

# The Gothic Mouldings of the Latin and Lady Chapels

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## SUMMARY

*The study of the mouldings provides evidence for three main phases in the architectural development of the N.E. chapels of Oxford Cathedral in the Gothic period. The Lady Chapel was added c.1230 and is the work of masons employed previously on the choir of Pershore Abbey, as well as including stylistic features from the Winchester/Salisbury workshops. More work occurred in the late 13th century, of which there are partial remains between the Lady and Latin Chapels. The rebuilding of the Latin Chapel in its present form is shown to belong to c.1330-40 and constitutes a rare example of Decorated architecture in Oxfordshire with a firm date. Some of its more distinctive mouldings show close affinities with later Decorated works in the Bristol area, but the most coherent stylistic connexions seem to be with Master Henry Wy's work at St. Albans Abbey (after 1323), and he is suggested as the master-mason of the Latin Chapel.*

The N.E. chapels of Oxford Cathedral constitute one of the most interesting corners in any church in England for studying the development of Gothic mouldings and their value in documenting the history of the building. After the completion of the 12th-century church, the mouldings allow us to distinguish three main phases. First, about 1230, the Lady Chapel was constructed, communicating through new arcades with the N. choir aisle, the E. aisle of the N. transept, and the 'pre-Latin Chapel'. Second, it appears that in about 1290 arcades were opened up in the N. wall of the Lady Chapel (Figs. 35 and 98, bays II.1-2 and 2-3), and presumably the 'pre-Latin Chapel' was extended E. at this time to the same length as the Lady Chapel. This work appears to have been unsatisfactory because, in a final phase in the later Decorated period, about 1338, the outer walls were entirely rebuilt to create the Latin Chapel as we see it today, with a new vault and associated arches and window tracery. These phases can be dated reasonably accurately by comparison with other works, and two of the phases are closely connected with specific workshops.

The following discussion uses the pier numbering system shown on Fig. 35 (p. 77), and should be read in conjunction with Figs. 98-100.

## THE LADY CHAPEL

The mouldings of the Early English Lady Chapel exhibit such convincing parallels with the choir of Pershore Abbey, Worcestershire (c.1220-39),<sup>1</sup> that the master-mason of the

<sup>1</sup> R. Stalley and M. Thurlby, 'A Note on the Architecture of Pershore Abbey', *J.B.A.A.* 3rd ser. xxxvii (1974), 113-18.

