“TO BEAUTIFY HIS HOUSE”:
RODMAN WANAMAKER’S SACRAMENTAL SILVER COMMISSIONS

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in American Material Culture

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In 1901, Rodman Wanamaker, son of department store magnate John Wanamaker, added a newly-built and fully furnished Lady Chapel to the existing building of St. Mark’s Church (Episcopal) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The gift was in memory of his late wife, Fernanda Henry Wanamaker. This set in motion a steady stream of bequests and donations to not only St. Mark’s, but also to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene and the English royal family, as well as to Westminster Abbey. Wanamaker was a prolific and generous donor—specifically, in this case, of religious materials—who remains largely an enigma.

This paper seeks to understand the reasons behind Rodman Wanamaker’s gifts and to place them within the larger history of the Anglican Church, as well as within the context of transnational trade and patronage.
Chapter 1

ORIGINS

Introduction

The death of Fernanda Wanamaker (née Henry), wife of Rodman Wanamaker, on March 24, 1900, precipitated a number of unparalleled events in the life of her husband and in the history of St. Mark’s Church (Episcopal) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A lifelong member of St. Mark’s, Fernanda Wanamaker (1863-1900) had been an active member of parish for many years, especially as a member of the Altar Society. Rodman Wanamaker’s grief led to his bestowal of a vast number of gifts in her memory, beginning with the construction of the Lady Chapel. This memorial served as the basis for the rest of what was to become a large collection of designated Lady Chapel ornaments, and sacramental and liturgical accessories.

A Lady Chapel is a devotional space, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, within a larger building—a church or cathedral. The Lady Chapel at St. Mark’s was designed by Philadelphia architects Cope and Stewardson, who created a small addition on the southern side of the chancel.¹ The design follows the English Decorated Gothic style, popular in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and is more ornamental than the style used for the original 1840s St. Mark’s building. The

¹ When one looks toward to the High Altar (facing East), the Lady Chapel is to its right, at the eastern end of south aisle.
stone roof is groin-vaulted, not hammer-beamed as is the church’s nave, and the
stained-glass windows within the chapel narrate scenes from the life of the Blessed
Virgin Mary. Rodman Wanamaker’s original commission included the chapel itself,
designed by local, well-respected2 Philadelphia architects, and quickly grew to include
a vast amount of bejeweled sacramental plate and extraordinarily decorated vestments,
all of which were imported from either England or France, along with chapel
furnishings such as devotional statues, a rood-beam, altar rails, and an organ. Rodman
Wanamaker also gave an English alabaster altar and German-carved, English-painted
wooden reredos, an ornamental screen that stands above and behind the altar. The altar
and reredos were soon removed from the Lady Chapel, having been supplanted by
Wanamaker’s subsequent gifts of a remarkable sterling silver altar and later silver and
gold reredos. The Lady Chapel was consecrated and dedicated on February 10, 1902,
and the silver altar was installed just in time for Christmas of 1908.

Rodman Wanamaker, son of department store magnate John Wanamaker, has
occasionally been maligned as an heir and robber baron, out of touch with the reality
of the city around him. An intensely private man who left behind few personal
documents, he has too easily been portrayed by casual biographers and scholars of
department store history as merely the “artistic” son of John Wanamaker. But letters
from his family, along with a few of his own letters and newspaper articles, reveal a
sensitive and thoughtful man dedicated primarily to his family and nearly as primarily

2 “John Stewardson and Walter Cope were two men whose importance in the cause of
sound art cannot possibly be overestimated [. . .].” Ralph Adams Cram, “Architecture
in America,” in The Gothic Quest (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Company, 1915),
153.
to his father’s business. Rodman Wanamaker was also a passionate collector. The Lady Chapel, a long-term investment of time, money, and collecting, certainly started out as a gift of grief and devotion to a departed wife, but potentially continued as an outlet for Rodman’s passion for collecting beautiful objects.

The scope of his bequests—both in value and over a sustained period of time—however, represents an incredible investment of money and a strong level of personal commitment to not only his church, but also to charitable giving and to his own well-defined moral strictures. The silver altar, and the group of complementary objects also given to St. Mark’s, are representative of more than just Wanamaker’s personal views: they came out of a vibrant spiritual and theological movement in the Anglican Church, as well as a coeval ecclesiastical design revival. Additionally, Rodman Wanamaker’s extended custom of the London-based silversmith firm Barkentin & Krall is a remarkable testament to the influence of transnational trade—especially in luxury items—in the early twentieth century, and to the cosmopolitan nature of Wanamaker and many of his fellow Philadelphians. Finally, the Lady Chapel is an exceptional example of the devotional fashion of memorial-making at the turn of the twentieth century. It allows for not only a personal study of the man behind it all, but also a contextual investigation into the material culture of sacred objects and spaces.

Rodman Wanamaker left behind few personal documents, and records for Barkentin & Krall are no longer extant. The significant textual research for this paper has been conducted through a study of Wanamaker family letters in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, newspaper articles, and supportive contemporary writings. Additional documents in England’s National Archives and the
Westminster Abbey Archives, as well as the Lady Chapel and other objects themselves, have contributed hugely to a further understanding of Wanamaker’s commissions.

**The Lady Chapel: Historical Context**

Considering the Lady Chapel and its subsequent furnishings within the context of Philadelphia in the late nineteenth century calls to attention the developing popularity of memorializing departed loved ones through monuments. Most Americans, of course, could not afford to install entire chapels and associated decorative fittings in their churches. The closest comparable donation contemporary with Wanamaker’s is the $200,000 bequest of Mrs. Eugene Kelly to the Archdiocese of New York for the construction of a Lady Chapel in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Plans for that Lady Chapel were approved in May 1900 after a competition presided over by judges “Prof. Ware of Columbia University, who acted as expert for architectural design, and Archbishop Corrigan, who was the expert for ecclesiastical design.”³ New York architect Charles T. Mathews’ design was chosen out of submissions from England, France, Canada and the United States; Matthews was subsequently sent on a trip to Europe for study and inspiration. The architectural style of the final design was “thirteenth century [French] Gothic,” a combination of the Sainte-Chapelle (Paris) and the Lady Chapel in Amiens Cathedral.⁴


⁴ Ibid.
Plans for the interior of the Lady Chapel at St. Patrick’s included carved stonework, a “high carved” reredos, a mosaic floor, and a predomination of blue—especially in the stained glass—to represent the Virgin Mary. There are some obvious differences between the New York and Philadelphia Lady Chapels, most notably the architectural styles and the fact that Mrs. Kelly’s donation was a legacy after her death, whereas Rodman Wanamaker had a very careful hand in all the furnishing details of the St. Mark’s Lady Chapel. These differences aside, the significant fact remains that two Lady Chapels were constructed one hundred miles away and within two years of each other, and both were funded by extraordinarily generous donations.

Memorial chapels—and, in some cases, memorial churches—were by no means a new form. Traditionally, memorials took the shape of a chantry chapel, in which masses, psalms, or prayers would have been offered for the benefit of the souls of the deceased. The Lady Chapel at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York is the most comparable contemporary example in the United States, but Wanamaker’s particular commissions are more accurately compared with several large-scale projects privately funded by wealthy, landed members of the Anglican Church in England.5

5 A useful and particularly kindred example is the Church of the Holy Angels in Hoar Cross, Staffordshire, which was commissioned in 1871 by Emily Meynell Ingram to memorialize her husband, Hugo Frances Meynell Ingram, who died in that year. Designed and built by George Frederick Bodley and Thomas Garner (the firm Bodley & Garner), Mrs. Meynell Ingram played an essential role in the design and furnishing of the church; her letters to Bodley show a deep involvement in and strong opinions about the building and are useful for a study of the architect/designer-patron relationship. Together, she and Bodley “perfected” the church until her death in 1904, showing a level of tweaking and curatorial effort that exceeded Rodman Wanamaker’s. (Michael Hall, “Emily Meynell Ingram and Holy Angels, Hoar Cross, Staffordshire: A Study in Patronage,” *Architectural History* 47 (2004).)
It is important to remember, however, that examples such as these were the result of an extraordinary renewal—both spiritual and architectural—in the Anglican Church. Without an understanding of the developments that created the environment for ecclesiastical furnishing and design to flourish in especially England, but also in the Northeastern United States, Rodman Wanamaker’s substantial bequests cannot be viewed within the continuum of their historical context.

**Church Building Initiatives in Victorian England and America**

When studying the development of ecclesiology and the liturgical movement in the nineteenth century, it is tempting to start with what is now broadly referred to as the Oxford Movement. But what is too easily put aside into the neatly dated categories of history is the evolving crisis of the Anglican church in Hanoverian England, which led to the dramatic, large-scale nineteenth-century reforms that resulted in probably the most fertile periods of church building and furnishing in England’s history.

The late-eighteenth-century Anglican church has generally been characterized by cases of nepotism and preferment among the clergy. Impropration—the transference of ecclesiastical funds, tithes, and property to the jurisdiction of lay people—was by this time fully realized in post-Reformation England, encouraging the mismanagement of funds by both the lay people and the Church. This practice was problematic especially in small parishes whose livings were not large enough to support a clergyman and his family. It became common for clergy to hold multiple livings and outsource the majority of parish duties to curates, members of the clergy.

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6 Positions as vicar or rector that included income, property, or both.
who assisted a rector with his pastoral duties. In 1810, for example, 47% of beneficed clergy were non-resident. This was especially prevalent in cathedral towns, the supervisory and administrative centers of many small parishes, where the presence of non-resident clergy—called “cathedral drones”—raised the ire of reformers.

This practice, not surprisingly, had its detractors and supporters, but the undeniable problem was that worship practices were affected. Many of these pluralities ranged over a wide geographical scope, making personal or meaningful relationships between clergy and parishioners difficult. Many scholars point to this impersonality as the reason for the pulpit-centric tradition of the eighteenth-century Anglican church. The additional use of practices such as the system of pew renting, for example, only increased the public perception of the Church of England as a hierarchical, class-oriented structure that had no understanding of how the majority of English citizens lived.

Into this unsettled, impersonal environment came the crusading evangelism of newly popular denominations, such as the Methodists, Baptists, and

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8 Brooks, 3. Brooks’ introductory chapter to his and Saint’s edited collection is cited extensively in this study because of the valuable primary sources he used to generate his statistics, including records in the Home Office of the United Kingdom.

9 Pew renting was not restricted to the Church of England, nor was it abolished: many churches relied on the income provided by pew rents. The High Church component became especially against the system after the 1840s (Andrew Saint, “Anglican Church-Building in London,” The Victorian Church, 41). It is, however, a good illustration of the hierarchical structure of the church.
Congregationalists. These enjoyed especial popularity in the industrial centers of northern England and the Midlands, as well as in the poverty-stricken East End of London. The emotional appeals of personal salvation, often made in open-air meetings, contradicted the hierarchical, closed-wall structure of the Anglican church.\textsuperscript{10}

The changing system of denominational structure in eighteenth-century England led to a dramatic shift in the popularity of the Anglican Church, as well as a reduction in member numbers, raising awareness of the immediate need for reform. This took place in two major—and different—ways: 1) the influence of the evangelizing denominations placed a new emphasis on personal piety and spiritual renewal within the Church of England, and 2) the defense of the church as an institution and as a member of the Catholic body, spearheaded by John Keble’s 1833 sermon on “National Apostasy.”\textsuperscript{11} In 1836, therefore, the Ecclesiastical Commission was established to investigate and turn around the Anglican church’s financial and structural troubles.

The Bishop of London, Charles Blomfield, assumed leadership of the Commission, making its primary goal the building and endowment of new churches. The endowments—raised in both local and national efforts—were meant to decrease the need for pluralities and place the financial power of the church into a wider diversity of hands. There was an attempt to involve more people in the church, even if only financially at first, thinking that “the magic of aristocratic patronage might just

\textsuperscript{10} Brooks, 3.

\textsuperscript{11} Brooks, 5.
charm the urban *nouveaux riches* into generosity on behalf of the established church.”

12 To this end, the Church Building Fund (1818; incorporated 1828) and the Metropolis Church Fund (1836) aided building projects: part of the Bishop’s proposal for the Metropolis Church Fund included the stipulation that where three-fourths of the building cost were privately supplied by patrons, the national government would supply the rest of the original building cost, the finishing costs, and help to supply an endowment. Additional perquisites given to voluntary contributors was the chance to nominate five trustees for the “perpetual patronage” of the parish, with future nominating powers after a trustees’ death. This is an obvious, almost democratic, departure from former parish management in the Anglican church; in many cases, spreading trust and deciding power from a few laymen whose inheritances included the power of bestowing benefices on clergy to a wider range of parishioners.

The fundraising efforts were largely successful; between 1835 and 1875, for example, 3,765 Anglican churches were consecrated, with 1,010 of them in the 1860s. Additional statistics from the United Kingdom’s Home Office show that between 1873 and 1891, £20,531,402 was put toward building or restoring churches

12 Brooks, 7.


14 Ibid.

15 Brooks, 9.
and cathedrals in England and Wales—“almost all of it [was] from private sources, helped out by the various church building societies—which were themselves, of course, voluntarily funded.”\textsuperscript{16} In some cases, building projects and fundraisers were all a fantastic dream, with contentious arguments about fund allocations killing the project itself. The statistical information on the number of new churches is hard to deny, however, and shows a considerable amount of nationwide success.

**The Oxford Movement, The Cambridge Camden Society, and The Ecclesiologist**

Much of the impetus for this building movement came from the tenets of the Oxford Movement, a theological and intellectual movement, originating at Oxford University, that developed out of the wish for a self-governing autonomous church not regulated by parliamentary powers. It was at first not particularly focused on the liturgical and sacramental aspects of High Church Anglicanism that have since come to define the movement, but instead called for the Church to return to the historical episcopal legacy on which it was founded. Although many of the individual scholars and theologians who participated in the movement had different suggestions for the best way to achieve this, common among all was a renewed practice of discipline, worship, and holiness, characterized by a dedicated and deeply personal commitment to both individual piety and the heritage of the episcopacy in the Anglican Church.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. Citing *Return showing the Number of Churches (Including Cathedrals) in every Diocese...which have been Built or Restored at a Cost exceeding £500 since the Year 1873*, (London:1892).

An initially concomitant movement was the Cambridge Camden (later Ecclesiological) Society, which was formally organized in 1839 at Cambridge University for the study and appreciation of Gothic architecture and objects.\textsuperscript{18} Using field study and scholarly research as foundational material, members of the Society produced a journal called the \textit{Ecclesiologist} (1841, first publication), which addressed the new interest in church construction and furnishing by sanctioning certain architects and designers to create “appropriate” plans and designs for new structures. The Society recruited new members widely, appealing not only to students at the University of Cambridge, but also to clergy and architects, among others, in both cities and rural areas.\textsuperscript{19} The \textit{Ecclesiologist} functioned as a unifying publication that informed wide-ranging members of the news from Cambridge, as well as the latest information from some of the other, smaller architectural societies that were springing up throughout England.

Two major aspects of the Cambridge Camden Society’s work carried over to a similar revival in America, specifically—in this case—Philadelphia: the overwhelming popularity of historically influenced church architecture and building,

\textsuperscript{18} There was a similar organization at Oxford University, called the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture, which did not have as far-reaching an effect on building and furnishing churches as the Cambridge Camdenians. The two societies established a type of reciprocity in 1840, but the Camdenians objected to the Oxford group’s refusal to call Gothic “the one Christian style, to the exclusion of all others.” (James White, 43, citing the \textit{Ecclesiologist}). Additionally, the Oxford Architectural Society studied secular buildings.

and the ritualist movement in High Church Anglicanism. In mid-nineteenth century England, the study of church architecture was a particularly trendy leisure activity. With its membership numbering in the several hundreds—at its peak, nearing 900—the Society took advantage of this interest by issuing a form called a “Church Scheme,” which allowed visitors to parish churches to fill in a blank document with their descriptions, observations, and measurements of the space, and then to submit the notes to the Society. This turned the study of church architecture into an amateur science, and members of the Society were fond of emphasizing their work as such. They issued guidebooks for both members and non-member amateurs, with historical information, illustrations, explanations of terminology and methodology.

This grassroots campaign among enthusiasts coincided with a vast amount of research that was being attempted through the study of medieval documentation—particularly, in this case, of sources on ecclesiastical information. Committee members of the Society, who controlled every publication and official opinion presented to the public, deemed the work of “holiday tourists” useless for interpretation without a thorough understanding of how medieval churches worked and how people might have functioned in the space. It is at this point in the history of the Society that the science of ecclesiology begins to take a spiritual turn, introducing the importance of sacramentality, symbolism, and ritualism to the process of evaluating churches. John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, two of the founders of the Society, published *The

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Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments: A Translation of the First Book of the Rationale Divinorum Officiorum, Written by William Durandus, Sometime Bishop of Mende, which served as a catalyst for the spiritual adjustments within the efforts of the Society and the Ecclesiologist. In the introduction to this translation, Neale and Webb struggled to explain the unexplainable: that there was a palpable difference between medieval and newly-built churches, which could be the result only of the mercenary approach of the modern architect and builder. Without the deep respect of symbolism, ritual, and liturgy, the modern church could never feel the same as the medieval, no matter how perfectly the design imitated the medieval prototype.

The effect of these movements on the American Episcopal Church was important; religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom emphasizes a similarity between the ritualistic laxity and divided politics of the Church of England and the post-Revolution Episcopal Church in the late eighteenth century. There was an important difference, however, and that was the position of the Episcopal Church as “one voluntary church among others” in America, compared to the national Church of England which, despite the tenets of the Oxford Movement, was still a part of the state.

Organizing and galvanizing forces resuscitated the American Episcopal Church in the early nineteenth century, sub-dividing into two primary parties: the

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22 Idealizing, of course, the “purely spiritual” motivations of medieval builders.


