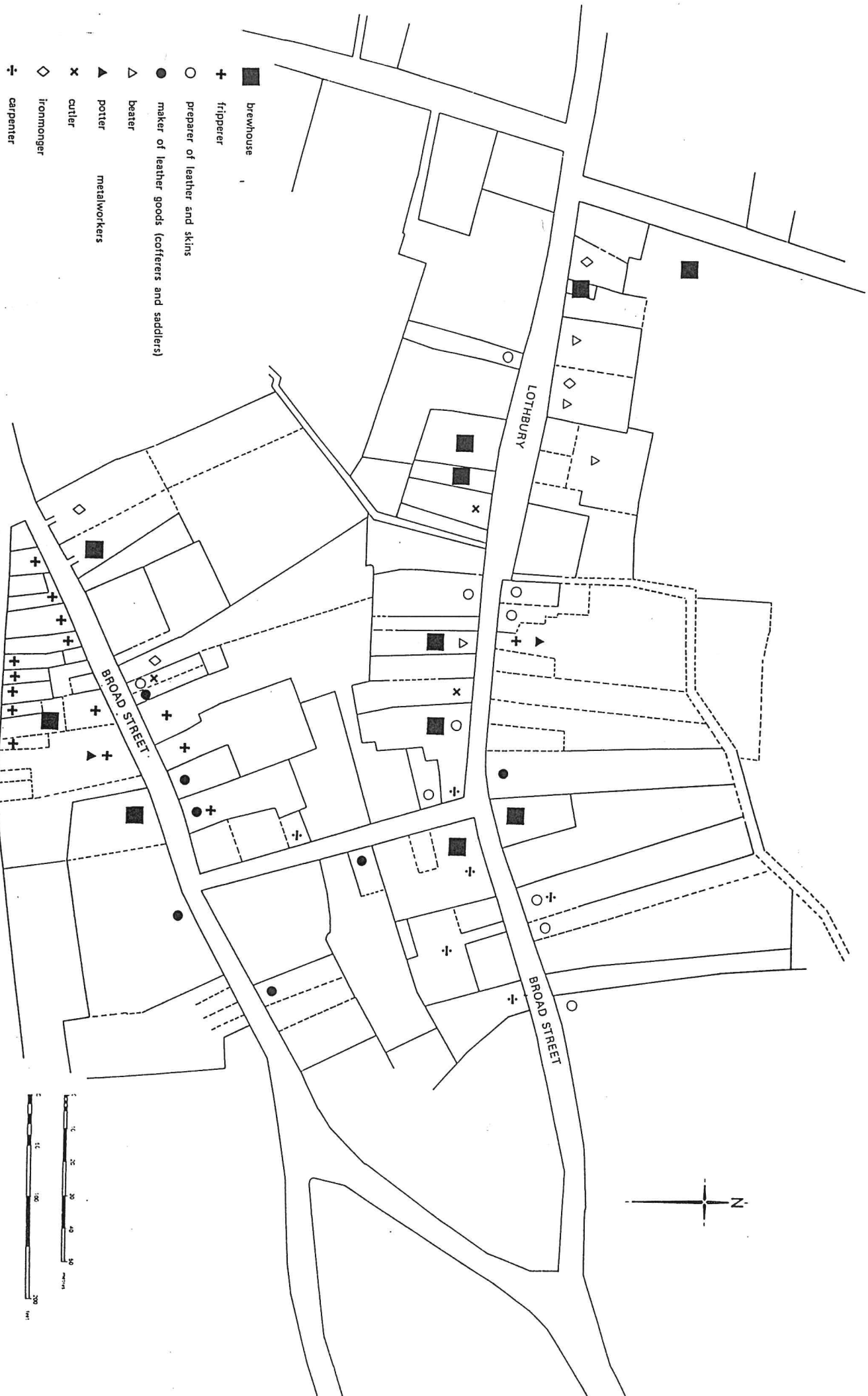


FIG. 5. Bank of England area: principal trades practised there c. 1260-1340