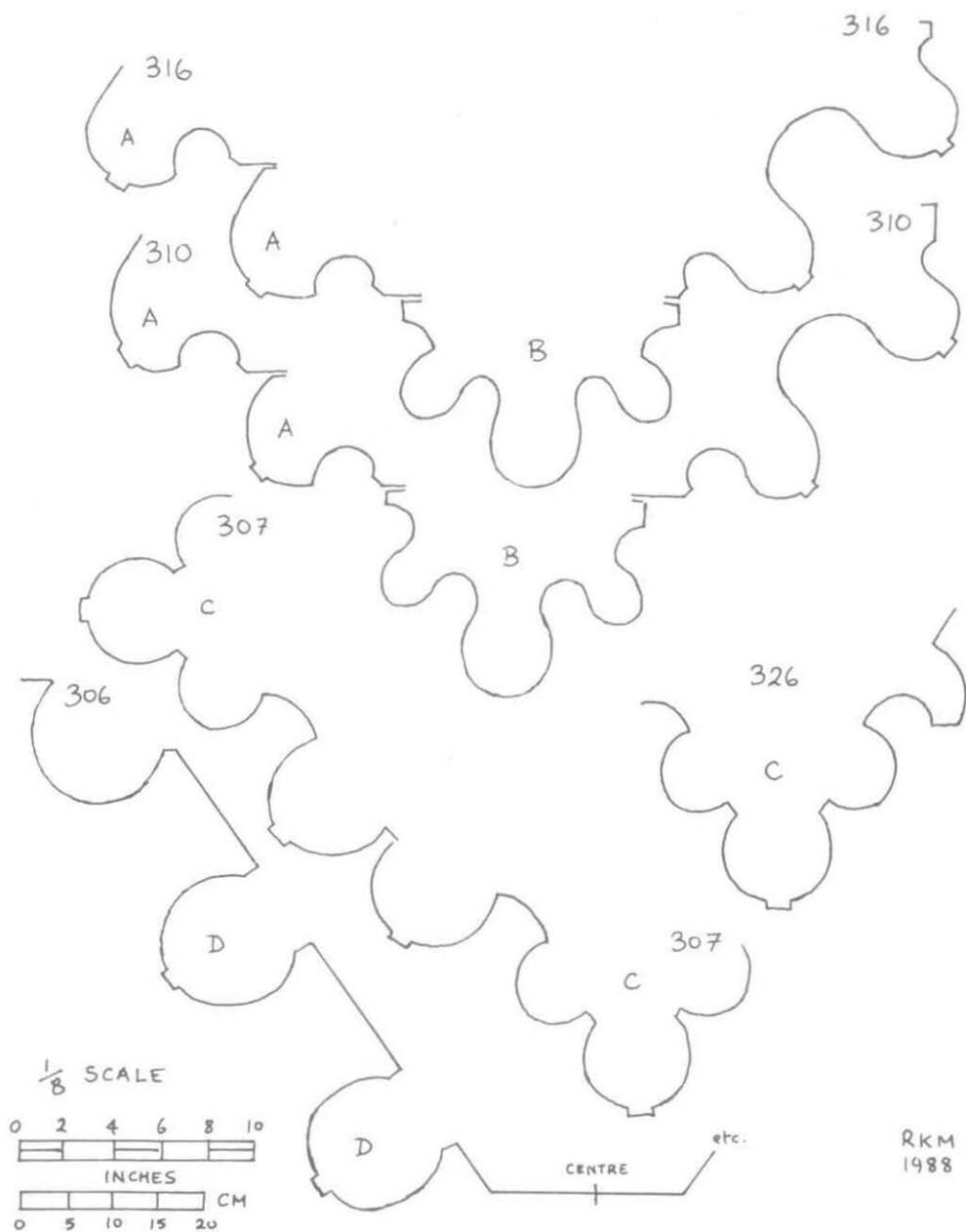


Fig. 69. Lady Chapel profiles, arches and piers: 306, S. arcade, E. respond (demi-section); 307, S. arcade, pier (quarter section); 310, S. arcade, arch; 316, N. arcade, W. bay, arch; 326, vault respond, N. side, pier II.3.A.

Chapel must have worked there previously. All the arches of the S. arcade and of the N. arch into the former 'pre-Latin Chapel' make repetitive use of undercut roll and fillet mouldings, canted downwards (Fig. 69, 310.A and 316.A), a characteristic of the choir arcades at Pershore, illustrated by Andrews.<sup>2</sup> The idea appears to be a feature of the west midlands and south-west in this period, a similar usage occurring on the E. crossing arches of Worcester Cathedral (c.1230),<sup>3</sup> but the specific link with Pershore extends also to the piers and responds. The E. respond of the S. arcade consists of a series of large filleted shafts, each projecting from the flat chamfer plane of the respond on a short strip of necking (Fig. 69, 306.D): shafts of the same design and very similar size are used in a comparable way in some of the piers at Pershore (Archive PER.256).<sup>4</sup> The angles of all the Pershore piers terminate in a triplet of shafts, a characteristic of Brakspear's 'West Country School of Masons',<sup>5</sup> but unlike earlier examples at Glastonbury and Wells Cathedral, the triplet design at Pershore has a prominent fillet on the axial shaft and thus constitutes an exact parallel for the type employed for all the piers in the Lady Chapel (Fig. 69, 307.C and 326.C).<sup>6</sup>

The profiles of the main types of bases and foliage capitals used for the lateral arcade arches<sup>7</sup> and all the vault responds except the capital of pier II.3.A may also be explained by reference to Pershore choir. None of the forms is especially distinctive, but Pershore makes use of both the typical Early English 'water-holding' base, a rather crude version of which is prevalent at Oxford (Fig. 70, 313), and of the torus-derived base found also at Oxford (Fig. 70, e.g. 312, 325).<sup>8</sup> In particular, the chamfered sub-base is exactly the same size at both churches (Fig. 70, 312, 313, 324.C: and Archive PER.257). For the foliage capitals, the general form is similar, with the fillet of the abacus moulding canted downwards and frequent use made of a blunt profile for the necking (Fig. 70, 311).<sup>9</sup> In addition, all the capitals and bases in the Lady Chapel and in Pershore choir are carved in freestone; no use is made of marble components or of detached shafts.<sup>10</sup>

Other profiles present in the Lady Chapel suggest the presence of a mason with experience of early Gothic work in the Winchester/Salisbury area. An instance of this is the undulating design of the soffit mouldings in the arcade arches, and of the rib profile (Fig. 69, 310.B, 316.B; and Fig. 71, 328), a motif not encountered at Pershore but quite frequently seen in the south of England especially from the 1220s. It is common for rib profiles, as at Winchester retrochoir, Salisbury and the Temple Church in London,<sup>11</sup> but it is less usual for the soffit of an arch, in the way it is used at Oxford. In this respect, a rare parallel is provided by the profile of the entrance arch into the eastern chapels of

<sup>2</sup> F.B. Andrews, *The Benedictine Abbey of SS. Mary, Peter and Paul, at Pershore, Worcestershire* (1901), page of 'Details of Moldings', centre.