25 Ibid.
evangelical, scripture-based Low Church and the more ritualistic, liturgically-focused High Church. A further faction developed around the mid-nineteenth century, when a Catholic Revival began to influence many members and congregations in the Episcopal Church. In period documents, High Churchmen and Anglo-Catholics are often referred to interchangeably, although there are significant differences. Many descriptions of Anglo-Catholicism characterize it by beliefs in, for example, the “Real Presence” of Christ in the consecrated elements of the Communion, the value of voluntary confession and absolution, and reservation of consecrated elements “for the purpose of adoration.” Historian Clowes Chorley called Anglo-Catholicism “old-fashioned High Churchmanship and early Catholicism with a large plus, both in doctrine and ritual.”

Ferdinand Cartwright Ewer (1826-1883), an early leader of the Catholic Revival in America, preached a series of eight sermons on “The Failure of Protestantism,” in which he credited the Catholic churches—considering the Roman, Greek, and Anglican branches of Catholicism—for being united by the belief in transubstantiation as the foundational basis of the church, whereas the “mere intellectual presence of Christ which Protestantism upholds” gives Protestant denominations the opportunity to choose their particular doctrines and depart from a shared heritage of faith and ritual.


Ritualism, the practice of following a prescribed form of words, liturgy, and ceremony, was an explosive issue in the Episcopal Church. Some of the ceremonial aspects of ritualistic worship to which anti-ritualists particularly objected were the physical and spiritual emphasis on the altar, the elevation of the host during the Eucharist, candles on the altar, and the use of vestments (especially colored, ornately decorated vestments), to list only a few. Early on, Philadelphia became a locus for the mid-century Catholic Revival and Ritualist controversy with the prolonged battle between the vestry of St. Clement’s Church and its Rector, the Rev. Herman Griswold Batterson. Almost immediately following his appointment, Batterson introduced Catholic doctrine and ceremonies to the congregation of St. Clement’s; the vestry, a body of parishioners advising on parochial business, soon requested that he dispense with the processional and recessional hymns; changing stoles; the use of lighted candles in the chancel; the invocation before the sermon; the standing of the choir and congregation during the presentation of the offertory; and changing of the furniture of the Church.

After Batterson refused to discontinue these and other practices, the vestry appealed to the Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, the Right Rev. William Bacon Stevens, who upheld the vestry’s request. The case eventually went to civil court, where Batterson’s position was sustained. Although Batterson soon resigned over ill health,

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28 Bishop of Massachusetts, Manton Eastburn, called these practices “superstitious puerilities,” speaking particularly of the Church of the Advent (Boston) in an 1845 letter addressed to the “clergy of Massachusetts.” Cited in Chorley, Men and Movements, 365.

29 Chorley, Men and Movements, 337. Chorley’s source not cited.
the stubborn position he had taken on the importance of ritual at St. Clement’s had, in fact, inspired the congregation to support aspects of the Catholic Revival that it had once repudiated and St. Clement’s remains today a self-styled “Anglo-Catholic parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Philadelphia.”

St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, was only one of many newly-formed Episcopal congregations that sought the advice and approval of the English Ecclesiological Society for their new building. Construction of St. Mark’s Church began in 1848 after a year-long consultation among building committee members, the Ecclesiological Society, and Philadelphia architect John Notman (1810-1865). Notman’s original plans were not entirely satisfactory to the St. Mark’s committee, which applied to the Ecclesiological Society for one of its sanctioned plans. The Society sent plans by English architect Richard Cromwell Carpenter, who was known for his High Anglican designs; Notman made the necessary alterations and re-submitted the designs to the Ecclesiological Society for approval (Figures 1 and 2).

The August 1848 edition of the Ecclesiologist reports:

30 St. Clement’s Church, Philadelphia, website: http://www.saintclementsphiladelphia.org/


We repeat our satisfaction at finding that the United States were able to furnish so creditable a design. Mr Notman further informs us that the Vestry of S Mark’s were moved by the English tracings [Carpenter’s] to devote a larger sum to the building of the church.”

St. Mark’s was dedicated in May 1850, although finishing work on the tower and spire didn’t conclude until 1852.

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33 The Ecclesiologist, Volume IX, no. LXVII (August 1848), 14. A few months before, the Ecclesiologist had reported with no particular reference to a specific church, “In the United States, indeed, and in the English colonies, the Society may now reckon some of its best friends, and may see the most gratifying results of its exertions” (Volume VIII, no. LXVI, June 1848, 376.)

Figure 1. Tracing of the plans for St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia (John Notman), sent to the Ecclesiological Society in London, 1848. Courtesy Winterthur Museum & Library, 1960.0348.001.
Adherence to the strictures of Neale and Webb’s translation of Durundus (described above) is seen throughout St. Mark’s; Jonathan Fairbanks emphasizes the twelve columns—six on each side—in the nave, representing the apostles.35 The

importance that Neale and Webb placed on the respect required for a proper “church-like feel” shown by architects and builders was also followed by the St. Mark’s vestry; Fairbanks quotes the instructions from the vestry to the workmen as follows:

To All Persons Employed In Building This Church

1. A church is the House of God; and therefore, any work that has to do with a church is a holy work. Every stone you lay, and every beam you hew is lain and hewn for the honor of Almighty God—

2. The behavior of those who are employed in a holy work must also be holy. How careful, then should Churchmen be in working upon a Church, to avoid (no more than at other time) all unseemly words, all oaths and everything like an oath….

3. This church when it has been solemnly dedicated to God by the Bishop, will become the house of Peace; therefore let it not now be profaned by lightness of speech…Remember in what holy quietness Solomon’s holy temple was built.

4. A Churchman while working in the house of God, will also avoid any act that may seem irreverent, such as singing or whistling idle tunes, or taking his meals within the circle of the church walls.

The Foreman of this church must require that every visitor who may enter it while in the course of building will shew by his reverence, that he remembers its solemn destination to be House of God.36

excerpt Fairbanks uses ends with a description of columns (an application chosen for the columns at St. Mark’s): “there is delicate foliage round the head of all; for all [the apostles] were plentiful in good works,” which can be interpreted as an underscoring of bringing materials, visual symbolism, and architecture into congregants’ religious lives.

The functional simplicity favored by the Ecclesiological Society that was echoed in the early design of St. Mark’s was not to last: the increasing popularity of ritualism prompted further embellishment of church interiors, and the parishioners at St. Mark’s responded in kind.

The Rev. Alfred G. Mortimer’s Effect on St. Mark’s Church

Two rectors at St. Mark’s, Eugene Hoffman and his successor, Isaac Nicholson, instilled the ritualistic tradition in the practice of worship in the early generations of St. Mark’s history. Under the leadership of Alfred Garnett Mortimer (1848-1924), the “beautification” of the formerly sparsely decorated church began in earnest. Mortimer was not only a ritualist; he was a ritualist who expanded the term to its most ritualistic boundaries. Born in London in 1848, Mortimer was installed as rector of St. Marks in January of 1892, holding that position until December 1912.

Alfred Mortimer was publicly chastised in the New York Times for his High Church practices, following his “inhibition [by Bishop William Pinkney from ministry in the Diocese of Maryland]” for being one of the celebrants at the requiem mass for the Rev. Dr. James DeKoven at St. Clement’s Church, Philadelphia, on May 14, 1879.37 DeKoven was one of the rallying leaders of the ritualist movement in the United States and had died from an accident in Wisconsin just as he was about to

move to Philadelphia and assume the rectorship of St. Clement’s. The author of the critical—at times indignant—article in the Baltimore American, reprinted in the New York Times, gave a full description of the “paraphernalia” with which Father Mortimer and his perceived henchmen celebrated the mass. Quoting an “investigators’ report” of an 1878 Christmas service that Mortimer officiated, the paper goes on to list a catalogue of offenses, including the sight of parishioners genuflecting and crossing themselves, Mortimer kissing the stole before beginning his sermon, and the use of a processional cross. The clear message in this article is the objection to the way the ritualists were stretching the limits of the Episcopal church’s official ritual and defying their bishops. A letter from the Rev. Dr. A. M. Randolph, of Emmanuel Church, Baltimore, elucidates this problem:

The Ritualists of England, from whose writings the Ritualists of this country feed their minds and draw their weapons of offense and defense, have very little respect for the authority that is the governing power of the office of the Bishop. They profess to hold very exalted views of the spiritual functions of Bishops, as transmitting through the apostolic succession what they call the ‘grace of orders,’ which gives validity to the ministry and efficacy to the sacraments; but they have little use for Bishops as governors and rulers.

38 The New York Times, December 25, 1879, 2. description of Mortimer is as follows: “Father Mortimer flitted through the church before services commenced in a cassock, and wearing a Romish beretta.”

39 The author reports, “In the congregation were quite a number of Low Churchmen, who undoubtedly were present to learn in what manner the requiem would be celebrated, since there is no requiem service in the ritual, except the ordinary Episcopal service for the dead.” Ibid.

40 Ibid.
The fallout from Bishop Pinkney’s action seems to have been minimal, at least long-term, and members of both St. Clement’s and of St. Mark’s continued to worship as they had. By the time Mortimer was verbally accosted for his practices by an English priest visiting Philadelphia in 1904, the reporter for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* lists all the offenses of the visiting priest—including his inhibition from preaching in all but his own small living in England—and lends support to Mortimer. Mortimer issued no public reply to the letter, indicating that Philadelphia was no longer as antagonistic as it once had been to the ritualist movement.

During Mortimer’s tenure at St. Mark’s, the congregation flourished. In 1900, around the time of Fernanda Wanamaker’s death, there were 1,627 communicants at St. Mark’s, which led in size the pack of “fashionable” Episcopal churches in Philadelphia. In the church’s 1906 Annual Report, Mortimer noted that 101 new members were confirmed on “Easter Eve.” By 1920, the communicants numbered 1,520 and were outnumbered only by the membership at the Church of the Saviour (now the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral) and Holy Trinity, on Rittenhouse Square. The reduced size of 1920s St. Mark’s reflects the growing trend among the

41 “Anti-Ritualist Makes Attack on Rev. Dr. Mortimer,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 25, 1904 (vol. 151, iss. 117). The visiting clergyman, Rev. Mr. Fillingham, suspects that The High Church movement was started in the first place to fill the pockets of the clergy, and so far as that result is concerned it has achieved a measure of success. The movement grew [... until the rectors got the idea that they are the successors of the apostles: that they have the power to forgive sins and a great many other powers which we think belong to God.”


wealthiest members of Philadelphia society for moving westward as the city expanded. St. Mark’s was at peak size in the first decade of the 1900s, with a large number of the most prominent families in attendance.

Mortimer encouraged his parishioners to give as they could, reminding them that the majority of the many organizations funded and run by St. Mark’s were possible not because of gifts from “wealthy members of the Parish,” but from “the growth of a spirit of love, which shows itself, as love always does, by sacrifice.” He continued:

[. . .] this love for the Church led people then not only to build and adorn beautiful churches, but to store them with costly vessels and vestments, so that while men’s houses in those days were simply furnished, the churches were possessed of great treasures of gold, and silver, and precious stones, the work of the most celebrated artists of those times. He [a Dr. Jessup, whose essays on the medieval Church of England Mortimer was citing] goes on sadly to observe that in our days the reverse is seen, our houses being lavishly furnished, but our churches too often suggesting cheapness rather than simplicity.

This, of course, makes no secret of Mortimer’s wish for embellishment of the once relatively austere interior of St. Mark’s, and is a clear call for financial and material support. Mortimer himself proudly reported on his progress at the church:

In closing the account of the Church Plate and Vestments it should be noticed that no money of the Church has ever been spent upon them, that they have been all memorials or other offerings from individuals. When the present Rector [Mortimer] took charge in 1892 the Church possessed only three chalices: the two sent out from England when the Church was built, and the Clark memorial chalice. The Parish then had

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45 Ibid.
no vestments at all except of linen; so that all this great collection has been given within the seventeen years of his incumbency. He desires to express his heartfelt gratitude to God for putting into the hearts of His people to give so abundantly of their means to beautify His house, and earnestly prays that their gifts may be accepted by God, and that the fullness of His blessing may rest forever on the donors.”  

The parishioners embraced the opportunity to enhance their spiritual space, making a considerable number of contributions, both financial and of valuable objects.

Structural changes were made to the church from 1907-1908, adding a concrete and steel foundation to the original ground foundation that had settled many inches, and irregularly, since 1848. The encaustic floor tiles were removed and replaced with large blue flagstones, and the chancel was paved with marble. 

At the same time, significant other changes were made, including lowering the pews from a wooden platform to floor level; the erection of a new Rood Beam in 1907 in memory of the Rt. Rev. Isaac Nicholson, Bishop of Milwaukee and former rector of St. Mark’s; the addition of choir-stalls, an organ gallery, grille, and case for the organ, all given in memory of Mr. Sutherland Mallet Prevost, who died in 1905 and in whose memory also the chancel was restored in 1907 (with marble stones mentioned above). In 1908, seven silver lamps by Barkentin & Krall were added to the Sanctuary, just in front of the high altar, as another memorial gift. Significant other gifts were added to the church’s collection and are too numerous and are deserving of a separate, object-based study.


47 Mortimer, *S. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia*, 20-21. Mortimer recorded that “the cost was some $16,000.”
Mortimer’s English connections appealed to the Anglophilic enthusiasms of what sociologist Digby Baltzell calls “Proper Philadelphia.” The gifts of objects made by Barkentin & Krall, for example, before Rodman Wanamaker’s specially commissioned silver altar, shows a high degree of familiarity with the most fashionable of church furnishing firms.\textsuperscript{48} St. Mark’s rector’s and parishioners’ attachment to the Anglican Church and to England itself was stronger than just the purchase of spiritual and symbolic objects: in 1901, likely as the Lady Chapel was under construction, the church hosted a special memorial service for Queen Victoria.

\textit{The Philadelphia Inquirer} described the preparations:

Saturday’s services at St. Mark’s Protestant Episcopal Church, Sixteenth and Locust streets, in memory of Queen Victoria, will be a unique occasion in the history of Philadelphia. Elaborate preparations have been made to make the solemn ceremonies at once imposing and impressive. The entire interior of the church will be draped in black, and the contrast between the somber hue and the beautiful floral offerings that are being designed for the occasion will be striking.

At the head of the church, on a raised platform draped in black, a magnificent catafalque will be erected. On top of this will be placed a bier covered with a purple pall crowned with a wreath of flowers. Surrounding this will be six tall tapers and two candelabra. The services of the day will begin at half-past nine in the morning with a mass of requiem. At three o’clock in the afternoon the service proper will begin. The Rev. Dr. Mortimer, in black vestments, will conduct the service, which will be the same as that which was used in England in St. Paul’s Cathedral after the death of George III, George IV, and William IV. An elaborate musical program, including the Magnificat

\textsuperscript{48} Other “fashionable” firms used by St. Mark’s parishioners the Sisters of Bethany (textiles) and C.E. Kempe (stained glass and church furnishings).
and the Nunc Dimittis, has been arranged. The Right Rev. Bishop Coleman, of Delaware, will preach the sermon.49

The English connection at this church could not be more strongly emphasized.50

The Inquirer’s excitement over the several visits of Henry Pelham-Clinton, 7th Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyme, to Mortimer at the St. Mark’s rectory reveals a breathless enthusiasm for “things England,” as well as further acceptance of the High Churchmen:

He is possessor of one of the most beautiful country seats in England, “Clumber,” located in the remains of the celebrated Robin Hood forest. In this magnificent park, which is laid out in beautiful Italian gardens, drives and lakes, the Duke built a church, which is considered to be the handsomest edifice of its kind that has been erected since the Reformation. The Duke and Lord Halifax are the two most prominent churchmen of the nobility in Europe.51

49 “Queen Victoria to be Honored by Impressive Services Here. Religious Ceremony to be Observed in St. Mark’s Church.” The Philadelphia Inquirer, January 30, 1901 (vol. 144, iss. 30), 3. The irony in this type of celebration is that Queen Victoria especially abhorred ritualist High Churchmen, which led her to support the passage of the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, an attempt to limit the spreading popularity of High Church/Anglo-Catholic ritualism.

50 Additionally, one can see a markedly positive difference in the approach to High Church ritualism from the above New York Times article, which chastised Mortimer.

51 “Duke of Newcastle Here for Easter. Well-known English Nobleman is Guest of Dr. Mortimer, Rector of St. Mark’s,” The Philadelphia Inquirer, April 8, 1903 (vol. 148, iss. 98), 8. Another article calls him a “leading high churchman” (January 12, 1901, vol. 144, iss. 12, 3). The Clumber Park church, the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, was designed and built by George Frederick Bodley, an immensely respected ecclesiological architect and designer, in 1889.
According to a statement from Mortimer to the *Inquirer*, the Duke returned to Philadelphia from a visit to Florida to celebrate Holy Week at St. Mark’s, a trip that was “purely devotional [and will] have nothing to do with business or pleasure.”

In 1909, Mortimer compiled a lengthy, illustrated catalogue of the objects at St. Mark’s, which also contained a history of the church. He sent a copy to Queen Alexandra, wife of King Edward VII, who sent a thankful acknowledgement of the gift. The description of the book emphasizes the connection of Queen Alexandra to the Philadelphia church:

Among the illustrations are a number of views of the silver altar in the Lady Chapel presented to the church some years ago by Rodman Wanamaker in memory of his wife. It is the only altar of its kind in the world, consisting of sapphires, emeralds, pearls and diamonds, and cost $100,000. The Queen’s interest was aroused when the work was on exhibition in London, when it was suggested to her that she might receive the book to be published.

Mortimer’s connections with members of the upper ranks of English society are an important clue to the life of St. Mark’s itself, but also to the ever-increasing patronage of English companies by his parishioners. Mortimer’s influence on St.

