

THE  
EXPERIENCE  
OF WORSHIP  
IN LATE MEDIEVAL  
CATHEDRAL AND  
PARISH CHURCH

# PYX FOR ALTAR BREAD

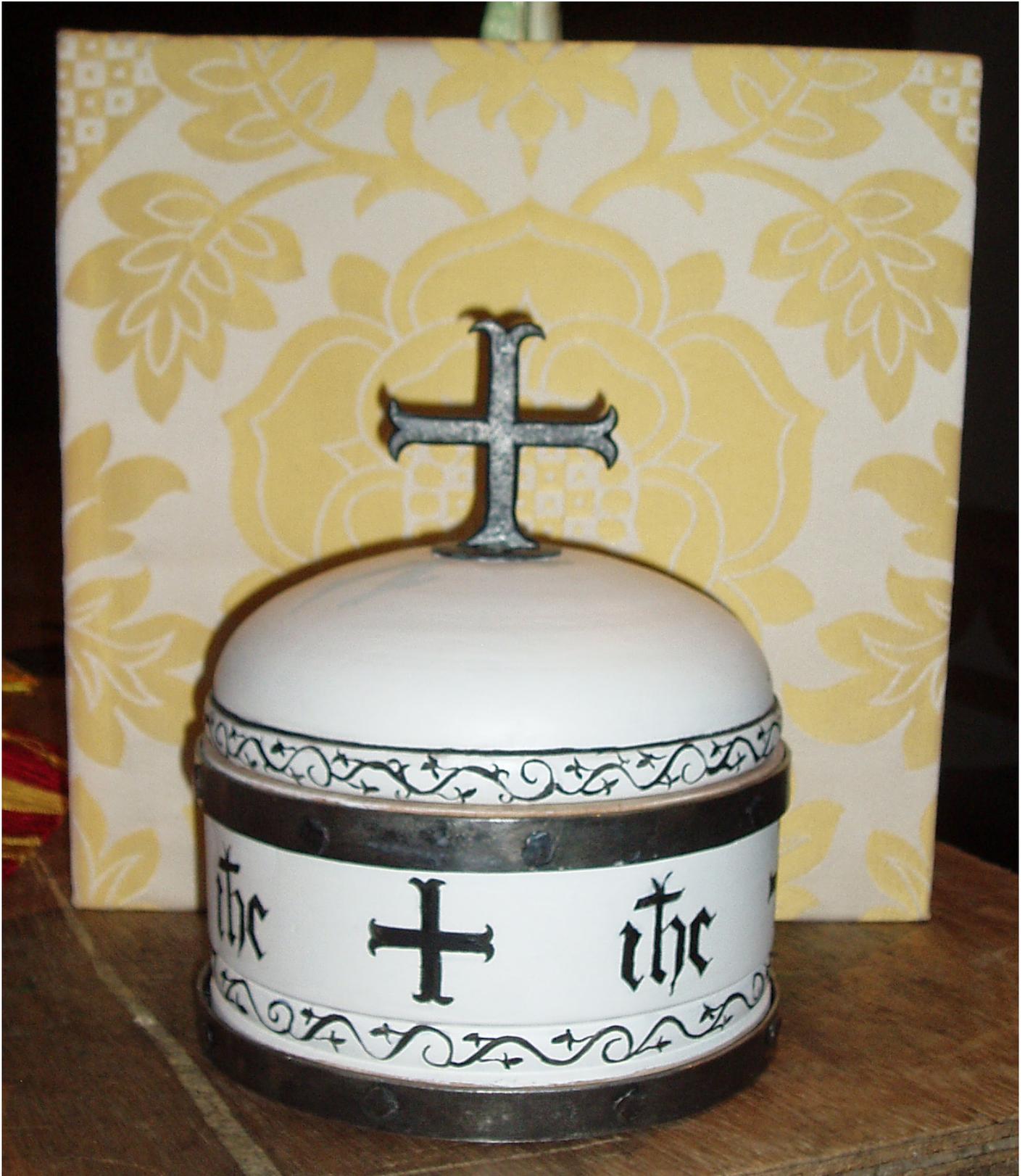


Photo: Sally Harpere

The St Teilo Pyx for the altar bread

## Description

Cylindrical pyx made from a single piece of beech, with bead mouldings running around the body and lid. Vegetable-oiled internally. Nails in the upper row are clinched, with their points depressed into the lime body. The handle, fixed to the centre of the lid, is in the form of a simple metal cross. No hinge or clasp was deemed necessary. Decoration is limited to a simple black transfer pattern applied over a white base, with an oiled / varnish finish. The decorations take the monogram IHC, alternating with a cross that echoes the design of the handle, both repeated four times round the body of the pyx, with simple vine scroll decoration for the border design on the rounded moulding at the base of the lid and the main body.

## Measurements

External diameter: 152mm; internal diameter: 114mm; internal depth: 51mm. The required internal diameter was determined by the likely size of the host (which iconography suggests was quite large).

## Model

No wooden pyx for unconsecrated altar bread is known to survive, although the St Teilo pyx incorporates elements from its St Teilo counterpart, the hanging pyx, particularly in its black iron-work, nailed bands around the body, and the circular plate forming the base of the cross handle. Conceptually the pyx is also similar in form to the gilded copper alloy 'Godsfield pyx' (made c.1350–1400), the only known English example of a form once found throughout northern Europe. Although smaller than the St Teilo pyx, this also has a conical lid and cross finial.

See also descriptions of the St Teilo hanging pyx, and pyx cloth.

## Craftspeople

Jeremy Glenn, woodworker, Abergavenny (design and all woodwork);  
Norman Lawrence, woodturner, Cwmbran; Ross Smith, blacksmith, Pontypool (metal fixing);  
Lois Raine, specialist painter, Exeter, Devon (decoration).

## Bibliography

Image of the 'Godsfield pyx' (Victoria and Albert Museum, M.360-1921) at <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O110443/the-godsfield-pyx-unknown/>.

P. G. Cobb, 'A Medieval Pyx?' *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 113 (1995), 179–82.

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Note compiled by Sally Harper