<sup>3</sup> Other examples in the west include Glastonbury, galilee; Lichfield N. transept, W. clearstorey; and Gloucester, 'reliquary' in N. transept: Warwick Archive drawing numbers GLA.665 etc., and GLO.575 etc.

<sup>4</sup> References in this style refer to the drawing number in the Warwick Mouldings Archive, c/o Dr. R.K. Morris, History of Art Department, University of Warwick, Coventry.

<sup>5</sup> H. Brakspear, 'A West Country School of Masons', *Archaeologia*, lxxxi (1931), 1-18.

<sup>6</sup> See Andrews op. cit. note 2, 'Details of Moldings', centre; and Archive PER.254.

<sup>7</sup> And probably for the N. arcade bay II.3-4; traces remaining on pier II.3 suggest bases of the water-holding type.

<sup>8</sup> See Andrews op.cit. note 2, 'Details of Moldings', bottom left; and Archive PER.257 and 154.

<sup>9</sup> Andrews op.cit. note 2, 'Details of Moldings', top left, 'Choir Arcade'; and Archive PER.160.

<sup>10</sup> The use of marble at Pershore is restricted to the Lady Chapel area, which is a different phase of the work; see further Stalley and Thurlby op.cit. note 1.

<sup>11</sup> There are also examples in the west, at Gloucester (passage to infirmary cloister) and Tewkesbury (N.-E. chapel of N. transept); Archive GLO.832 and TEW.420.