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54 “Queen Thanks Rector. Alexandra Acknowledges Receipt of St. Mark’s Album.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 22, 1910 (vol. 162, iss. 78), 13. The cost of the altar is unverified; this article is the only one in which it is mentioned, and no records have been found documenting the order or cost analysis.
Mark’s Church is impossible to ignore; he inspired his parishioners to give valuable objects for the decoration of the church and was almost certainly a catalyst behind Rodman Wanamaker’s series of bequests. The magnitude of these gifts, however, suggests a deeper passion than a simple answer to Mortimer’s call for enhancement.

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55 Mortimer credits Rodman Wanamaker with inspiring fellow congregants: “Shortly after [Mrs. Fernanda Wanamaker’s] death Mr. Rodman Wanamaker gave in her memory the Lady Chapel with all its treasures. This has not only been the great object of interest in S. Mark’s, but has stimulated many other improvements. Indeed, from this year [1901] may be reckoned a new era in the life of the fabric of S. Mark’s, gifts and memorials having been added until it has now almost reached perfection, and with the exception, perhaps, of the introduction of an interior roof-ceiling, and some changes in the south porch, nothing more seems left to be done to the structure of the Church.” Mortimer, *S. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia*, 14.
Chapter 2

THE OBJECTS: ST. MARK’S CHURCH, THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE (SANDRINGHAM), AND WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The Lady Chapel, St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia

The Lady Chapel, furnished entirely by Rodman Wanmaker, comprises far more than the altar and reredos alone. Alfred Mortimer’s 1909 catalogue comprehensively and exhaustively documents the collection up to that point; Wanamaker continued to outfit the Lady Chapel with metalwork, textiles, and religious objects of other media into the 1920s. A brief discussion of Wanamaker’s gifts up until 1909, culled from Mortimer’s catalogue, provides an illustration of the sheer volume and expense of the Lady Chapel collection.56

The objects given between 1901 and 1909 include, at the most basic level, ornate wrought-iron gates at the main entrance to the Lady Chapel, a memorial wall tablet, floriated bronze altar rails with ten angels, scrolls, and shield devices all in silver, and other architectural details such as carved stone and woodwork. Within the category of silver and gold metalwork, Wanamaker gave two sets of paired cruets to hold wine and water during the celebration of Communion—one set, made by the London gold- and silversmith firm Barkentin & Krall and elaborately jewelled, also

56 The Lady Chapel, and all of its furnishings, deserves a complete and exclusive study; this very short list serves only to provide readers with an idea of the objects at St. Mark’s Church and the magnanimity of Rodman Wanamaker’s donations. Complete details, descriptions, and photographs can be found in Mortimer’s catalogue.
includes a bread box and lavabo, a small bowl for the priest to wash his hands; the other, made by A. Boyer, Paris, is “inferior” to the Barkentin & Krall set and includes a bread box, lavabo, as well as a crucifix and pair of candlesticks. Wanamaker also gave a simple pair of cruets, with bread box and lavabo, for the daily celebrations within the Lady Chapel. Three chalices are included in the Lady Chapel catalogue: one, made by A. Boyer and of 20-carat gold and with an accompanying paten, is “simple but chaste: the knob contains a large heart of diamonds and emeralds, the centre diamond of considerable size.” The other two chalices include one designed by Charles Eamer Kempe, a well-regarded liturgical designer and manufacturer; the third is an “ancient Spanish chalice, probably of eighteenth century workmanship.”

Other metal items are two sets of silver-gilt crucifixes and pairs of candlesticks (one by A. Boyer; another designed by Kempe); a silver-gilt cross “made originally for the Altar Cross of the Lady Chapel, but [which] was found to be too small [. . .] and it was affixed to a staff, and is used for the Lady Chapel banner of the Blessed Virgin”; a silver hexagonal sanctuary lamp made by Barkentin & Krall, “similar to the one given by the Duke of Norfolk to Arundel Cathedral”; an “ancient German Gothic” censer, for burning and dispersing incense; a silver-gilt, pearl studded altar

57 A small disc or plate for holding the Eucharistic bread and covering the chalice.

58 Mortimer, *S. Mark's, Philadelphia, and Its Lady Chapel*, Plate LXXXIII.

59 Ibid., Plate LXXXV.

60 Ibid., Plate LXXXI

61 Ibid., Plate LXXXIII
desk and corresponding Missal\textsuperscript{62}; a pair of jewelled flower vases and a silver-gilt hand-held altar bell ("Sanctus bell"), both by Barkentin & Krall. Wanamaker overlooked no detail for the accessories required to celebrate Mass within the Lady Chapel, even including a gold morse, a clasp for holding together the edges of a liturgical vestment called a cope: the morse is a quatrefoil shape and is set with blister pearls and sapphires, with a representation of the Virgin Mary in high relief in the center on a ground of blue-enameded fleur-de-lys (Figure 3).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.jpg}
\caption{Morse, for the Lady Chapel. St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, c. 1901-1908. Photo by author.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{62} An instructional book with directions for the celebration of Mass.
Mortimer was most delighted by silver processional cross, which he called “the gem of our Church Plate” it had been “for many years in a collection in Italy and was brought to London to be sold in 1901.” It was estimated, presumably not only by Mortimer, to have been made in sixteenth-century Sicily and is of elaborate workmanship and Gothic styling.

An additional collection of textiles comprised seven altar frontals, which would have been used for the alabaster altar preceding the silver altar’s installation. They were commissioned from well-regarded liturgical designers in England; most were designed by C. E. Kempe and another influential artist and designer, J. Ninian Comper, and were intended especially for use in the Lady Chapel. One particularly noted by Mortimer, is a 1904 frontal designed by Comper and embroidered by the Sisters of Bethany (London), an Augustinian community of religious women who started and operated a school of embroidery for the production of liturgical textiles (Figure 4). In addition to the altar frontals, Rodman Wanamaker commissioned and collected seven sets of vestments; some antique and some newly made by the same designers and embroiderers.

63 Mortimer, *S. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, and Its Lady Chapel*, Plate LXXVII.

64 Many of these frontals are still used for special celebrations and holidays at St. Mark’s.

65 This photograph also shows the Lady Chapel’s original wooden reredos; the frontal covers the original alabaster altar. The pair are photographed in their new location and designation as the St. John’s Altar. The carved figures flanking the central panel are replacements, designed by Ralph Adams Cram, for the carvings of Saints Luke and John flanking a depiction of the Annunciation of St. Mary.
Figure 4. Altar frontal (J.N. Comper, design; Sisters of Bethany, embroidery). St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia. Photo courtesy Davis d’Ambly.
Outside of the Lady Chapel commissions, parishioners of St. Mark’s also frequented Barkentin & Krall for their memorial gifts to St. Mark’s. Significant donations include seven silver sanctuary lamps, hanging before the high altar, the ivory-inlaid and jewelled silver-gilt crucifix on the high altar, and a heavily jewelled and enameled bread box. Another morse, commissioned from Barkentin & Krall “for use in the Church” (not the Lady Chapel), is decorated with a star of diamonds, containing about sixty stones; in the outer moulding of the Morse are eight large carbuncles between which and on the Cross, are the twelve precious stones mentioned in Rev. xxi, 19-21, as garnishing the foundations of the wall of the City of the New Jerusalem (Figure 5).  

Figure 5. Morse (Barkentin & Krall). St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia.

66 Mortimer, S. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, and Its Lady Chapel, Plate LXXIV.
The objects listed above are certainly not an exhaustive representation of the collection at St. Mark’s. It is difficult to give them the interpretation they deserve within the context of a paper that is more about the donor of the Lady Chapel and his motivations for giving than the gifts themselves. Without the list, however, the Lady Chapel’s silver altar and reredos—as well as Rodman Wanamaker’s subsequent, substantial donations to the royal family in England and Westminster Abbey—would stand in massive isolation. The large-scale commissions cannot be understood on their own, without the contextual relationship of the other—smaller, yet comprehensively precise—gifts to the Lady Chapel. The larger silver gifts, however, garner the most attention for international trade and transatlantic relationships and help to demonstrate Rodman Wanamaker’s inexplicable, yet thorough, generosity; the Lady Chapel’s altar was the impetus for the donations to England’s royal family and Westminster Abbey.

**Inspiration: The Baptistery Altar, Museo dell’ Opera del Duomo, Florence**

A pamphlet written and published by the London firm of Barkentin & Krall in 1907 compares the altar they produced for St. Mark’s Church to a silver altar made by fifteenth-century Florentine silversmith Antonio del Pollaiuolo for the Baptistery of the Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore (familiarly known as the Duomo). Dedicated to St. John the Baptist, it was carried each year to the Baptistery on his feast day. The authors of the Barkentin & Krall pamphlet declare that since the creation of the Florentine altar, “nothing has been produced at all approaching it in elaborate magnificence, until the present time, when Mr. Krall, and the artists and craftsmen
associated with him, have made the Altar for the Lady Chapel of St. Mark’s, Philadelphia.”

Antonio del Pollaiuolo (c. 1431-1498), though a significant artist, sculptor, and designer in fifteenth-century Florence, was not the sole designer and contributor to the silver altar at the Baptistery. More of a long-term collaborative project, it was begun in 1366 and intended to serve only as a frontal for the stone altar already in place in the choir, where the relics of St. John the Baptist were stored in a confessio—a sepulcher or chapel for the storage of relics—underneath the present altar. Originally removed from its storage for installation in the Baptistery only on the eve of the Nativity of San Giovanni, Baptistery documents record the gradual progress of the dossal’s increased importance within the space and consequent installations. A 1475 letter from Piero di Bernardo Cennini, son of goldsmith Bernardo Cennini, describes the Baptistery much in the way one imagines visitors to St. Mark’s Lady Chapel might:

In the middle of the pavement of the baptistery rises up a marble font, wide and notable for its double wall. It is nearly always empty, except when the annual solemnities of the epiphany of Christ are celebrated, or Easter Days. However, whenever any day is celebrated in memory of ST John, a silver altar is constructed on top of the same font, with most exquisite working, showing the deeds of the saint. It consists of many parts: but the beauty of the workmanship cannot be described in words. A thurible above, incense boats, chalices, flasks, candlesticks, a cross,

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69 Ibid.
all of amazing size, adorn it: nothing but remarkable objects of silver and gold [are seen]. It was of inestimable expense.70 Allison Wright, a scholar of the Pollaiuolo brothers and their work, calls this a “triumph of spectacle over function” and infers from letters and records that the gradual elevation of the silver dossal may have been a case of one-upmanship over another silver altar in nearby Pistoia. She also points to the relationship between the increasing proximity of the font and the dossal as a “reaffirmation” of the relationship between St. John the Baptist’s original mission and an altar commemorating scenes from his life.71

Antonio del Pollaiuolo was not included in the altar’s design until the 1470s, when the Opera of the Baptistery, the governing council, decided enclose the dossal’s sides with four silver relief panels, two on each side. They commissioned panels from four Florentine goldsmiths: first hiring only Andrea del Verrocchio and Antonio del Pollaiuolo, but perhaps owing to a shortened deadline for the competed panels, subsequently accepting bids from Bernardo Cennini and the goldsmith company of Antonio di Salvi and Francesco di Giovanni.72 Each was assigned one storia, or relief panel, and the Opera’s records do not indicate whether the same four goldsmiths completed the framing elements, pilasters, and small niche statues of saints against enameled backgrounds, or whether those commissions were given to other artists.73


71 Ibid., 288.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 289.
Pollaiuolo was commissioned to make several of the silver altar decorations described in the excerpt above, including the ornate altar cross with its many detailed small figures.

The author of the Barkentin & Krall pamphlet unfortunately did not specify who decided on the Florentine altar as a design source, or why it was chosen. The resemblance between the two is unmistakable and delicately done; the London-made altar is perhaps even more impressive when one considers its creation—in pieces of all shapes and sizes, with a variety of construction techniques—by a single firm.

The Lady Chapel Altar and Reredos, St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia

Rodman Wanamaker commissioned The Lady Chapel’s monumental silver altar from London silver- and goldsmithing firm Barkentin & Krall in 1904, and it was installed in the Lady Chapel by December 1908 (Figure 6). It is seven feet long, two feet deep, and three feet high. The solid silver frame supports a grey-black Irish marble mensa, or altar slab, and the entire structure is backed by wood supports. The silver altar was originally meant to serve as a movable frontal—used only on Marian feast days—to the alabaster altar already in place in the Lady Chapel, but its extraordinary decoration and weight necessarily caused its permanent installation in

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74 “The Church Congress: The Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition,” *The Times*, October 5, 1908. This places the altar in London until at least October 1908, where it was on display at the Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition as a part of the Church Congress, hosted by the Bishop of Manchester. Mortimer, *S. Mark’s Church and Its Lady Chapel*, records that the altar was used for the first time on Christmas Eve of 1908 (26).
the Lady Chapel.\textsuperscript{75} The alabaster altar was relocated to the head of the church’s north aisle, on the eastern wall, where it was rededicated as the Altar of St. John the Evangelist and remains today.

\footnote{75 The pamphlet published by Barkentin & Krall on the altar indicates the possibility of increased elaboration from the original design, making the altar’s intended portability impossible. Without records of Wanamaker’s original order, budget, and continued correspondence, it is difficult to know the process of the design’s evolution.}
Figure 6. The Lady Chapel Altar and Reredos (Barkentin & Krall, 1908/1923). St. Mark’s Church (Episcopal), Philadelphia, PA. Photo by author.
The St. Mark’s altar is decorated primarily on its front, with comparatively simple, paneled ends. The altar’s front is divided into seven sections by eight full-height columns, which are each decorated with eighteen figures of saints in individual niches stacked in rows of three. Six of the seven sections are further divided by a decorative horizontal band. In the central vertical space is a niche containing a statue, surrounded by a floriated arch, of Mary holding the infant Jesus. The back of the niche is covered with a pale blue enamel and decorated with a fleur-de-lys-patterned diaper (Figure 7).

The twelve panels surrounding the central niche portray scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin, each in low relief. The scenes proceed chronologically, beginning in the upper left with an angel’s appearance to St. Anne, proclaiming the news that Mary would soon be born. To its right is the birth of Mary, followed by the presentation of Mary in the Temple, which takes the narrative to the upper half of the central niche. The story continues at the bottom left corner, showing the espousal of Mary and Joseph and then the Annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel.76 The next scene shows Mary’s visit to St. Elizabeth, when Mary tells Elizabeth of the news from the angel, Elizabeth praises her for her faith and trust in the message, and Mary delivers her famous song of praise, The Magnificat.

76 In his book, S. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, and Its Lady Chapel, Mortimer calls special attention to the floral iconography in these two panels—a “rose in full bloom” in the foreground of the espousal scene, and Gabriel presenting Mary with a lily at the Annunciation (Plates LII and LIII).
Figure 7. Central niche, Lady Chapel Altar (Barkentin & Krall, 1908), St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia. Photo by author.

The scenes continue in the upper row, just to the right of the central niche, with a depiction of the shepherds’ visitation to the Holy Family in their stable followed by the family’s flight to Egypt to escape King Herod’s paranoid infanticide. The final episode in the upper right row shows Mary finding Jesus in the Temple as he questions the scribes and priests. To the right of the central niche in the first panel of the lower row, the narrative continues with the miracle at Cana, at which Jesus turned water into wine at the marriage feast. The next scene shows the scene of at the foot of
the Cross, with Mary at the center of the scene holding Christ’s body, surrounded by the Holy Women and observed from the background by two praying angels. The final panel, at the bottom right-hand corner, is a representation of the coronation of Mary by Christ following her assumption into heaven.\textsuperscript{77}

Wanamaker’s later gift to St. Mark’s, a silver reredos to sit above and slightly behind the altar, was commissioned from Barkentin & Krall in the early 1920s and replaced the carved, painted, and gilded wooden triptych reredos that was reunited with the alabaster Altar of St. John the Evangelist for which it was originally intended. The silver reredos was designed by Carl Krall’s son-in-law, Walter Stoye, and exhibits slight differences in both design and execution from Krall’s altar. The reredos was installed in the Lady Chapel in 1923. As early as 1909, however, Mortimer refers to planning stages for a silver reredos to complement the altar in his important catalog on the treasures of St. Mark’s:

Since the Silver Altar has been in place, designs have been prepared for a Reredos of silver to take the place of the oak triptych. If these are approved the triptych would probably be removed to S. John the Evangelist’s Altar in the north aisle, for which it was originally designed.\textsuperscript{78}

The lapse of time between the 1908 installation of the altar and the 1923 addition of the reredos is strange and unexplainable, especially when one considers the volume of Wanamaker’s other large commissions to Barkentin & Krall during those years.

\textsuperscript{77} The consideration of Mary as “Queen of Heaven” is part of the Catholic—and often Anglican—study of Mariology.

The focal point of Stoye’s design is a large center panel (Figure 8), representing “the Out-pouring of the Holy Ghost on the Assembled Apostles, with the Blessed Virgin as the central figure.” This is flanked by a smaller side panel on each side—on the left, a scene of the Resurrection, and on the right, of Christ’s Ascension.

Figure 8. Central panel, Lady Chapel Reredos (Barkentin & Krall, 1923). St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia. Photo by author.

According to pamphlet produced by Barkentin & Krall describing this reredos, the scenes chosen were meant to assume the narrative where the altar’s scenic panels concluded. Four columns frame the reredos and separate the scenes; the many niches in each column are filled with small statuettes representing “the angelic choirs” instead of the saints on the altar below, and “a separate study [was] made of each one of these small figures, with the appropriate symbols of the various choirs and orders.”

The rectangular body of the reredos is surmounted by three pinnacles, each in a pointed Gothic form with canopied niches. The central pinnacle is the largest and shows the Agnus Dei [Lamb of God] in glory, above which is placed around the canopy a group of guarding angels. The whole design and construction of this feature is a suggestion of the heavenly city, and with the altar, forms a complete cycle of events.

Two smaller, less elaborate pinnacles stand on either side of the central one and contain representations of, on the left, St. John and, on the right, the Blessed Virgin.

The author notes that the reredos is made out of solid silver, excepting the gold Agnus Dei, and the use of various jewels including “sapphires, rubies, tourmalines, pearls amethysts, topaz, chrysoprase, some six hundred in number [which] are also set in gold.” According to the pamphlet, its construction took two years.

80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., 2.
82 Ibid.
Silver Gifts to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Sandringham

Few records documenting the early building history of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene survive, but there has been a parish church there since 1321. The present building is the result of a large restoration project undertaken in 1855 by Lady Harriette Cowper in memory of her daughter. King Edward VII—then Prince of Wales—bought the Sandringham estate from the Hon. Charles Spencer Cowper in 1861 and restored the church twice, in 1890 and 1909. The later restorations fully embraced trends in church decorating, including a fully painted polychromatic chancel ceiling; carved, gilded, and painted wooden angel figures playing musical instruments (called the “Sandringham ‘Angel Choir’”); and stenciled painted decoration on the walls. 83

Although the firm of Barkentin & Krall was not granted a Warrant of Appointment to Queen Alexandra until 1913, the queen visited the workshops and show rooms before that, as recorded in the Court Circular section of The Times. Queen Alexandra was so pleased by her visit to “inspect the silver altar made for Philadelphia” in July 1908 that Rodman Wanamaker presented the royal family with its own silver altar and reredos in May 1911. 84 It was dedicated “to the Glory of God and in memory of Edward VII, the Peacemaker,” and was installed in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at the Sandringham Estate on the first anniversary of King Edward’s death (Figure 9).

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Figure 9. Altar and Reredos (Barkentin & Krall, 1911). The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Sandringham, Norfolk, England. Photo by author.
Unlike the years-long separation between the St. Mark’s altar and reredos, Rodman Wanamaker commissioned the Sandringham pieces together, as a unit. The front “scene” of the six-foot-long altar is set in a recessed cove—ensconced by a floriated arch—displaying in high relief the royal coat of arms, the first and fourth quarters showing the triple-stacked lion passant; the second, the rampant lion and bordering fleur-de-lys of Scotland; the third, the harp for Northern Ireland (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Altar (Barkentin & Krall, 1911). The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Sandringham, Norfolk, England. Photo by author.
The arms are surrounded by the royal motto, *Dieu et mon droit*, in its standard ribbon motif.\(^85\) Another banner above the arms’ crest coronet is inscribed “EDWARD VII.” In place of the supporting crowned guardant lion and Scottish unicorn, however, which typically flank the royal arms, are two kneeling angels who each support the armorial shield with one hand.\(^86\) The background of the panel is *repoussé* work of thick floral designs. On either side of the altar’s front are full-height half-projecting pilasters, depicting three-story Gothic windows with lancets in the upper arches. The sides are plain, with the exception of a paneled inscription on the left flank, as follows:

> This silver Altar, Reredos, and bronze Altar Rails are presented to Her Majesty Queen Alexandra on 6\(^{th}\) May 1911, the first anniversary of the death of His Majesty King Edward VII the Great Peacemaker, by Rodman Wanamaker Esq.

> This Altar is proffered as a great privilege and as a token of sympathy to commemorate the great service His Majesty King Edward VII rendered the world and the manner in which he guided with diplomacy the sentiments of the English Nation. These feelings during his reign were reflected in other countries to the lasting good of the whole world.

> This Altar of peace, the first acceptance of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, stands as an indication of what Her Majesty desired to express to her people for all time and that over this Altar prayers may be constantly offered for the Peace of all Nations.

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\(^85\) The motto is in an area called the *compartment*, which is “anything depicted below the shield as a foothold or resting-place for the supporters, or indeed for the shield itself.” Arthur C. Fox-Davies, *The Art of Heraldry: An Encyclopedia of Armory*, (New York, London: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1904, 1968), 324.

\(^86\) In heraldic terms, supporting human or angel figures are called *Tenants*, while animalistic representations are *Supports*. 

50
Its great object is that by frequent use, its history may dwell in the hearts of all as an inspiration from the late

King Edward VII

The Peacemaker

The sentiment must have been of utmost importance to Rodman Wanamaker, considering the extra time and consequent expense that would have constituted completion of this panel. A further inscription, “C.C. Krall fecit” (Figure 11), goes beyond the standard English hallmarking system and likely was added because of the prestige of the altar’s designation and the pride that Krall felt in his work and company.

Figure 11. “C.C. Krall, fecit,” Altar and Reredos (Barkentin & Krall, 1911). The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Sandringham, Norfolk, England. Photo by author.

The reredos shows the post-resurrection scene in which Christ appears to his disciples (Figure 12). Christ, backed by gold enameling and with a radiant halo,

87 Parish object notes indicate that this reredos, like the St. Mark’s Lady Chapel altar, was a copy of a work by Antonio del Pollaiuolo. There is no record for a work on this subject by either of the Pollaiuolos.
stands in a brick room with a row of arched windows and a Gothic vaulted roof. His arms are outstretched toward the apostles, who stand or kneel around him on either side. This scene, like the one on the altar, is also set back from a floriated arch. Along the tiered base of the reredos, on individual panels set into openwork quatrefoils, is the motto “Peace / Be / With / You.” Below this, at the foot of the reredos, reads the chased commemoration, “To the Glory of God and in memory of Edward VII, the Peacemaker.”

Figure 12. Reredos (Barkentin & Krall, 1911). The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Sandringham, Norfolk, England. Photo by author.
Four years after the installation and dedication of the altar and reredos, in 1915 Rodman Wanamaker gave a jewelled Bible to Queen Alexandra. The leather binding is decorated with a flat silver-gilt scrolled decorative mounting and closed with silver-gilt scrolled clasps, all set with gemstones (Figure 13). No official documentation for the Bible has yet been found, but it was reputedly made in the United States.  

88 “Including emeralds, sapphires, garnets, white opals, turquoise, amethysts, chrysoberyls, green tourmalines, pearls, pink topaz, and topaz quartz.” Church of St. Mary Magdalene private research; whether this has been verified by original documentation or a gemologist is unclear. One member of the church, who has been studying the jewelled Bible, is interested in potential connections between Biblical records of gemstones—specifically, in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation—and the stones chosen for the jewelled Bible at Sandringham.

89 Ibid.
In 1918, Wanamaker presented Queen Alexandra with an antique Spanish silver processional cross in memory of the men from the Sandringham estate who died in World War I (Figure 14). Wanamaker’s source for the cross is unknown.\textsuperscript{91} The cross is mounted on an ebony staff and rests on a silver stand. Chased into the stand are symbols of the Crucifixion and Passion of Christ: the Cross; the crown of thorns; the hammer; ladder; nails; pillar and cords, for the scourging of Christ; the reed on the

\textsuperscript{90} According to parish research, 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Unverified.

\textsuperscript{91} It is possible that he went through Barkentin & Krall, but no documentation of the purchase survives.
end of which the vinegar-filled sponge was offered to Christ on the cross; the robe; the scourge; and the spear. At the base of the cross, standing in the standard floriated niches, are small icons of angels, individually molded. The cross is intricately chased with decorative floral motifs. On the front, Christ hangs from the cross in high relief. Within the quatrefoils are chased images of the Evangelists—Saints John, Luke, Mark, and Matthew—each with their symbols—the eagle, bull, winged lion, and winged man. The reverse of the altar depicts St. Andrew with his cross of martyrdom in the center, surrounded in the quatrefoils by the pelican (representing self-sacrifice), the Virgin Mary, St. John, and a scene of the resurrection of Christ from the tomb.

92 Neither the hammer nor the ladder are have scriptural sources, but are connected iconographically with the Crucifixion and Passion, respectively.
For the 1924 gift of the silver pulpit, Wanamaker returned to Barkentin & Krall, now under the design leadership of Walter Stoye. Wanamaker presented it to Queen Alexandra on her 80th birthday, 1 December 1924. The octagonal pulpit rests on a bronze base set upon a black marble plinth. It comprises two large panels, each with two framed scenes, at either end of the octagon. Two smaller full-length panels, each with two individual niches for representations in relief of the four Evangelists, flank the protruding center section, in which a full-length figure of Christ stands within an ornate Gothic niche. The four panels are set into the pulpit of quarter-sawn oak, and are each separated by a highly carved wooden column. The scenes represent
important moments of Christ’s ministry: the Nativity; the Last Supper; feeding the five thousand; and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples at Pentecost.

Within the center niche, backed by a gold diaper of cross motifs, Christ stands in a benedictory pose. His stylized, elongated body spans the full height of the surrounding scenic panels, and represents work of a later, Art Nouveau-influenced style period than Krall’s Gothic, yet lifelike figures. On either side of the figure of Christ are a column of statuary niches, in each of which is an angel playing a musical instrument.93

The artistic details of the pulpit, designed by Stoye, are of a markedly different style from the objects designed and produced during Krall’s lifetime and therefore particularly useful for exploring the changing nature of the firm following Krall’s death, as well as for analyzing Krall’s and Stoye’s relative skills. The relief composing the scenic panels on Stoye’s pulpit is significantly flatter than the work on either of the altars and the chasing is far less detailed and delicate. Facial expressions, for example, are minimized on the pulpit—at least compared with the scenes on the altar—and details such as angels’ wings are not as finely chased. The subjects’ poses are stiff and predictable in Stoye’s design, whereas the surprised facial expressions, sweeping gestures, and animated stances of the apostles on Krall’s reredos convey a compelling—almost painterly—narrative. The obvious change in stylistic trends, too, is clearly visible in the pulpit’s elongated central figure of Christ and the long, narrow

93 Perhaps referencing Psalm 150, although some of the instruments the angels hold are not in that psalm.
niches with their blunt-edged canopies; the linear designs are much different from the flowy, floriated complexities of the altar and reredos (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Pulpit (Barkentin & Krall, 1924). The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Sandringham, Norfolk, England. Photo by author.
In 1927, Wanamaker presented King George V with an elaborate set of jeweled gold communion plate for the Church of St. Mary Magdalene. The set comprises a diamond-crusted chalice, a simple paten, a bread box with more diamonds and minute relief work, two flagons, and a comparatively simple alms dish. All the pieces are of 20-carat gold and, in total, set with more than 300 diamonds and rubies. They are stored within a walnut cabinet enhanced with silver handles and fittings, and decorated with a carved representation of the Royal Arms.

The Processional Cross for Westminster Abbey, London

Four years after presenting the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Sandringham with the Spanish processional cross, Rodman Wanamaker gave another processional cross—this time commissioned from and designed by Barkentin & Krall (Stoye)—to Westminster Abbey. The cross was presented to the Abbey and dedicated as part of the 1922 Christmas Eve service. Much like the Sandringham altar, this gift from a “distinguished citizen of the United States [who] had long devoted himself to the development of ‘brotherly union and concord’ between the British Empire and the great Republic of the West” was intended to promote international amity and peace.

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94 The maker of these objects is unrecorded on available documentation, but Rodman Wanamaker’s predilection for Barkentin & Krall makes the firm an obvious choice. The communion set is kept within the Sandringham House vaults and is not readily available for viewing or study.

95 Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Object Notes. No author listed.

The cross is composed of three materials only—ivory, silver gilt, and gold—with added jewel embellishments. Even the staff, usually of wood or other lightweight material, is solid silver gilt. Two inscriptions on the staff record 1) the date of presentation, and 2) the sentiment behind the gift, in the form of a line from Isaiah 2:4, *Non levabit gens contra gentem nec exercebuntur ultra ad proelium.*

Showing scenes from the life of Christ, each story is depicted in a square plaque of beaten eighteen carat gold. The central obverse plaque shows the Crucifixion. At the four points of the cross, clockwise from the extreme left plaque, are scenes of the Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection, and Ascension. The reverse central panel shows Christ in Majesty, with arms outstretched. The four surrounding plaques at the cross’ extremities contain images of the twelve apostles—three to a plaque—identifiable by their emblems. Between the large end plaques are smaller ones, also of beaten gold, with mottoes of the Evangelists and smaller figures of angels. These plaques are set into background panels of ivory and the cross is further embellished with sapphires, lining the edges of the cross arms on both sides.

From the body of the cross springs an articulated border of vines and leaves. At the base of the cross, just below the bottommost plaque in a circle of canopied niches, stand representations of the founders and patrons of Westminster Abbey: St. Peter, King Sebert of the Saxons, (King and Saint) Edward the Confessor, King Henry III, King Henry VII, and Queen Elizabeth, each with his or her coat of arms above the niche. The niches are supported by a boss with colored enamel badges of the Royal

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97 “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”
Arms of Great Britain and Ireland, the arms of the Pre-Reformation Monastery, and the combined arms of the Collegiate Church and those of Herbert Edward Ryle, Dean of Westminster Abbey from 1910 to 1925.

Metal proofs for this commission from Barkentin & Krall wound up in the offices of St. Mark’s Church, having been found in Rodman Wanamaker’s office following his death and subsequently given to the church. The proofs comprise the main scenic panels for the cross, arranged accordingly, beaten in bronze and nailed to a thick wooden board (Figure 16). St. Mark’s also has a framed, double-sided watercolor print of the cross, signed “W. Stoye” in pencil. This was likely produced after the cross was presented to Westminster Abbey, as the dates and particulars of the gift are printed beneath the image.

98 The official title of Westminster Abbey is, following its re-founding by Queen Elizabeth I, the Collegiate Church of St. Peter in Westminster.
A largely undocumented, yet intriguing, addition was made to the cross in the 1960s, when it was sent to Wanamaker’s in Philadelphia for cleaning. According to a 1964 report from Westminster Abbey’s Sacrist, The Rev. Christopher Hildyard,

The Cross of Westminster is expected back from Wanamaker’s in Philadelphia within the first two weeks of April, and they have told me that the inlaid ivory has been replaced by new ivory, specially prepared, so that it will not discolour, that the silver gilt has been regilded [sic.]
with 22 carat gold, and the central panels of beaten gold have been surrounded on both sides with a total of seventy two diamonds.\textsuperscript{99}

The occasion for the new ivory and re-gilding, indicates a note by this report, was an overall general cleanup in preparation for the upcoming 900\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Abbey’s founding by Edward the Confessor (December 28, 1965). An article in the \textit{Glasgow Herald} reported that

[The anniversary celebration] coincides with the completion of restoration work inside the abbey made possible by the £1m. appeal fund launched in 1953 by Sir Winston Churchill. The whole interior has been cleaned and the impression of light and loftiness, the gilding fresh on the creamy stone vaulting, the piers of Purbeck marble polished and gleaming, is probably closer to the original splendour of the Gothic abbey Henry III rebuilt in the thirteenth century than it has ever been since.\textsuperscript{100}

The restoration work on the cross can be explained, therefore, as a necessity for an object with such a prominent role. But the reason for sending it to Wanamaker’s, as well as the impressive decision to add seventy-two diamonds around the central panels, is unclear.\textsuperscript{101} During the cross’ 1964 visit to Wanamaker’s, detail photographs were taken (Figure 17) and diagrams made, but no written record has yet been found of way plans for the elaboration of the cross proceeded.

\textsuperscript{99} Sacristy Inventory, “Chapter IV: Altar Crosses, Candlesticks, & Other Furnishings in situ—High Altar and Sacarium.” The 1964 record was tucked in among earlier-dated pages describing the cross.

\textsuperscript{100} “Abbey’s 900\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary: Events Planned at Westminster. From Our Own Correspondent.” \textit{The Glasgow Herald}, September 8, 1965, 7.

\textsuperscript{101} Barkentin & Krall was no longer extant. It is highly improbable that the Abbey would have provided either the diamonds or the funds to purchase them.
Figure 17. John R. Wanamaker holding the Westminster Processional Cross c. 1964 during its trip to Wanamaker’s, Philadelphia, for its restoration and the addition of 72 diamonds. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Wanamaker Papers, Collection 2188.
Rodman Wanamaker’s large-scale donations to the Lady Chapel, the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, and Westminster Abbey remain as immense representations of his generosity and enthusiasm. These are only the largest and most widely known and discussed gifts, however; in a far smaller and quieter sphere, Wanamaker outfitted the Lady Chapel with every liturgical accessory—and more—required for both daily and festival celebrations. Many of his fellow parishioners also gave intensely valuable and precious accessories and ornaments to St. Mark’s Church, giving consistent business to Barkentin & Krall. The ways in which all—especially the ever-elusive Rodman Wanamaker—ordered the pieces from the firm is uncertain and without explicit documentation at present, but some surviving papers are somewhat elucidating.

Commissions

An intriguing collection of documents archived in the Westminster Abbey Library provides a glimpse into Rodman Wanamaker’s ordering process. A memorandum from The Rev. Dr. Jocelyn Perkins, sacrist of the Abbey from 1900 to 1958, fully describes the process of Wanamaker’s bequest and is worth transcribing at length:

One morning in the autumn of 1922, [. . .] I found a Conference going on between the Dean [Ryle] and two other people who were at that time unknown to me. One of the two was a Colonel Wood representing in England the Honourable Rodman Wanamaker, [. . .]. With him was a man named Maundy Gregory, a mysterious person with an office in Whitehall. He became very well-known to some of us as time went on especially to the Dean, Kanpp [sic] Fisher and myself. I understood him to be some kind of Government Agent and he used to say that he was drawing a larger income than the Prime Minister. [. . .] How he came to be associated with Colonel Wood I never understood.
It appeared that Wanamaker who was a great friend of the cause of International Amity was very anxious to present a Processional Cross to the Abbey. Money was absolutely an indifferent matter. Wanamaker was prepared to cover any expense, however great, incurred by Colonel Wood.

The two men had brought a design for a Processional Cross, the work of Barkentin & Krall, who as you probably know were at one time all the rage for metal work. They manufactured our present Altar Cross, a gift of Lord Rosebery, and also the Canterbury Cross with which you yourself are very familiar. There is no doubt at all that they were very first-class people of their kind.