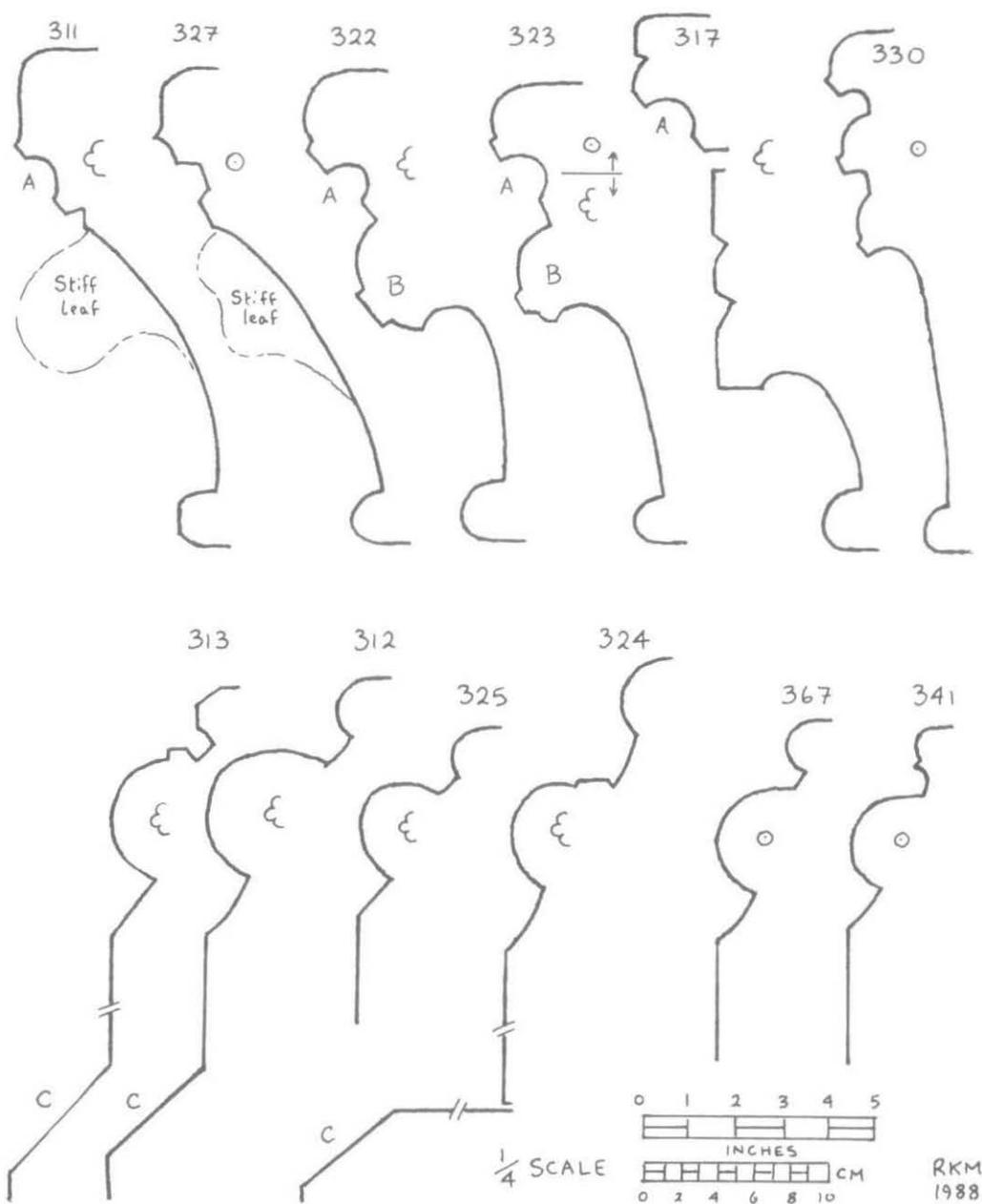


Fig. 70. Lady Chapel profiles, capitals and bases: 311/312, S. arcade and vault responds; 313, S. arcade, E. respond; 317, N. arcade, W. bay; 322/325, arch to transept, S. respond; 323/324, arch to transept, N. respond; 327, vault respond, N. side, pier II.3.A; 330, blind arcade, pier II.3.B; 341, E. window, rere-arch; 367, base *ex situ* in Latin Chapel, pier II.3.C.

the retrochoir of Winchester Cathedral (c.1200–20),<sup>12</sup> where the only significant difference to the design of the Oxford arcades is that the axial roll is filleted (Archive WIN.141). Another characteristic of the Winchester retrochoir which recurs at Oxford is the use of two fillet mouldings separated by a semi-circular hollow as the basis for abaci and stringcourses (Fig. 70, 311.A, 322.A, 323.A, 317.A; Fig. 71, 332: Archive WIN.105, 112 (Purbeck), 302). The evidence suggests that this idea may have originated at Winchester, perhaps initially as a design for Purbeck marble components; other examples, apart from Oxford, span the period c.1220–50, e.g. Romsey nave W. bays, Chichester nave S. chapels, Gloucester 'reliquary' in N. transept (Archive ROM.624, 635, etc.; CHI.663 (Purbeck); GLO.594).

The entrance arch which leads into the Lady Chapel from the E. aisle of the N. transept is somewhat different in character from the lateral arcades, as also are its capitals. The distinctive feature of the arch is the symmetrical undercut roll and fillet moulding used for the soffit (Fig. 71, 321.A), which is not frequently encountered in this position on arches, but which is found in a relatively similar formation at Salisbury Cathedral, in the arches between the choir aisles and the retrochoir, dating from the early 1220s (Archive SAL.144). The only difference is that it employs keel mouldings for the lateral mouldings instead of the undercut roll and fillet mouldings used at Oxford (Fig. 71, 321.B). The symmetrical undercut roll and fillet occurs most frequently in ribs, occasionally as early as the late 12th century, e.g. Chichester Cathedral retrochoir (Archive CHI.116), but is most common in the 1220s and 1230s and later, e.g. St. Albans W. porches, Portsmouth Garrison Church, Ely choir (arcade arch, 1234sq.), Chichester nave aisles, Romsey E. clearstory (Archive POG.113, ELY.250, CHI.614, ROM.205). On this evidence the Oxford arch is unlikely to date before c.1230, and this is corroborated by the style of the capitals. The latter introduce into the Lady Chapel the three-unit moulded capital (Fig. 70, 322, 323), which was beginning to appear in both the south and the west towards 1230, as in the Castle Hall at Winchester (1222–36), the clearstorey of Worcester Cathedral (Archive WOR.270 etc.) and the passage to the Infirmary cloister at Gloucester (Archive GLO.830). Either area could have inspired the general design of the Lady Chapel examples, but the specific detail of an undercut roll and fillet moulding is more typical of the west, e.g. Wenlock Priory nave, Gloucester 'reliquary' (Archive WEN.614, GLO.591, 592). Thus the Lady Chapel entrance arch demonstrates a synthesis of ideas from the west midlands and from the Wessex area which is compatible with the stylistic analysis above of the sources of the main arcades.

With regard to the relationship of the work with Pershore, it seems more likely that it postdates the choir there. First, it has been shown that a number of features in the Lady Chapel are likely to date from around 1230 and thus later than the generally accepted date for the Pershore choir. Second, the complete combination of mouldings in the Lady Chapel makes it more credible that the influence came from Pershore rather than vice-versa. For example, though a type of undercut roll and fillet is used earlier in the Wessex area in the Winchester retrochoir (e.g. Archive WIN.141), the form taken by this moulding in the Lady Chapel looks to be much more of a direct derivation from Pershore rather than having evolved from earlier examples like Winchester.

The mouldings of the Lady Chapel are reasonably uniform, except on the S. side of the former 'pre-Latin Chapel' site, where their variety suggests some hesitation and inconsistency in the building process. Here (between II.3 and II.4), where an arch was cut through the former wall to the 'pre-Latin Chapel' or inserted to replace a

<sup>12</sup> P. Draper, 'The Retrochoir of Winchester Cathedral', *Archit. Hist.* xxi (1978), 6–7.

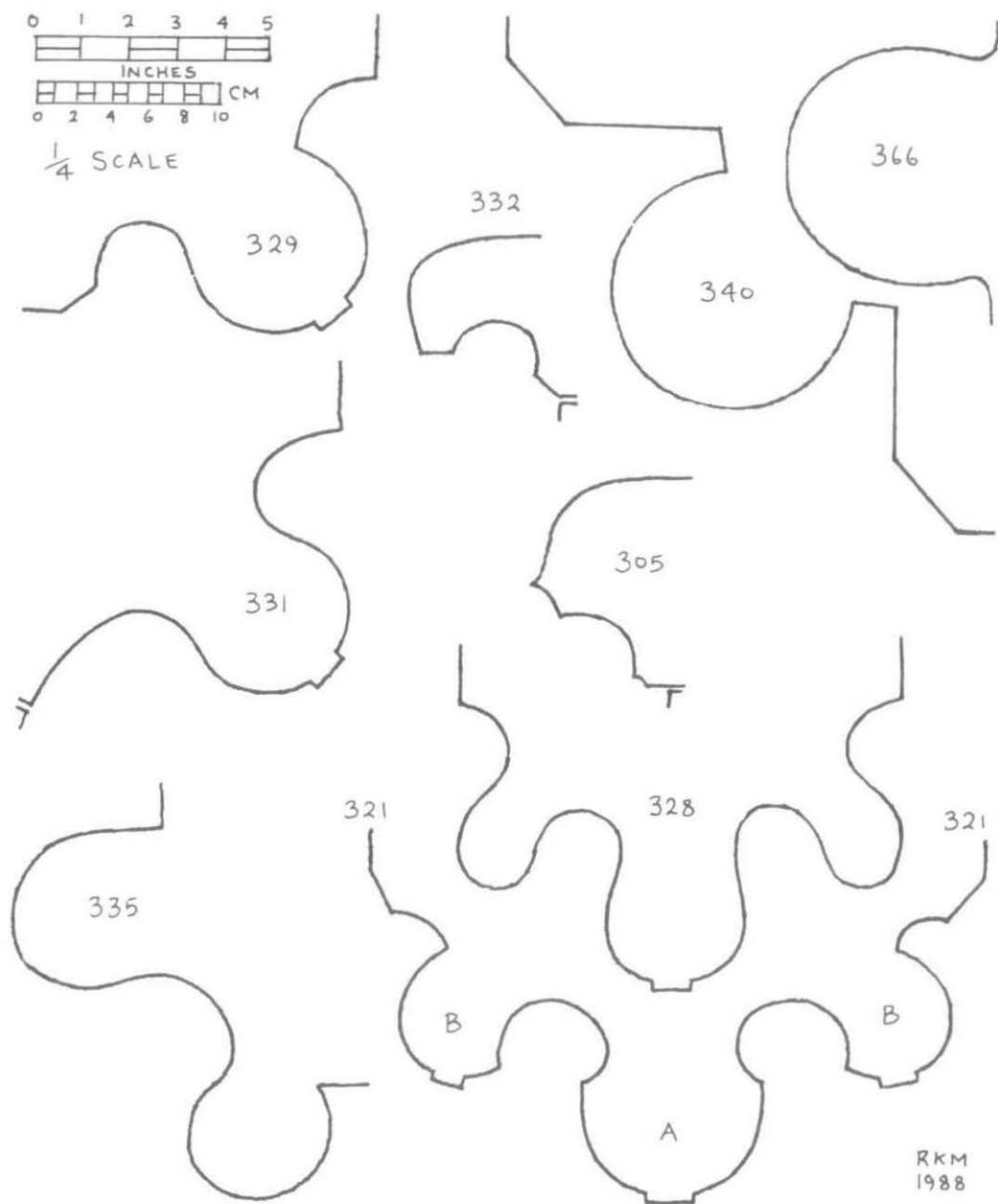


Fig. 71. Lady Chapel profiles, miscellaneous: 305, E. wall, interior stringcourse (renewed); 321, arch to transept; 328, vault, main rib; 329, vault, wall-rib; 331, vault, wall-rib (N. side, variant); 332, stringcourse used as arch, pier II.3, S.-E. face; 335, piscina, arch/jamb; 340, E. window, rere-arch, jamb; 366, shaft (probably *ex situ*) in Latin Chapel, pier II.3.C.

Romanesque arch, other hands appear, as implied by the rather crude and somewhat old-fashioned design for the arcade capitals (Fig. 70, 317). Was this perhaps one of the first works carried out in the Lady Chapel campaign? Also, at the former S.-E. angle of the 'pre-Latin Chapel', the capital for the Lady Chapel vault springing is different from any of the others (Fig. 70, 327; pier II.3.A). Furthermore, the adaptation of this angle, to accommodate the greater width of the Lady Chapel in the two bays E. of the 'pre-Latin Chapel', created a blind arch across the splay supported at its N. end by a capital unique in design to the Lady Chapel (II.3.B). It is a four-unit moulded capital, the top three elements of which consist of partial roll and fillet mouldings (Fig. 70, 330), and therefore presumably it belongs with the introduction of moulded capitals with comparable features in the entrance arch from the N. transept (Fig. 70, 322, 323). Like them, the thinking behind its design is probably western and a general parallel for it may be seen in the nave arcade capitals at Wenlock Priory (Archive WEN.614).