Ryle was extremely delighted and needless to say I myself was in the seventh Heaven. For some reason we had been using the Abyssinian Cross for processional purposes. It was far from satisfactory at the head of a great Abbey procession. [. . .]

Clearly it was impossible in such circumstances to look a gift horse in the mouth, in fact to the best of my recollection a start had actually been made upon the process of manufacture before these two emissaries arrived. In the end the Cross was considerably added to. I made a number of suggestions, all of which were accepted and they did, I think I can safely say, a good deal to improve the Cross. No one at the time was particularly interested in the details. [. . .].

[. . .] I shall never forget that beautiful Service [the dedication] with the blending of Christmas Hymns and the tremendous impression made as the Cross was carried the full length of the Abbey and presented to the Dean by Colonel Wood, the whole thing being followed by a beautiful Gospel sermon from Storr and of course a concluding procession which at that time included to banners.

The total cost of the Cross was £4,500 but the question of cost was a mere detail. Wanamaker would have signed a cheque for £14,500 if he had been asked to do so.

102 In order to include more of the Abbey’s history on the cross and to make it more institutionally personal.
Such are the main historical facts concerning the Cross of Westminster and now at the risk of wearying you I should like to add something of a different nature.

The Cross is to my mind a tragedy of the first order. Expensive though it was we have not had anything like full value for the money. My old friend Omar Ramsden\(^{103}\) once told me that he would have done the job for £2,000. Of course Barkentin & Krall at that time had an immense prestige. They had also very heavy overhead charges to meet in connection with their big shop just opposite Queen’s Hall and I believe their factories were also in Central London. Thus they were inevitably expensive people though this fact did not matter so far as the Abbey was concerned.

Again I would point out that the designer of the Cross has made a serious fundamental mistake. He has failed to realize that the all-essential need for a Processional Cross is proportion and design. The materials really do not and should not come into question at all.

Thus they have overloaded the Cross with a lot of detail which is not and never can be seen, indeed some of it requires a magnifying glass.

The fact of the matter is that the head of the Firm, an old gentleman named Krall who was responsible for the Abbey Altar Cross and who was the real artist had either died or retired, I forget which. By the time Colonel Wood arrived on the scene the business was in the hands of Krall’s son-in-law, a man named Stoy[e] who did not possess a tenth part of the old man’s ability. I have since learnt that it was a characteristic of Stoy[e] to plaster details in the wrong place and regardless of expense on the surface of his ornaments. In the case of our Cross he has sprinkled it very liberally with sapphires which are devoid of any effect whatsoever and, in fact, look like a lot of spots of ink.

\(^{103}\) Omar Ramsden (1873-1939) was a leading silver designer in London. In Perkins’ view, Barkentin & Krall passed its peak after Krall’s retirement and death.
[. . .] I shall always feel that our Cross, fond of it though I am, is in the long run commonplace in itself and stamped with a certain element of tragedy.\textsuperscript{104}

This is a valuable document for several reasons: notably, it shows that Rodman Wanamaker was not present for the consultation with the Abbey clergy. The further indication that the manufacture of the cross was already underway is a telling detail about the possible assumption that the Abbey would be delighted to accept such a gift; Jocelyn Perkins clearly thinks Barkentin & Krall overrated, inherited by a designer whose work was sub-standard to his predecessor’s. Most intriguing and strange, however, is the aiding presence of Maundy Gregory.

Arthur John Maundy Gregory (1877-1941) was the son of a clergyman who, following a short acting career, landed in the unscrupulous career of selling peerages to newly moneyed (post-war), socially climbing English industrialists. This was certainly not a new practice, but Prime Minister David Lloyd George (P.M. 1916-1922) was the first to establish a price bracket for the different levels of peerages: knighthoods were the cheapest to acquire, from £10,000 to £12,000, whereas the hereditary baronetcies, which could be passed down to future generations, went for

\textsuperscript{104} Jocelyn Perkins, “The Cross of Westminster. Memorandum,” undated. An edited—and more positive—version of this history appears in Perkins’ memoir, \textit{Sixty Years at Westminster Abbey} (London: J. Clarke, 1960). In the memoir, Perkins actually suggested replacing the sapphires with crystals, although “Of course people will say the sapphires ought to be replaced (if replaced at all) by diamonds. I do not believe for one moment that diamonds would be a bit more effective, whereas we could probably exchange the sapphires for crystals without difficulty,” 138. Four years later, the sapphires remained, but diamonds had been added. One wonders at a possible connection.
£40,000. Gregory naturally focused more keenly on bringing in potential baronets because of the lure of a larger commission.

Gregory’s offices at 38 Parliament Street were at the center of the Houses of Parliament, Lloyd George’s residence in 10 Downing Street, and Scotland Yard. Gregory was especially close with Lloyd George, the Police Commissioner and the Chief Whip in the House of Commons, who was also Patronage Secretary to the Treasury:

All that was lacking to complete the Establishment line-up was the Archbishop of Canterbury, but then Gregory enjoyed excellent relations with Bishop Ryle, the Dean of Westminster, on whose behalf Gregory had raised money to gild the choir stalls of Westminster Abbey.

The peerages business began to dwindle in the 1920s, especially after Lloyd George’s 1922 defeat. And in 1925, the Honours Act of Parliament prohibited the acceptance of any sort of gift as an inducement for the bestowal of a dignity or title. By the late 1920s, Gregory had begun to consider himself in the role of professional fundraiser: one of his few biographers, Tom Cullen, cites a memorandum/résumé that highlighted financing the gilding of the Abbey choir stalls, serving as intermediary and organizer.

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106 Ibid., 24.

107 Cullen notes that this did not put Gregory out of business; it just “forc[ed] him to diversify.” (Cullen, *Maundy Gregory*, 31).
for the Wanamaker processional cross, and raising £20,000 for an urgent roofing project at St. George’s Chapel, Windsor.\textsuperscript{108}

Cullen suggests that Gregory was encouraged to contact Wanamaker by his friend at Westminster Abbey, Sir Edward Knapp-Fisher, Chapter Clerk.\textsuperscript{109} In his memoir, though, Jocelyn Perkins says that following his conference with Ryle, Wood, and Gregory, “[Gregory] became very well-known to some of us as time went on especially to the Dean, K[napp] Fisher and myself,” suggesting that the relationship was a new one to at least some.\textsuperscript{110} Even taking into account the possibility of memory error in Perkins’ description of the event, there is also the strong possibility that Wanamaker and Gregory were introduced through Gregory’s friendship with the Police Commissioner and Wanamaker’s position as Special Deputy Police Commissioner of the New York Police Reserves.\textsuperscript{111} The fact of Gregory’s involvement, however, suggests an approach unusual for Wanamaker: by 1922, he had already given a substantial amount directly to the Royal Family and the Church of St. Mary Magdalene without the help of Maundy Gregory’s “fundraising,” so it is likely

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 159-160. Cullen’s book is a work of popular non-fiction, and the sources—including this one—are regrettably not suitably cited, though his bibliography and personal interviews are substantial.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 160.

\textsuperscript{110} Perkins, “Memorandum,” 1.

\textsuperscript{111} The relationship between Gregory and Wanamaker that Cullen recounts—“public relations expert to a client”—cannot be confirmed because of Cullen’s non-documentation (160). It is impossible to imagine that Wanamaker would ever need or want an entrée into society of the type offered by Gregory; his relations with the Royal Family and connections with other English families and clubs were well-established.
that he would have had absolutely no trouble following a similar procedure with Westminster Abbey.\textsuperscript{112}

It is clear that Rodman Wanamaker was not directly involved in either the discussions of the cross, or even in the presentation of the cross. But the presence of the plaque proofs and the print of the finished cross in Philadelphia certainly indicate some level of personal involvement on Wanamaker’s part. This appears to be the only time that Gregory served as a liaison for Wanamaker, although Cullen suggests Wanamaker may have been the “anonymous donor” behind the mid-1920s re-roofing project at St. George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle.\textsuperscript{113}

Three letters in the collection of the National Archives (UK) give some additional indication of Wanamaker’s perhaps more typical method of ordering his gifts.\textsuperscript{114} These refer to the gold communion plate set, mentioned above, which were given to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene five years after the Westminster Cross, in 1927. Two of the letters are dated August 25, 1925, and written by Frederick

\textsuperscript{112} Perhaps the meeting that Perkins attended wasn’t the first, and was only the first one to which he had been invited.

\textsuperscript{113} Cullen, 160. But the pattern of Rodman Wanamaker’s giving is not anonymous; his bequests were given quietly, with Wanamaker always staying in the background, but not anonymously. The only clue that Gregory and Wanamaker’s association may have continued is a 1924 “Easter Greetings” telegram from Gregory to Wanamaker: “From my retreat on an island in the Thames Please accept very hearty greetings upon this more than historic day of Easter J Maundy Gregory” (April 20, 1924, Wanamaker Papers #2188, Box 6, Folder 8, Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

\textsuperscript{114} The letters in the National Archives are typed copies, on paper embossed at the top left corner with “G.R.” (George Rex). The locations of the originals are unknown. The National Archives (Kew Gardens) IR 62/1859.
Ponsonby, 1st Baron of Sysonby, who was Keeper of the King’s Privy Purse from 1914 until 1935, having formerly served King Edward VII in a similar capacity. One, addressed to Rodman Wanamaker, acknowledges that “the King has heard through Colonel Wood that you propose to add to the magnificent gift which you have presented in memory of King Edward to Sandringham Church and that you now contemplate giving a gold set of Communion Plate.”

Colonel William Edward Wood—a decidedly more salubrious contact than Maundy Gregory—appears to have been a London agent for the Wanamakers for several years. The level of his involvement with the company and family is presently unclear, but his responsibilities and public presence increased following a closer association with Rodman. A 1911 letter from John Wanamaker to Rodman mentions him briefly, but more definite evidence of his presence in the London office of the

115 Letter (copy), F. Ponsonby to R. Wanamaker, Balmoral Castle, August 25, 1925. In a further letter of acknowledgement to Colonel Wood, Ponsonby writes, “May I add that having been for many years with King Edward, it is a sincere pleasure to me to think that these magnificent presents to Sandringham Church should be made by Mr. Wanamaker to perpetuate his memory.” Letter (copy), F. Ponsonby to W.E. Wood, Balmoral Castle, August 25, 1925. National Archives (Kew Gardens), IR 62/1859.

116 Maundy Gregory died abroad in France in 1941, either in a German-run labor camp or army hospital, allegedly from some repercussion of his former dissipated living. He had escaped bankruptcy in England for France after having been 1) convicted in 1933 under the Honours Act for continuing to sell peerages, and 2) suspected of poisoning his longtime housemate, Edith Rosse, having encouraged her to change her will in his favor weeks before her death, and concealing the murder by burying her in an unsealed coffin in a flood-prone area. There are additional unverified allegations of blackmail and spying for MI5.
Wanamaker company comes a year later in a letter from John to Mr. Wood, asking him to arrange passage back to the United States on Wanamaker’s behalf.\textsuperscript{117}

By the time Rodman Wanamaker had been appointed Special Deputy Police Commissioner of the New York Police Reserves, in 1918, Wood appears in newspaper articles as Wanamaker’s “Chief of Staff” in the Police Reserves. Details of their respective jobs are uncertain, but both were unpaid, indicating a certain level of financial comfort in Wood’s situation. In an article special to the \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer} from a New York correspondent, on Wanamaker’s progress as Commissioner, Wood is described as a

\begin{quote}
[an] indefatigable and unselfish worker, who is in the game for the sheer love of it. A man who has traveled much, he is a cosmopolitan individual, tolerant, genial, and in touch with the spirit that animates the men. Having been in many countries, Colonel Wood has learned to make friends among all sorts and conditions, and when it is considered that in a great city like New York a police reserve must necessarily be cosmopolitan in character it is easy to understand why Colonel Wood has succeeded in in gaining the co-operation of the men.\textsuperscript{118}
\end{quote}

As Wanamaker’s Chief of Staff, Wood often stepped in to present awards and prizes on behalf of his superior. Most notably, in this case, are a series of silver loving cups and presentation urns that Wood presented to the London Police Reserves and the

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\textsuperscript{117} Letter, John Wanamaker to Mr. William E. Wood, May 10, 1912, Wanamaker Papers #2188, Box 3, Folder 23, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Wanamaker also asks Wood to procure the latest catalog and print sources on the “Ideal Home,” a recent London event that Wanamaker calls “health week,” and “everything touching on Empire Day,” even more evidence of his consummate work ethic.

\end{flushright}
Metropolitan Police as a gift from Wanamaker and the New York Police Reserves. The two traveled to London together to study the London Police Reserve Force’s training methods in September of 1921, and seem to have made other similar trips.

Despite Wood’s position as Chief of Staff, the amount of his duties with the New York Police Reserves is unspecified and he seems to have continued to spend significant amounts of time in London, working for the Wanamaker firm. A flurry of telegrams between Wood and Wanamaker in August 1922 offer tantalizingly unclear messages that very possibly refer to the Westminster Abbey Processional Cross project. Especially in the 1920s, Rodman Wanamaker seldom stayed abroad long; Wood, on the other hand, was based in London at least in 1911 and 1912, and appears to have maintained that stability.

Whether Mr. Wood was involved in Wanamaker’s earlier gifts to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Sandringham is unknown. From John Wanamaker’s 1912


120 Telegram, William E. Wood (in London) to Rodman Wanamaker (New York), August 8, 1922: “Dear Chief Happy Possibility Seeing You Here Know It Would Please Our Mutual Friend Hope Nothing Arises Preventing Wood,” Wanamaker Papers #2188, Box 6, Folder 6, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Further telegrams mention “matters running smoothly.” It is tempting to attribute this to the Cross project, but speculative.

121 This conclusion is based on his frequent attendance in London on behalf of Rodman Wanamaker, and most especially by his presence there from August of 1922 until Christmas Eve, at the very least, when he presented to Cross to Westminster Abbey. It is unfortunate that more is not known about Mr. Wood. His name is fairly common and his nationality is as yet unknown, making genealogical and ship manifest searches inconclusive.
letter to Wood in London, though, it is clear that Wood was acting as a business agent—or perhaps personal secretary or assistant—to the Wanamakers. This fits perfectly into the timeline of the construction and presentation of the silver altar to Sandringham. The plaques at St. Mark’s Church in Philadelphia confirm that Rodman Wanamaker had a certain degree of involvement in the commissions, but Wood’s certain participation in at least two of the major bequests—the cross and the communion plate set—offer substantial clues to Wanamaker’s ordering methods.122

Rodman Wanamaker’s commissions from Barkentin & Krall continue to be used for their original purposes; the large-scale bequests are especially visible to worshipers and public visitors today. The spaces at St. Mark’s and Sandringham are both focused around the silver altars, with Wanamaker’s other gifts (silver and otherwise) emphasizing and supporting the strong visual presence of the pieces. The comprehensiveness of the donations—which spanned many years—creates a feeling of completeness and intent in both spaces.

122 That is, at least, during the 1920s. By 1927, when the gold communion plate was given to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Rodman Wanamaker was very ill with kidney failure. In a thank-you note to Rodman (May 20, 1927), King George V extends an invitation for a visit to the treasures at Sandringham, but Rodman died before making another trip to England (March 9, 1928).
Chapter 3

THE MAKERS: BARKENTIN & KRALL

The parishioners of St. Mark’s Church had a history of turning to the firm of Barkentin & Krall for their gifts to their church, although the exact reason for evolution that relationship is unclear. There is no question that Philadelphian Anglophiles were inclined to look toward England for architectural, artistic, and social inspiration, but the sustained patronage of a single London firm by members of a single parish is remarkable. It is likely that St. Mark’s holds the largest collection of Barkentin & Krall ecclesiastical silver still in its intended spiritual space, certainly in the United States, and possibly in England. The company was one of the most celebrated makers of ecclesiastical silver and gold metalwork in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century England. This is thanks in large part to its talented and celebrated founder, Jes Barkentin, and his partner and later successor, Carl Krall, who was a demonstratively talented designer in his own right.

Jes Peter Barkentin (d. 1883), founder of the firm Barkentin & Krall, was a Danish émigré to England. As a goldsmith and chaser, Barkentin was a specialist in the most advanced levels of metalwork. According to a contemporary researcher of industry in London, “There seems to be some jealousy between [the] branches as regards their relative importance. The most highly paid are the chasers, and at the other end of the scale are the polishers and burnishers, polishers being men and
burnishers, who give the final brilliancy, being generally women.”  

Barkentin worked early on at Hunt & Roskell, a prestigious firm of silversmiths and jewelers in business from 1834-1897. Hunt & Roskell was particularly known for its jewelry and the workmanship of the settings: a reporter visiting the showroom in 1865 remarked on the quality of the gemstones, but went a step further and ventured that the setting was even more remarkable than the quality of the stones. The same reporter also described Hunt & Roskell as

among the very few manufacturing silversmiths and goldsmiths existing in London, and assuredly ranking as the very highest of the class—not alone for the beauty of their workmanship, but for the exquisitely artistic taste, as well as for the consummate care and thoughtfulness displayed in their designs.


Soon after registering his own mark with the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in October of 1862, Barkentin was commissioned by the community of Anglo-Danes in London to design and produce a wedding present to Alexandra, Princess of Wales, in 1863, and was catapulted to individual prominence as an artist and craftsman. He was commended for the wedding present, a “vase of ample dimensions [of] oxydised silver, which should be emphatically an expression of Danish Art, the work of a Dane, and, if possible, of an Anglo-Dane, like the donors themselves” (Figure 18).128 The vase is covered with decorative scenes of Danish history and Scandinavian mythology, mostly executed in repoussé. Because of his extraordinarily successful design and work, Barkentin was hailed as the “Danish Cellini” after the legendarily skilled sixteenth-century Italian goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571).129

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129 Ibid.
Figure 18. “The Queen Alexandra Vase, Presented to the Princess of Wales by the Danish Residents in Great Britain,” *Illustrated London News*, March 5, 1864.
At the time of the vase’s commission, Barkentin was set up on his own in a studio at 23 Berners Street, two blocks north of Oxford Circus in one of London’s most popular shopping districts. Readers of the Art-Journal were encouraged to visit and view “works in precious metals, bronzes, and examples of Damascened steel, &c.”

Soon after, in late 1863, Barkentin entered into partnership with fellow goldsmith George Slater, with a manufactory in Oxford Street. Barkentin & Slater moved to 291 Regent Street in 1866, but the partnership soon dissolved. Around the same time, Barkentin filed a petition for bankruptcy, but retained the manufactory and showroom space on Regent Street.

Despite the bankruptcy, Jes Barkentin’s unmitigated success as a designer and craftsman drew the particular attention of William Burges (1827-1881), an influential scholar, architect, and designer. Barkentin seems to have been the only metalworker who worked with Burges on both secular and sacred designs. Burges became the designated metalwork designer to the Ecclesiological Society in 1864, succeeding William Butterfield (who served from 1848-1856) and G.E. Street (1856-1864) to the

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130 Ibid.


132 *The Times* (London), 7 February 1866. It is likely that this bankruptcy was purely for the sake of dissolving the partnership between Barkentin & Slater and not for financial troubles.

post. Butterfield and Street both favored the Society’s chosen metalworker, John Keith and Son (London), but Burges preferred three firms: Hardman & Co. (Birmingham); Hart, Son, and Peard (London and Birmingham); and Jes Barkentin (Barkentin & Krall after 1869, London). John Hardman & Co. was a Birmingham firm that gained its notoriety through the Hardmans’ close collaboration with A.W.N. Pugin, most famously for the stained glass at the new Houses of Parliament. Burges never hired Hardman for its stained glass, but early in the 1860s engaged them to make silver chalices of Burges’ design. Burges continued to favor all three firms for some of his largest projects—presumably in order to accomplish the work more efficiently—but gave Barkentin some of the most elaborate and uncommon of his designs. For St. Michael and All Angels, Brighton, for example, Hardman and Hart were each responsible for chalices and other pieces of communion plate, but Barkentin was given the larger task of a silver-gilt dossal, or altar screen, decorated with jewels, enamels, and filigree. Barkentin not only produced many of Burges’ designs for

134 Ibid., 212.


136 Crook, William Burges, 213. The dossal was never made—or, at least, is no longer at St. Michael and All Angels—but Barkentin’s specimen design is pictured in Crook’s biography of William Burges. There are significant stylistic and jewel-setting similarities between the specimen design and some of the framing elements of Krall’s later altar for St. Mark’s.
both secular and sacred metalwork, but also served as conservator to Burges’ large private collection of armor.\textsuperscript{137}

Perhaps surprisingly, Barkentin—a relative newcomer to the scene—was appointed gold- and silversmith to the Ecclesiological Society in 1867. The Society had commissioned a crozier, or pastoral staff, for its secretary, the Rev. H.L. Jenner, who was appointed Bishop of Dunedin (New Zealand) in 1865. Notes from Ecclesiological Society committee meeting on December 3, 1866, record that Mr. Burges laid before the committee Mr. Barkentin’s model for the ivory carving of the to staff be given to the Bishop of Dunedin, by his colleagues on the Ecclesiological committee. He also showed a specimen of a metal dossal intended for S. Michael’s, Brighton. The enamels and filagrees, by Mr. Barkentin, were exquisitely wrought.\textsuperscript{138}

The staff represents the struggle between St. George and the Dragon and is of ivory and silver set with gems.\textsuperscript{139} Barkentin’s extraordinary artistry and skill led to significant success in ecclesiastical metalwork; he soon took on Carl Krall as a partner.

Carl Christopher Krall (1844-1923), a Heidelberg-born German of Czech descent, emigrated to England c. 1867, having “apprenticed in Switzerland and studied

\textsuperscript{137} Crook, \textit{William Burges}, 96. Burges thrilled in the competitive armour market; many of his pieces are now on display at the British Museum and in the Tower of London.

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{The Ecclesiologist}, Vol. 28, No. 178 (February 1867), 54-55.

\textsuperscript{139} Despite the seriousness of the commission, Burges indulged his legendary sense of humor in his private sketchbook, captioning the design, “This is the staff of the Lord Bishop of the isles where they eat one another.” Cited in Crook, \textit{William Burges}, 223.
in Munich, Berlin and Paris.”

He joined Barkentin c. 1869 at 291 Regent Street, and the firm acquired additional space next door, at 289 Regent Street, in 1877. In 1885, Krall became a member of the Art Workers’ Guild. They listed themselves as “goldsmiths” in 1873 and “manufacturing goldsmiths” from 1893. According to Charles Booth, the industry writer, “Goldsmiths proper are employed in the manufacture of brooches, bracelets, sleeve-links, lockets, studs, &c., while gold-chain makers and ring-makers and carvers, also workers in gold, form small branches by themselves”; manufacturing goldsmiths create a wider variety of goods of all sizes, shapes, and styles. In 1914, Krall redeveloped the firm into a limited liability company called Barkentin & Krall Ltd., and the company became the “leading supplier of church plate and furnishings after John Hardman and Company.”

Walter Stoyle (1886-1974) began his education at the Whitechapel Crafts School in Little Alie Street, London, and finished as a student of W. August Steward at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. The School of Arts and Crafts was

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140 Crook, 212. Crook does not cite a source for this, but his scholarship is so thorough and carefully sourced throughout his study of William Burges that it is trustworthy.

141 Ibid.

142 Culme, Nineteenth-Century Silver, 54.

143 Culme, Directory of Gold & Silversmiths, 26.


founded in 1896 as a school to provide training in design, materials, and workshop management to young designers. Many of the faculty, especially in the early years, were members of the Art Workers’ Guild,\(^{146}\) of which Carl Krall was a member. After his training at the Central School, Walter Stoye taught at the Brighton School of Art and the Camberwell School of Art.\(^{147}\) Stoye served an apprenticeship with Carl Krall\(^ {148}\) and married Carl Krall’s daughter between April and June of 1915.\(^ {149}\)

Krall and Stoye both travelled widely for their business, likely to consult with potential clients. Krall did not become a citizen of the United Kingdom until 1905, having lived in London for “more than thirty-seven years.”\(^ {150}\) His naturalization documents explain that the reason for his application is that

> his business takes him abroad a good deal to America, Germany, Spain, and other countries, where he stays for a period of from four to six weeks at a time, and it is chiefly with a view to be able to claim British protection when abroad that he is applying for a Certificate of Naturalization.\(^ {151}\)


\(^{150}\) Krall, Carl Chirstoph(/f), Naturalization Papers. The National Archives (Kew Gardens), HO 144/796/131824.

\(^{151}\) Ibid.
Some tantalizing entries in ship manifests around the commissioning time of both the Lady Chapel altar and, later, its reredos, indicate that they both travelled to the United States to meet with Rodman Wanamaker. Mr. Carl C. Krall, “merchant,” arrived in New York on the S.S. Hamburg from Dover on October 9, 1904, to visit “various cities” on business.\textsuperscript{152} Similarly, Walter Stoye, “designer,” sailed from Southampton to New York on the S.S. Aquitania, arriving on March 19, 1921, and listed New York as his only destination.\textsuperscript{153} Two years later, on May 8, 1923, Stoye—now listed as “Architect and Designer”—returned to New York; it is likely that he was visiting to aid in the installation of the reredos.\textsuperscript{154}


The Workshop

The unfortunate lack of Barkentin & Krall’s records makes an exact description of their manufactory and showroom impossible. The unnamed reporter for Henry Mayhew’s survey of London shops and manufactories quoted above made an additional account of the layout of and workings in Hunt and Roskell’s factory. Though lengthy, it is worth quoting in its entirety not only because it provides such a superb illustration of a silversmith’s manufactory, but also because it describes Hunt and Roskell in 1865, only three years after Jes Barkentin left the firm to set up his own establishment:

Passing up-stairs and along passages, both sides of which are hung with innumerable plaster-moulds for coffee-pots, tea-pots, candlesticks, and various ornamentations, we enter a long room, having benches and windows at each side. And this room is, we are inclined to think, the noisiest part of the manufactory, for there is a deal of filing, hammering, and scraping going on. It is in this department that all the various articles are first hammered into shape from the silver, as it comes from the flutting mills. Here we saw the vase for the Royal Hunt Cup. This, we were told, was considered a most favourable specimen of silversmiths’ work, for the desideratum in this kind of craft is—whatever shape the vessel may be—to have the metal of an uniform thickness throughout.

At the further end of the room is a miniature forge, which is used for soldering. Here we saw a tea-pot brought under the fire in the most reckless, made red hot, and a spout soldered to it in no time. [. . .]

The majority of the firm’s records and accounts were lost in the bombing of London during World War II; some receipts, letters, designs, etc., survive in individual collections, but there is no comprehensive collection of documents. The firm and its designers—Barkentin, Krall, and Stoye—deserve a focused study, especially considering their tremendous popularity and success, as well as the large number of objects that survive.
If we look carefully at these benches, where the men are filing, hammering, and turning, we shall see a large calf-skin pouch, or pocket, before each man, into which all the filings and scraps fall. These are collected every evening, and locked into a box. The sweepings of the floor, too, are carefully kept, and generally sold every half-year; indeed, every brush, tool, or piece of pumice-stone used in the place is burnt or washed, when it is worn out, so that every particle of the precious metal is preserved. The remains of the melting-pot are run down into what is called “coarse-bar”, which is about one-sixth the value of silver.

Let us now go up-stairs into the chasing room, a room of a similar size to the one we have just left, but infinitely quieter, and you can see at a glance the workers here are of a superior class to those below; for, in addition to being good workmen, a certain amount of artistic taste, wedded to manipulative dexterity, is necessary for a man to succeed in this branch of the business. This is a very interesting department, as every variety of chasing and finishing, in all its branches, are going on. Here is a stag’s head, whereon every hair is being carefully and delicately made out; there an elaborate piece of arabesque tracery, or floriated ornament, is being perfected. This is all done by means of sharp tools, and punches of every variety of size and point; so great a variety indeed is required, and so sharp and true must the tools be, that many of the men have more than a hundred lying beside them, on the bench, for immediate use.\textsuperscript{156}

Let us glance now at the process of \textit{repoussé} work. This is accomplished by means of a steel nipple attached to a spring-bar, resting at the back of the pattern, which is traced in black on the silver, and this is hammered smartly from the outside as the metal is turned and twisted according to the ornament required. Such is another operation requiring not only skill but taste on the part of the workman [. . .]

We will next, if you please, mount higher, into a room which, [sic.] rather smaller than the others, and where the last operation of all is going on; this is the polishing room. The articles are first taken to a tub, in the middle of the room, where they are rubbed and scrubbed with

\textsuperscript{156} This is where Barkentin would have worked.
pumice-stone and a saline solution, known in the factory as “Pickle”. They are then thoroughly dried, and handed over to a man who presides at an apparatus which exactly resembles a miniature edition of the modern hair-brushing machine, and he gives them a further polish with brick-dust and oil. [. . .] Then another individual carefully polishes them by hand with rotten-stone\textsuperscript{157} and oil, and, finally, they are finished off with a leather and rouge, an operation which gives then a peculiar lustre not obtainable in any other way.\textsuperscript{158}

The reporter goes on to describe the melting room ("the silver-kitchen"), the pattern room, the room for manufacture of silver and gold wire, and an art studio/casting room for creation of figural models. On his departure from Hunt & Roskell to set up his own manufactory, Barkentin undoubtedly employed in his new space at 289 & 291 Regent Street some of the operational methods that he had learned while working at the prestigious firm.

The above description gives an idea of how the workshop likely functioned, but two rare photographs of Barkentin & Krall provide valuable visual information of the company’s workers and interiors. Probably taken in 1910 and most likely as publicity for either Barkentin & Krall, the royal family, or both, they show two different sets of workers constructing the altar and reredos designated for Sandringham (Figures 19 and 20).

\textsuperscript{157} Rottenstone (n): A siliceous limestone made crumbly by weathering; (also more commonly) a preparation of this or a similar material used as a powder or paste for polishing metal and wood. Oxford English Dictionary (online), accessed March 10, 2012, hosted by University of Delaware.

\textsuperscript{158} Henry Mayhew, ed. The Trades and Manufactory of Great Britain, 1865, 32-33. Quoted in Culme, Nineteenth-Century Silver, “Masters and Men,” 45-46. Culme also quotes a young Beatrix Potter, who visited Hunt & Roskell in 1881 and describes it in similar detail, although more about the technology than room-by-room.
Figure 19. Workers from Barkentin & Krall assembling either a model of or the Sandringham reredos itself (background), c. 1910. The medium of the object cannot be concluded from the photograph. John Culme, *The Directory of Gold and Silversmiths*, (The Antique Collectors’ Club, 1987), xlvi.
Figure 20. Chasers at work on the figural elements of the Sandringham reredos (Barkentin & Krall, c. 1910). The piece standing in the background can be seen in the above figure (15.1), being put into position on the reredos’ right side. Silver Studies, The Journal of the Silver Society, no. 16 (2004), 12.

The photographs show the Sandringham altar in progress. Even more helpfully, they are intriguing glances into a well-respected and well-connected firm of silversmiths that left behind scant information or records. Barkentin & Krall ceased trading between 1932 and 1935, but left behind a legacy of objects deserving further, detailed study—especially those in the collection at St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia.

CHAPTER 4

RODMAN WANAMAKER

Lewis Rodman Wanamaker (1863-1928) remains a largely enigmatic figure not only in the annals of St. Mark’s Church, but also to the city of Philadelphia. His father, John Wanamaker (1838-1922), led a long life of sustained hard and dedicated work for the company he founded, Wanamaker’s Department Stores. The Wanamaker name is still recognized today as an influential and successful story in retail and taste-making history; John Wanamaker’s innovative business model, tireless personality, generous nature, and long life caused him to be the focus of scrutiny, both during his lifetime and in the present day. Rodman’s personal and business life, consequently, was and has remained comparatively outside of the public eye.

Graduating from Princeton University in 1886, [Lewis] Rodman Wanamaker immediately joined his father’s business. In the same year, he was married to Fernanda Henry at her church, St. Mark’s. The couple soon began spending large parts of the year in France, where Rodman managed the Paris branch of the family business and worked as a buyer. The early death of Rodman’s older brother, Thomas B. Wanamaker (1862-1908), elevated Rodman to the position of partner in 1909.

Rodman Wanamaker was not only a businessman, but also a well-educated traveller and collector whose role in the Wanamaker Stores made him an arbiter of good taste—especially for home decoration and fine art—in Philadelphia and in New
York. Much of his work in the business happened behind the scenes, although personal and business letters between Rodman and John Wanamaker show that John relied extremely on Rodman as an intrinsic part of the company. Rodman’s work ethic and business sense appears to have been equal to his father’s legendary management. Personally, however, Rodman was far more retiring than his gregarious father: a New York Times article reporting Wanamaker’s London wedding to his second wife, Violet Cruger, describes the efforts made to ensure secrecy:

Mr. Wanamaker explained subsequently [after the wedding] that the privacy with which the marriage was conducted was due to his strong personal dislike for notoriety, and he wished the wedding to be conducted with as little outside display as possible.

Those who had been admitted to the confidences of the bridal couple were pledged to secrecy, and Mr. Wanamaker tried to throw off inquirers at his hotel yesterday by leaving word that he had gone to Scotland. The church [St. Margaret’s, Westminster] was closed to every one save a few invited guests, and the officials informed would-be sightseers that the building was closed for cleaning purposes until tomorrow.¹⁶⁰

The author of the article closes by mentioning that Rodman Wanamaker had been living in “semi-retirement” for some years. John Wanamaker’s long life and Rodman’s comparatively short one allowed Rodman to work and live according to his preference, largely out of the limelight.

¹⁶⁰“Rodman Wanamaker Weds in Privacy,” New York Times, July 28, 1909. The service was “fully choral,” even though only three witnesses attended—Wanamaker’s brother-in-law, Barclay Warburton; Violet Cruger’s mother, Mrs. Frederick Tams; and American Ambassador Whitelaw Reid, who had to give a “password which admitted him to the church.”
John Wanamaker devoted significant amounts of his life and money to charitable missions. He was particularly supportive of religious and educational foundations and was an active leader in his church, Bethany Presbyterian. Wanamaker was also a generous and forward-thinking employer, initiating a number of programs for his employees, ranging from medical care to musical clubs. Rodman Wanamaker’s was not so public a face, yet he was an active philanthropist and supporter of not only workers and workers’ rights, but also of the arts and the church.\footnote{These facts are generally well-known, especially in Philadelphia, but can be supported by the vast amount of correspondence in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Wanamaker Papers, #2188).}

Rodman Wanamaker’s vastly varied interests led him to lend his support in more ways than just financially to a number of organizations and plans. Some of the most notable, at least for the purpose of this study, include his presidency of the American Art Association in Paris, a progressive organization that premiered and displayed the work of many contemporary artists. Another is Wanamaker’s passionate interest in Native Americans and the perpetuation of the “history and superstitions of that great race, their mentality and strength of character,”\footnote{“Ends Peace Trip to the Indians,” \textit{New York Times}, December 14, 1913.} along with his support of policy reform in favor of Native Americans’ rights. Together, John and Rodman Wanamaker financed several research and documentary expeditions between 1908-1923; photographer Joseph K. Dixon subsequently published a book of his photographic documentation, \textit{The Vanishing Race: The Last Great Indian Council}.\footnote{Over 8,000 images, along with other research, are in the Wanamaker Collection at Indiana University’s Mathers Museum of World Cultures (Bloomington, IN). The}
Wanamaker supported developments in aviation technology, sponsoring several attempts to cross the Atlantic and financing experiments to promote transatlantic flight. The *New York Times*’ obituary for Rodman reports that “as President of the America Trans-Oceanic Company he spent nearly $500,000 over a period of thirteen years in efforts to prove that transatlantic airplane flights were practical”; additionally, he hoped to develop airplanes for commercial freight from the Wanamaker Stores and was on the National Conference for the Development of Commercial Aviation.164

His involvement in these and various other aviation projects led to his 1918 appointment to Special Deputy Police Commissioner of the New York Police Reserve—reorganized from the Home Defense League—which was meant to serve as an auxiliary or emergency supplement to the police force. Within several months, Wanamaker had revitalized the Reserve and, in a non-traditional move for the New York police force, formed a Women’s Police Reserve.165 This he attributed to his study of the London Police Reserve and its inclusion of “upward of 600” women.166

Mathers Museum’s website has a searchable online gallery of the Wanamaker Collection.