#### THE NORTH ARCADE OF THE LADY CHAPEL

On first impression, it appears that the N. arcade in the two E. bays of the Lady Chapel (bays II.1-2 and 2-3) belongs with the general rebuilding of the Latin Chapel, as both works are in the Decorated style. However, closer examination suggests the possibility that the bases, piers and capitals of the arcade could date from the later 13th century, whereas the arcade arch above them and all the other main features of the Latin Chapel are clearly well into the 14th century, as will be shown later.

The profile of the arcade responds (Fig. 73, 360) and the centre pier is unconvincing as a mature Decorated design and lacks the stylishness of the arcade arches above. The use of a triplet of shafts at each of the axial points reflects loosely the earlier piers of the Lady Chapel, but the profile is actually extremely close to the responds of the tower arches at St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, usually dated shortly after 1294 (Archive BRR.704). In particular the prominence given to the circular core of the Lady Chapel pier is less likely in a 14th-century design, and this feature may be compared with the ambulatory piers executed at Hailes Abbey (Glos., 1270-77).<sup>13</sup> The base used on the responds and pier (Fig. 73, 365)<sup>14</sup> is of a double-roll type most common in the second half of the 13th century and found locally, for example, at Merton College chapel, 1289-94; though in the east of England it continued in use into the 14th century.<sup>15</sup> More distinctive is the sub-base (Fig. 73, 365.E), which appears to be a local design found again at Merton and also at the base of the tomb-chest of the military effigy in Dorchester Abbey (?c.1280-90).<sup>16</sup> Further afield, but still in the south of England, versions of this profile may be seen on sub-bases in the chapter-house undercroft of Wells Cathedral (?c.1250) and in the arcades of St. Thomas', Winchelsea, c.1290-1300 (Archive WEL.824, 85; and WIA.203).

The profile of the arcade capitals (Fig. 73, 363) is of the 'three-unit scroll' variety

<sup>13</sup> Illustrated in H. Brakspear, 'The Architecture of Hayles Abbey', *Bristol and Glouc. Arch. Soc. Trans.* xxiv (1901), 132; and Archive TED.700.

<sup>14</sup> And also the base cut into the earlier 13th-century shaft of the blind arch on pier II.3 at B, so that this arch also looks to be from the Decorated period at first sight; but is actually Early English, and goes with the wall-rib (Fig. 71, 331) abutting the later Decorated arcade arch in bays II, 1-2 and 2-3.

<sup>15</sup> See further R.K. Morris, 'The Development of Later Gothic Mouldings in England, c.1250-1400, Part II', *Archit. Hist.* xxii (1979), 26.

<sup>16</sup> P.J. Lankester, 'A Military Effigy in Dorchester Abbey, Oxon.', *Oxoniensia*, lii (1987), 145-72 and Fig. 9.