165 “Women Gain Police Fame in New York. New Yorkers Get First View of Latest Addition to Wanamaker’s Home Guard Body. Fair Ones, Becomingly Uniformed, March with Military Precision.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 12, 1918. All articles about Wanamaker’s appointment emphasize that he will “serve without pay.”

166 Ibid.
Wanamaker’s position as Commissioner is relevant to this particular study especially because the articles surrounding it provide evidence and some interpretive material about his relationship with Colonel William Wood, whose connection to at least two of Wanamaker’s major Barkentin & Krall gifts—the Westminster Abbey processional cross and the communion plate—is documented. Furthermore, both Wanamaker and Wood travelled frequently to London to study its Police Reserve force and met many high-ranking officials in the Metropolitan Police, which could very possibly have led to a relationship with Maundy Gregory.

Despite his various involvements outside of the Wanamaker stores, Rodman was, foremost, a merchant businessman and devoted son who focused on maintaining the legacy of his father, to whom he often referred—following John’s death—as The Founder. John and Rodman Wanamaker seem to have had a more commensurate working relationship than either of them had with Thomas: in a letter dating from 1900, John writes in a postscript to Rodman, “Don’t bother about Tom. [. . .] I have made up my mind unalterably that I will not discuss the business with him except to answer his questions. I can certainly be silent rather than unhappy after warm words.”

Rodman must have assumed more of the hard-headedness required for managing several large department stores following his brother’s death, judging from

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167 John Wanamaker to Rodman Wanamaker, June 13, 1900. Wanamaker Papers, #2188, Box 2, Folder 11, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Thomas appears to have been a more ruthless, profit-oriented businessman than his generous—though prudent—father, and artistic, retiring brother. This is in no way a judgment of their personal relationships; indeed, their personal letters continuously display genuine love and concern for one another’s happiness.
John’s occasional sternly gentle reminders about not being too caught up in business matters. But the longevity of John Wanamaker’s life and John and Rodman’s extraordinary closeness encouraged a collaborative approach to the sale of antiques and fine art within the Wanamaker stores, putting them at the forefront of the development of this particular department store niche.

**Artist and Collector**

Shortly after joining his father and brother in the family’s business and completing training apprenticeships throughout the store, Rodman Wanamaker was sent to Paris in 1888 to manage business there. Rodman’s enthusiastic appreciation and study of the decorative and fine arts, interiors, and architecture of Europe caused him to send a wide variety of products, both antique and new, back to Philadelphia. Early biographer of John Wanamaker, Joseph Appel, recounts an anecdotal—and possibly apocryphal—story about Rodman’s early purchases:

‘We didn’t know what to make of it,’ John Wanamaker was fond of telling the story. ‘Thomas […] and I began to think that Rodman had gone out of his head. We didn’t understand the things he was sending over. We didn’t know how to sell them. We tried to curb him. He wouldn’t be curbed. I was in Washington. Mr. Ogden and Thomas were in charge of the business. They went through a trying time. . . . Now, I know what he was about (he said many years later), and I am humbly appreciative of the uplift Rodman gave to the business.’

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168 Serving in the position of Postmaster General of the United States.

Rodman returned to Philadelphia in 1898, having made strong connections in Paris and having been ranked by the French government a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor for his service in furthering trade between the United States and France. His passion for art and antiques never waned; in its obituary for Rodman, the *New York Times* reports:

His offices were characteristic of his interest in both trade and art. He kept a series of five rooms busy with conferences all day, dashing from one visitor to another for rapid-fire talks and equally prompt decisions. The rooms were decorated in accordance with his artistic bent. One week a room would be decorated richly and artistically in a certain style; the next week might see the same room decorated just as richly and artistically in an entirely different style. It was nothing out of the ordinary for Mr. Wanamaker to have a beautiful shawl, worth thousands of dollars, draped over a desk.

Rodman Wanamaker’s taste for beauty led to a decided mission within the Wanamaker Stores to enhance the experience of shopping by turning it into an opportunity for education and information, creating exhibits and organizing concerts within the stores.

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170 Ibid., 403.


172 The press particularly lauded one concert, in 1926, at which Rodman Wanamaker’s collection of rare and especially fine Italian stringed instruments—including several by legendary maker Stradivarius—were played by members of the Philharmonic Society of New York. “Old Instruments Heard in Concert. Wanamaker Collection of Elite of String World Played for First Time Publicly Here,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1926.
**Au Quatrième and The Belmaison Gallery**

The antiques and interior decoration shop within Wanamaker’s New York store, called *Au Quatrième* for its fourth-floor location, was managed by decorator Nancy Vincent McClelland (1877-1959). McClelland started her professional life in 1897 as an arts reporter for the *Philadelphia Press*, but in 1900 became a copywriter in the advertising department at Wanamaker’s Philadelphia store. Her work in the advertising department also included the arrangement of store windows to most effectively display the home furnishings and decorations for sale, which she later credited with the early development of her artistic decorating eye.\(^{173}\) McClelland moved to Paris in 1907 as a buyer and representative for Wanamaker’s; while there she was able to study art and art history in a “traditional” French manner, through visits to “palaces, châteaux, and museums.”\(^{174}\) Upon her return to the United States in 1913, McClelland was hired by Rodman Wanamaker to open and manage *Au Quatrième*.


\(^{174}\) Ibid. In a letter to Rodman, John Wanamaker praises McClelland: “Miss McClelland’s letter was also in the same mail. Her arguments are very strong and well taken. I had no thought of Miss McClelland giving up her work in Paris. I think she could largely extend it throughout Europe to the advantage of our business because of her wonderful alertness and comprehensive manner of getting at things. I had no thought of her being over here excepting when as is possible between seasons, and then to gather up conditions here and to understand better what will help us both in Philadelphia and New York. I am very sure that Paris is full of ideas and if they can be gathered and conveyed to us here, and especially with good writing, they will be exceedingly useful. It takes a very uncommon person to gather ideas and to apply them for practical use. I think Miss McClelland has wonderful ability in that direction.” (April 26, 1910. Wanamaker Papers, Personal Correspondence—Box 3, Folder 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
The shop was such an immediate and overwhelming success that McClelland soon needed help and hired future decorator Ruby Ross Goodnow (later Ruby Ross Wood) to assist her. Goodnow succeeded McClelland as manager of *Au Quatrième* in 1918, when McClelland left to start her own decorating business. This new position afforded Goodnow the opportunity to travel to England and Europe as a buyer of not only antique furniture and decorative arts, but also textiles (historic and modern) and wallpaper.\(^{175}\) Her buying successes there are well documented in contemporary Wanamaker advertisements in *The New York Times*, in which the history of the collection and the triumph of the acquisition are celebrated. In an advertisement clothed as an article, for example, readers learned of the “Wanamaker collector’s” purchase of the Venetian Carminati Collection, which filled “three hundred big packing cases” and “twelve sixteen-ton [train] cars” bound for New York.\(^{176}\)

Goodnow soon embarked on another venture on behalf of Rodman Wanamaker, creating the Belmaison Gallery as an additional display space for both contemporary fine art and furniture reproductions.\(^{177}\) In 1921, Belmaison hosted one of the largest and most ambitious exhibitions of avant-garde art since the mostly successful and certainly talked-about 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art at

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177 The Belmaison Gallery has been primarily remembered for its displays of the “latest and greatest” work of both European and American painters.
New York’s 69th Regiment Armory. A reviewer of the show capitalized on Americans’ high social aspirations, saying, “These pictures are of the kind that one sees hanging in sumptuous houses all over continental Europe.”

The catalogs and exhibitions produced by the Wanamaker stores are indicators of the value that its owners placed on education and scholarship. Scholars of department store history connect the activities of the John Wanamaker Store with the developing popularity of institutional art museums. Locally, the construction of the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s current building consumed 1920s Philadelphia and the Wanamaker stores certainly capitalized on—and perhaps contributed to—that widespread enthusiasm. An undated catalogue in the collection of the Winterthur Library presents an “Exhibition of Antique Objets d’Art,” which includes “old Spanish and Italian wood carvings, old ecclesiastical embroideries, old French Mirrors, [. . .] Some Old Furniture, [etc.]” in the “Museum of Antiques” at Wanamaker’s Philadelphia store. The opening page of the catalogue reviews the objects, giving detailed historical and attributional information about the media—embroidery, wood

178 “Modernism at the Belmaison Gallery,” *Arts and Decoration*, New York, December 1921, 162.


carving, painting, etc.—and highlighting a few exceptional pieces. The following page, in Gothic script, reads, “Orders / For bronze, stucco, terra cotta and plaster reproductions of the famous sculptures in the museums of Europe will be filled within the shortest possible time,” which emphasizes the connections between museums, department stores, and private interior furnishings.

The appropriation of the numerous religious pieces in this catalogue as “objets d’art” deserves its own study, but poses some interesting questions about early 20th-century collecting and shopping patterns as well as the buyers’ abilities to separate religious objects into separate categories: from the religious, devotional sphere to the commercial, historical, and artistic realm. An additional, more pertinent, and many-layered question is what this says about Rodman Wanamaker and his privately curated Lady Chapel “collection” at St. Mark’s Church, as well as the nearly-as-privately curated gifts to The Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Sandringham. Wanamaker was an exacting businessman, collector, and donor, demonstrated by the completeness with which he furnished both spaces and attended to his other charitable works; the more quietly personal aspects of Wanamaker’s life are further addressed later in this study.

**The Royal Connection**

It is difficult to know the exact manner in which Rodman Wanamaker’s connection with England’s royal family began; the lack of records for his purchases, and on the exact way in which he carried out his orders, frustrates any absolute understanding. Queen Alexandra’s visit to Barkentin & Krall’s studios during the construction of the Lady Chapel altar provide a starting point, but the leap from the
admiration she expressed to the subsequent gift of a similar—and similarly valuable—altar is significant.\textsuperscript{181}

Anglomania was rife in early twentieth-century Philadelphia. Even John Wanamaker was susceptible to the fascinations of royalty; in a letter from London to Rodman in New York, he writes

\begin{quote}
I have been on a constant rush since I arrived in London and yesterday was a crowning day of a life time to be well presented and have a conversation with King George and to be presented by His Majesty himself to her most gracious Majesty the Queen. At night at the great dinner and later reception at the Imperial [unreadable] given by England’s finest old Lord Strathcona I was presented about midnight to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught later on to His Royal Highness the late King’s brother to the Duke of Connaught soon to be Governor General of Canada.\textsuperscript{182}
\end{quote}

Other letters recount John Wanamaker’s excitement at the possibility of attending the coronation of King George V (1911), and an earlier newspaper clipping from the \textit{New York Journal} reports Wanamaker’s presentation to King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace’s “most brilliant court of the season.”\textsuperscript{183} Rodman Wanamaker was not

\textsuperscript{181} “Court Circular,” \textit{The Times} (London), July 23, 1908, p. 13. Further, one wonders who alerted Rodman Wanamaker to Queen Alexandra’s appreciation—was it Barkentin & Krall, trying to drum up more business?—and how the particulars of the commission (its designation for the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, measurements of the space, thematic choices, etc.) were negotiated.

\textsuperscript{182} John Wanamaker to Rodman Wanamaker, July 11, 1911. Wanamaker Papers, #2188, Box 3, Folder 19, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{183} “Wanamaker Meets King,” \textit{New York Journal}, June 23, 1904. Wanamaker Papers, #2188, Box 2, Folder 24, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. John Wanamaker’s connection was unable to obtain a spot for him in the Abbey for the coronation, but the Historical Society has several back-and-forth letters documenting the attempt.
presented at court, nor is there any indication that he had close personal correspondence with the royal family during the early stages of his gift. In his position as “Chairman of the Mayor’s Committee on Reception of Distinguished Guests,” Rodman was in charge of organizing the Prince of Wales’ (Edward VIII) visit to New York. Beyond these small tidbits, little information survives about an explicit relationship, or even acquaintance.

But Rodman Wanamaker did express his admiration for the England’s royal family quietly, once again, behind the scenes. An advertisement in the Philadelphia Inquirer—Wanamaker advertisements were full-paged, with multiple columns of categories—announces a presentation in the Wanamaker Stores’ Egyptian Hall of “Specially Taken Motion Pictures of the Funeral of King Edward VII ‘of Blessed & Glorious Memory’ & the Proclaiming of George V as King of England.” Four showings are listed, giving Philadelphians many chances to see

184 There is, of course, the aforementioned copy of the thank-you note from King George V to Rodman Wanamaker on his gift of the gold communion plate set. It is certain that notes would have been similarly written for the former gifts, as well, especially considering their magnitude.


186 “Today’s News at Wanamaker’s” (advertisement), Philadelphia Inquirer, June 3, 1910. The funeral of King Edward VII occurred on May 20, 1910, which gives an indication of the quick processing and shipping of these videos to Philadelphia.
[. . .] the pomp of the funeral cortege, the procession of the crowned heads of Europe, & many high dignitaries of church & state, army & navy, & the vast hushed crowds of spectators, [which] make this probably the most intensely interesting series of pictures ever shown in America.  

A little over a year later, the store advertised a second series of videos and show times, celebrating the coronation of King George V (June 23, 1911). Even more striking, however, is the Coronation Festival thrown by the Philadelphia Wanamaker Store, to which “thousands” flocked:

The standards carried by the battalion included those of Richard I, Edward III, Henry V, James I, William and Mary, Queen Anne, George I, George III, the royal standards flown at sea by the members of the royal family, Viceroy of India, Australia and the Queen Mother’s flag. The Standard of the present ruler of Great Britain hung from the balcony beneath the organ, and this the battalion majestically saluted on arriving at the court. Following a fanfare by the bugle corps, the John Wanamaker Choral Society, composed of young women and men employed in the store, rendered Handel’s beautiful composition, “Zadok, the Priest.” Then came a combined musical number, “The King Shall Rejoice,” in which the organ, the band and the chorus participated. In conclusion the choral society, the junior chorus, the band and the organ united in the rendition of “God Save the King.”

187 Ibid.

188 “First Authentic Display of the Splendors of the Coronation,” Wanamaker Store Advertisement, Philadelphia Inquirer, July 1, 1911. The videos were “made especially for the Wanamaker stores, and reached this country by the Mauretania” (“Show Coronation Pictures,” Philadelphia Inquirer, July 1, 1911).

189 “Hold Coronation Festival,” Philadelphia Inquirer, June 23, 1911. This festival also marked the premier performance of the Wanamaker Organ. Strawbridge & Clothier, a rival Philadelphia department store, also advertised a concert by the store chorus in honor of the coronation, but their efforts were doubtless completely overshadowed and one-upped by the Wanamakers’ typical success.
It is hard to imagine quite such a grand tribute occurring in the United States today and is certainly reflective of not only of Philadelphians in general, but also the Wanamakers’ admiration for the royal family.\textsuperscript{190}

Further examples of Rodman Wanamaker’s regard, and the reciprocated niceties of the royal family, were reported in contemporary newspapers. In 1923, Colonel Wood gave a wedding present—a “massive” silver vase, “35 inches high, designed on classic lines”—on behalf of Rodman Wanamaker to the Duke of York (Prince Albert, the future King George VI) at Buckingham Palace.\textsuperscript{191} Colonel Wood was quoted by \textit{The New York Times’} correspondent:

\begin{quote}
The Duke received me very cordially. […] He was completely surprised at the object of my mission. He recalled, however, my visit last year on a similar errand in connection with Princess Mary’s marriage. The Duke said he was particular touched at the fact that Mr. Wanamaker had sent me across the Atlantic to hand over his present personally.\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quote}

Two aspects of this quote are particularly informative: 1) Wood reports, and the author of the article points out throughout, that the Duke of York was not aware that Wood was delivering a wedding present, indicating that Rodman Wanamaker or his delegates would be welcome to visit at any time, for any reason; 2) Rodman Wanamaker had sent Wood to England for the express purpose of delivering a

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{190} Only a month before, in May of 1911, Rodman Wanamaker had presented the silver altar to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Sandringham.
\item \textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
wedding present, and had also done so for the marriage of Princess Mary, which shows the kind of work in which Wood was often engaged for his employer.

Rodman Wanamaker’s great regard for Queen Alexandra, upon whom most of his gifts were bestowed, never ceased. In *The New York Times*’ photographic report on her funeral, a grainy photo shows wreaths being arranged in the ballroom at Sandringham. Most of the wreaths are laid flat on the floor in two-deep rows, separated by aisles for viewing. One massive wreath in the back, however, is displayed propped against what looks like a packing case: the caption identifies it as “a six-foot wreath of orchids” sent by Rodman Wanamaker.\footnote{“Funeral of England’s Queen Mother, in Mist and Snow,” *New York Times*, December 5, 1925.}

The gifts to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Sandringham display a level of dedication and commitment similar to Wanamaker’s efforts for the Lady Chapel at St. Mark’s. It is important to remember that he was actively giving to both places over the same stretch of years; the gifts are not an indication that he had completed work on one space and moved on to a new “project.” It does seem, though, that Wanamaker considered these—especially the Lady Chapel—to be curated spaces. In the case of Sandringham, what started as a magnanimous tribute to the memory of King Edward VII developed into a strong—if not entirely personal—relationship with Queen Alexandra and her children that lasted for many years. Viewed from a modern perspective, without full documentation and information, it is a curiously detached and
eccentric relationship that is difficult to interpret.\textsuperscript{194} There was unquestionably a mutual regard; on Rodman’s death, George V wrote Captain John Wanamaker a letter of condolence expressing his regret at the Wanamakers’ loss and his gratitude for the gifts to Sandringham that “will remain for all time a memorial of his unfailing thoughtfulness and generosity.”\textsuperscript{195}

It is a particularly interesting conundrum to consider the Sandringham gifts—especially the altar, given in memory of Edward VII—as memorials, in turn, to Rodman Wanamaker. His style of memorial-making was remarkable in its scale, cost, and curatorial approach, but the bequests have a sincerity about them that is impossible to ignore. Interpreting Wanamaker’s gifts as self-promotional or self-memorializing efforts is too easy and would ignore the historically contextual practice within the Anglican church of commemorating and honoring the departed.

\textsuperscript{194} Rodman Wanamaker, for example, could have presented the wedding presents on his own; it seems that perhaps he just didn’t want to be involved at that personal a level.

Chapter 5

MATERIAL RELIGION

What does it mean that Rodman Wanamaker presented St. Mark’s Church with not only a Lady Chapel, but also a large collection of pricey furnishings—including sacramental and decorative silver, and a large number of vestments and altar frontals—all in memory of his wife? And what do the gifts say about Rodman Wanamaker? The additional gifts to England’s royal family and Westminster Abbey are similarly intriguing. Modern public opinions vary, ranging from sentimentally respectful Internet-based tributes to critical judgment of Robber Baron-esque behavior. One author interprets Wanamaker’s philanthropic gifts as a blend of his “genuine interest in history, patriotism, scientific progress and religion, [for which] he spent millions of his own money in public-service ventures that kept the Wanamaker name and business in the headlines.” It is easy and tempting to dismiss the bequests as the gifts of a wealthy man using the church as a way to increase his social and business standing in both “Proper Philadelphia” and internationally. But the twenty-year span of his commissions, his additional donations to the royal family and to the Church of England at Westminster Abbey, and his passion for art and its appreciation

196 William Allen Zulker, John Wanamaker: King of Merchants, (Wayne, PA: Eaglecrest Press, 1993) 172. Zulker’s book is the result of his volunteer work at the HSP, where he helped to organize the Wanamaker Papers on their acquisition.
indicate something more. Surviving letters in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania give further evidence of Rodman’s kind and thoughtful nature, as well as his desire for maintaining his personal relationships.

Rodman Wanamaker’s large-scale bequests begin after the death of his first wife, Fernanda Henry Wanamaker. The most explicit documentation of the pair’s attachment to each other comes from family letters following her death in March 1900. None of these is from Rodman—but most are to or about him—but each makes his turmoil and grief clear. One in particular, from John to Rodman, is worth a full transcription for the clues it provides:

Dearest Rod,

You left at 1 and I also with Dr. Tyson at 1:02. My good Bye with you was too much mixed with rain discussion. I cannot tell you how I shall miss you. You often found me pre-occupied but I was always looking for your visit-I think all of us need some one to talk to & I [unreadable] myself wanting you & Leaning upon you.

I can work like a team of horses so long as I have the consciousness of you coming back to be with me. Were it not for that hope I would be most discouraged. You do not imagine for an instant how much I have studied you these past months and how I have delighted in your large thinking & growth. If you can keep your health I [think?] Our Heavenly Father will offer you a place of great usefulness & influence.

You are certainly right in thinking that there are other levels of life than those reached by the dollar & cents ladder—Money is an incident of great importance but it often mars our happiness as much as it sometimes makes it. We each have our duty to do by those who remain-and I am at my time of life bound to “set my house in order” for the saving of trouble to those who will stay after me. This one thing I must do whatever else be left undone.

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Please have it always in your mind that I need your love and help and that forty other sons and sons in law could not fill your place. To go about again in the old haunts will make some shadow but do not forget the sunshines that bend upon some part of every day—

There is a real happiness in the memory that so many spots & occupations are to be forever linked with another to whom these reminding things & circumstances give joy.

I find Mother distinctly better, the Doctor did also. He almost thought he would not come tomorrow. I will write you constantly & freely about everything. I shall follow you day by day across the sea & day by day when you reach the shore. God keep & bless you always.

The Old Father

This letter, written just before Rodman’s departure for an extended visit to Europe—accompanied by his children and mother-in-law, Mrs. Henry—tells modern readers a lot. Most obviously, it encapsulates the intensely close relationship between Rodman and his father. Referencing “these past months,” which presumably refers to the months since Fernanda’s death, John praises Rodman for his “large thinking and growth,” holding him in the highest esteem. Especially poignant is John’s positive spin on the difficulty ahead of Rodman as he encounters places and feelings that are so closely linked with memories of his wife.

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197 John Wanamaker to Rodman Wanamaker, June 13, 1900. Wanamaker Papers, Box 1, Folder 11, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

198 Both John and Mary Wanamaker ask after the progress of Mrs. Henry’s “recovery” in letters to Paris, July 31, 1900.

199 This is only one letter of many. The six boxes of personal letters at the HSP radiate love, support, and respect.
There is another interesting layer to this letter in the seeming continuation of a recent conversation between father and son on the subject of money and its place within one’s life. Rodman’s forthcoming trip to Paris is presumably the one during which he bought or commissioned a large part of the furnishings for the Lady Chapel. No family letters mention any memorial to Fernanda Wanamaker, but the Lady Chapel’s hasty completion and subsequent dedication on February 10, 1902, indicate that the project proceeded extraordinarily quickly.\(^{200}\) Judging from John Wanamaker’s letter, the topic of responsible stewardship of money was on Rodman’s mind; it does not seem too speculative to consider the vast amounts of money he soon would contribute to his and his wife’s church in her memory.

Other letters about Rodman from this time express concern over his grief. One, from an unidentified friend to Thomas Wanamaker, describes the friend’s intention to help him through his sadness and also points to the extreme regard that all seem to have felt for him:

…I spent the day yesterday with dear old Rod. He was such a sympathetic listener, I fear I wearied him with my long talk on oriental travel; but I prided myself I did freshen him up with my enthusiasm which may have been a little exaggerated, as the dear boy needed I thought to be taken out of himself. I intend to be as much with him as possible for I love him, & he is a better man than I, & his character & influence improve me. You are the richest man in the world with the

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\(^{200}\) “Lady Chapel Dedicated. Bishop Nicholson Leads Impressive Services at St. Mark’s Church.” \textit{The Philadelphia Inquirer}, February 11, 1902 (Vol. 146, issue 42), 2. Considering the volume of correspondence to Rodman from his parents at the HSP, it is confusing and astounding that they did not mention any of the gifts.
boundless affection of your brother. I never expect to be so fortunate but perhaps you have it because you deserve it.\textsuperscript{201}

Rodman seems to have been absorbed in the business even more than usual during this trip, indicated by an imploring letter from his mother, Mary:

\begin{quote}
I am sure you know best, Dear Lamb. Don’t bother over the business, do let up. I know you are planning every day & all day for the family, so quietly no one would imagine you were at anything. If your Father goes over don’t bother having days at the Exhibition,\textsuperscript{202} he will [unreadable] with Dr T & let them do it.

Roddie darling, you will wear out that dear unselfish heart of yours sooner than the allotted time. Do think of yourself—Just think of an invisible hand that [unreadable] on yours sometimes & begs her boy to give some thought for himself. Dear, dear, best of boys, God keep & help you, as your Mother would if she could.”\textsuperscript{203}
\end{quote}

Over the course of his life, Rodman was the recipient of many letters from both of his parents in the same vein as the one transcribed above. His devotion to both his family and its company is remarkable for its purity and constancy.\textsuperscript{204} More than anything, the letters illustrate the depth of Rodman’s relationships and interests, which are often

\textsuperscript{201} L.C.V. (unidentified) to Thomas Wanamaker, July 1, 1900 (Paris). Wanamaker Papers, Box 1, Folder 11, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{202} Other letters in the collection indicate that Mrs. Wanamaker is referring to the Exposition Universelle, the Parisian World’s Fair held from April to November of 1900.

\textsuperscript{203} Mrs. John Wanamaker to Rodman Wanamaker, August 6, 1900. Wanamaker Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{204} The Wanamakers communicated daily, even if all they could manage was a telegram or a short notecard. John and Rodman often corresponded more than once a day through letters and telegrams, aside from their business communications. Mostly all of the telegrams—among all members of the family—sign off with “Heroic Love” or an abbreviated “HL.”

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overlooked and unknown given the scarcity of his personal documents. Additionally, more scholarship has been directed toward John Wanamaker, whose beloved position as a self-made success and subsequent titan of the business world and of the city of Philadelphia is far more documented and well-known.

If clues about Rodman’s character must be traced through letters written by people other than Rodman himself, then questions about his religiousness and personal spirituality become even more challenging. But it is impossible to ignore the subject, owing to the incredible volume and value of the numerous gifts he gave to churches. Once again overshadowed in historical record by the magnitude of his father’s involvement in the city and church, however, Rodman is often disregarded as being an inactive churchman. To be sure, the perceived “simple world” of Sunday School, temperance, and self-denial of the Presbyterian church was not exactly a mirror to Rodman’s ornately furnished lifestyle, but attitudes such as the myopic and dismissive quip by historian William Leach—“if these things constituted what it meant to be Christian, then Rodman was no Christian”—discard the possibility that Rodman might have had his own personally-developed feelings toward the church and his religion that were different from his father’s.  

While it is impossible at present to attest to his private thoughts on spirituality and theology, Rodman certainly attended church and was a familiar enough presence

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in the congregation to be the recipient of deeply friendly letters from the rector at All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Atlantic City, NJ, the Reverend John W. Williams:

My dear Friend

It seems scarcely possible, but this is my eighteenth Easter greeting sent to my friends. I know they will not get weary of me and of them.

I send you two cards. The larger one came from Belgium before the war & I trust it stands for the restoration and resurrection of that martyr-nation. The smaller can I send as the words upon it contain my Easter greeting for you.

I would send a line to John if I knew where to address him. Please tell him I send him my love & Easter greeting & blessings & I hope sometime soon to see him & hear of his experiences abroad.

Wishing you each and all every Easter-blessing

I am [unreadable] your

John W. Williams

John Wanamaker, a frequent visitor to Rodman’s Atlantic City house—even when Rodman was not there—often mentions having been to church at All Saints’ and, in one letter, praises the service for being “so solemn sweet and satisfying.” Reverend Williams officiated at Mary Wanamaker’s funeral, which was conducted at the Bethany Presbyterian Church, John Wanamaker was an open-minded church visitor when out-of-town, writing to Rodman about attending a Methodist church one week and a German Reformed Church the next, in addition to “your Episcopal church” in Atlantic City.
family’s home, Lindenhurst. He also officiated, along with the Reverend Dr. Frank Vernon, rector of St. Mark’s Church, at Rodman Wanamaker’s funeral at St. Mark’s in 1928.

A reflective New Year’s letter to Rodman from his mother, Mary, also gives a clue that the man to whom she is writing is one who is comfortable in a faith:

Happy is the mother who can rest content that her Boy has learned the things which belong to his Peace. You have been constantly in my thoughts all day. I have gone over and over the past year, with you darling every day in it [. . .]. You will rest sweetly the last of this year if you look over the happiness you have given God’s creatures, O how great is the service you are rendering to others—‘How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me. How great is the sum of them.’

I am feeling very close to you my faithful boy at this moment.

Good night sweet. Blessing you [unreadable] loving

Mother

208 “Mrs. Wanamaker Buried,” New York Times, August 24, 1920. The choir of St. Mark’s Church and the New York Police Choir both sang at the services. In the article, Mrs. Wanamaker is described as having been a worshipper at Rev. Williams’ church, All Saints’ Episcopal Chapel.


210 Mrs. John Wanamaker to Rodman Wanamaker, December 30, 1910, Wanamaker Papers, Box 3, Folder 15, Historical Society of Philadelphia. At the end of the first paragraph, Mary Wanamaker quotes Psalm 139:17. Also notable is that at the time of this letter, her “Boy” was nearly fifty years old: the Wanamaker parents never ceased to express pride and love for their son, no matter his age, and the tone of their letters to him never changed.
It is possible that “his Peace” in the opening sentence may refer to Rodman himself. Based on others of Mary’s letters and her general style, however, it is more likely that Mary is referring to spiritual matters, and that she is pleased with Rodman for his faithful service manifested in his attention to his family, friends, and the public.

Despite all the letters and the objects themselves, there is still no documentation from Rodman himself on his feelings toward the Lady Chapel or his religious feelings, and excessive speculation risks irresponsible scholarship. Additionally, the potential interpretive layers to each gift make absolutes an impossibility. There is, of course, the easily-reached conclusion that the Lady Chapel, especially, is merely a manifestation of an aesthete’s curatorial efforts to compartmentalize and create outlets for his collections. But even at this most basic level of interpretation of Rodman Wanamaker, the gifts and the intent behind them reaches more than a pure aesthetics. Objects of devotion automatically become imbued with layers of meanings, many of them intangible.

**Conclusion**

Material culture scholarship has long tiptoed around the study of the material culture of religion. Exploring the intangible feelings, ideas, and theologies of religion through the study of a tangible object is a sensitive and often intensely personal undertaking that cannot always be quantified. The tendency has been, more often, to separate the subject into academic disciplines: archaeology, art history, religious studies, and theology, for example. But the long history and comprehensive survival of physical manifestations of belief provide evidence for the changing nature of human
interaction with religious objects and architecture—and most intangibly, with space. Architectural historian Louis Nelson writes, “sacred artifacts that remain in continuous use inevitably become burdened with the responsibility of bridging time between generations of believers.”

The idea that humans assign meaning to objects through patterns of use and personal value may seem intuitive, but the dualistic nature of the religious object adds an additional layer to their interpretation and study. It is tempting to give priority to the consideration of an object’s symbolic qualities, but an object on its own has no real meaning independent of the values assigned to it. A human relationship with an object like the Lady Chapel’s altar forms out of a variety of experiences: 1) the experience of the altar as an incredible physical example of artistry and the basest valuation of its materials and monetary value, 2) the experience of the altar as a memorial gift, and 3) a personal, introspective experience of the altar and its subject matter, formed through patterns of use in the everyday life of the church. The third is the hardest to quantify, by any standards, but particularly from a scholarly perspective. Additionally, it is impossible to dismiss Wanamaker’s gift as a gift only: in religious historian Colleen McDannell’s words, “if we immediately assume that wherever money is exchanged religion is debased, then we will miss the subtle ways that people create and maintain spiritual ideals through the exchange of goods and the construction of spaces.”

It is injudicious to view the Lady Chapel and its contents purely as (monetarily valuable)


212 McDannell, Material Christianity, 6.
objects made by skilled artists and craftsmen; parishioners of St. Mark’s Church continue to use the objects for their originally intended purposes—as objects of devotion that aid in mediating between the tangible and intangible.

Mixing ideas of the sacred and profane is touchy, but primarily for scholars only: for those who practice religion, especially in a ritualistic style, it is far easier to invite the sacred into the profane. The eminent designer and architect of many ecclesiastical Gothic Revival buildings, Ralph Adams Cram, wrote:

‘Ritualism,’ as it is called, is quite inexcusable if it is founded on a mere love of pretty things: if it is used as a language the idea must lie behind, and the idea that is voiced by Catholic ceremonial is certainly Catholic and sacramental. Cram elucidates this idea by emphasizing the degree to which space, objects, and ritual are tied together:

Beauty, tradition, ceremony, and form are the four columns that uphold the material fabric of the temple: shatter them, and the whole wonderful creation crumbles and sinks in dust and ruin.

The study of material religion presents certain challenges that lie outside of traditional object-based study. The idea of a continuum of meaning—keeping devotion and worship within its historical context—was precisely one of the philosophical goals of the Cambridge Camden Society. This theological notion of the historical continuum can be applied not only to buildings and practices of worship, but also to smaller objects. For present-day students, there is an added level of meaning in considering the


214 Ibid., 285.
objects that were newly created in the mid-nineteenth century to meet the Society’s revivalist standards. Those objects, meant to link the High Church movement to its historic precedent, now have over one hundred years of layered meanings—both personal and corporate—and are in turn now tied to a new historic precedent.

The Lady Chapel at St. Mark’s Church started out as a devotional space dedicated to the memory of Fernanda Henry Wanamaker. Rodman Wanamaker, an extraordinary patron, continued to add to the Lady Chapel’s collection over a period of nearly twenty-five years, enhancing it with a valuable collection of silver and textiles. The Lady Chapel was in continuous use during this period, though, and it is important to consider the way in which the enhancement of the Chapel’s furnishings also enhanced its users’ spiritual experiences and connections with the physical, tangible building. It is impossible to define any specific intent behind Rodman Wanamaker’s gifts, including those to Sandringham and Westminster Abbey, and this paper has demonstrated that there are many potential layers to Wanamaker as donor and patron. But the lasting spiritual legacy created by hundreds of intensely personal relationships with the objects through the congregants at St. Mark’s Church, over more than one hundred years, has created what Neale and Webb would have enigmatically called a “feeling,” achievable only through a pattern of deep reverence and a practice of worship. Users of the Lady Chapel have not needed the stories of Rodman Wanamaker or Barkentin & Krall to increase the strength of their spiritual relationship with the space and objects, and this is what makes the study of material religion so vastly different from traditional object study. So much is unexplainable and difficult to
pinpoint as fact, but each individual who experiences Rodman Wanamaker’s bequests has the opportunity to pinpoint a truth: profane, sacred, or both.
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Thank you. I'm submitting it tomorrow or Tuesday, so should have a copy for you next Sunday! (How perfect: just in time for Dr. Hall's visit to St. Mark's!)
Addie

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