Fig. 72. East respond of arcade between Latin and Lady Chapels (pier II.1), seen from inside watching-loft. (Ph. John Blair.)

which was standard in the Decorated period,<sup>17</sup> and thus less helpful for dating purposes. The Oxford examples are made slightly less conventional by having a keel moulding for the bell (Fig. 73, 363.B), but even this variant of the 'three-scroll' enjoys quite a long period of usage in the south of England: from the main arcade of Exeter Cathedral and the dado of Wells chapter-house, both around 1290, to the ambulatory of Tewkesbury Abbey and the S. bays of the nave at St. Albans in the 1320s and later (Archive EXE.201 (Purbeck), WEL.874, TEW.110, 116).<sup>18</sup>

However, two small details hint that the capitals may belong with the piers rather than with the later Decorated work. First, the fillet from the axial moulding of the pier is carried up as far as the bell of the capital (Fig. 73, 363.D; Fig. 72), which is a common trait in Early English work, but usually encountered in the 14th century only in conservative circumstances where an attempt has been made to blend in with earlier work, as in the rebuilt nave bays at St. Albans (after 1323) or in the nave of Beverley Minster. Second, there are slight differences of profile between these capitals and those of the vault springers on the N. wall of the Latin Chapel, observable in the fillet beneath the bead moulding of the abacus (Fig. 73, cf. 363.A and 370.A) and in the fillet beneath the keel moulding (Fig. 73, cf. 363.C and 370.C). In these details, the capitals of the vault responds on the S. side of the Latin Chapel, at piers II.1 and II.2, are exactly the

<sup>17</sup> Morris *op. cit.* note 15, 20sqq.

<sup>18</sup> For St. Albans, see J. Neale, *The Abbey Church of St. Alban, Hertfordshire* (1877), e.g. Pl. 18, 'Cap to Nave Piers': the bell is more of a pear moulding than a keel.

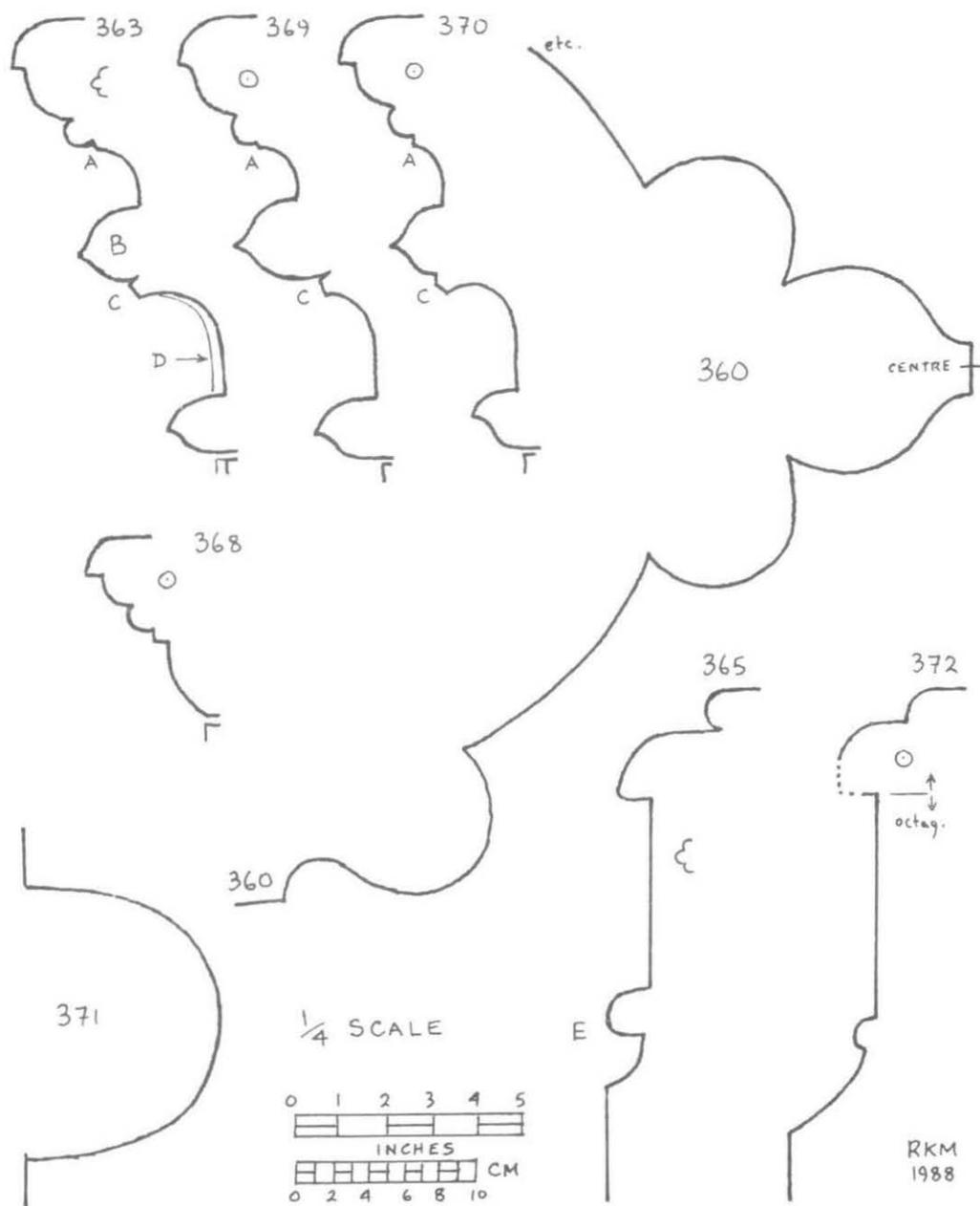


Fig. 73. Latin Chapel profiles, S. arcade and vault responds: 360, arcade respond (partial); 363/365, arcade capital and base; 368, vault respond capital, S. side, pier II.3.C only; 369, standard vault respond capital, S. side; 370/372, vault respond, N. side, capital and base; 371, vault respond, N. side.

same profile as those of the S. arcade (Fig. 73, cf. 363 and 369). Thus, the differences between the 'three-scroll' capitals on the N. and S. sides of the Latin Chapel might indicate two building periods, with the N. capitals representing a 14th-century attempt at replication. Moreover, this distinction between the vault responds applies more clearly to their bases, which also show slight differences in profile, and in particular the sub-bases of those on the N. wall are part-octagonal rather than curved (Fig. 73, cf. 365 and 372).

At this point it may be appropriate to comment on one anomalous area of masonry on the S. side of the Latin Chapel, at pier II.3.C. An early 13th-century base is visible here (Fig. 70, 367), supporting what must also be a wall-shaft of the same date, as its size and profile are closer to those of the Early English work in the Lady Chapel than to the 14th-century respond shafts on the N. wall of the Latin Chapel (cf. Fig. 71, 366 and 340; and Fig. 73, 371). Sturdy's excavations make it difficult to believe that the Early English base is *in situ* (above, pp. 79, 84), and therefore the base and shaft must have been moved to this position during a remodelling which involved the demolition of the old E. wall of the 'pre-Latin Chapel'. As the profile of the base is the same design as others still surviving in the eastern parts of the Lady Chapel (Fig. 70, 312), the most likely moment for this re-use is when the N. wall of the two eastern bays was replaced by the arcade and spare Early English components became available. Later, the shaft at II.3.C received its Decorated capital (Fig. 73, 368) when the Latin Chapel was vaulted in its present form, c.1338.

#### THE LATER DECORATED WORK IN THE LATIN CHAPEL

There can be no doubt that the final remodelling of the Latin Chapel (Figs. 74–6) took place in the later Decorated period. The flowing tracery of the N. windows (Fig. 74) is reminiscent of the curvilinear patterns of north-east England and, more locally, of windows in Oxfordshire churches such as Witney and Chipping Norton, all dictating a date in the second quarter of the 14th century. It will be argued here that the other profiles which belong with the mouldings of the windows are the ground course mouldings (Fig. 75, 350, 351), the ribs of the vault, including the unusual wall-rib added in the two W. bays on the S. side (Fig. 75, 362), and the arcade arches in the two E. bays.

The mouldings are sufficiently distinctive to provide useful parallels, and though it will be seen that they connect with more than one region, the prevalent source of influence appears to be the south-west. The profile of the diagonal and transverse ribs of the vault (Fig. 75, 373) is exactly the same design as the wall-ribs of the main vault at Bristol Cathedral, c.1320–30 (Archive BRI.213), and related rib designs are characteristic of that area, e.g. Bristol St. Mary Redcliffe, N. porch, and Wells retrochoir.<sup>19</sup> In support of the Bristol connexion is the fact that the ridge-ribs of the Latin Chapel vault consist of a small profile (hollow-chamfer) decorated with square fleurons (visible on Fig. 76), both of which features are found in the aisle vaults at Bristol: the small profile in the ridge ribs (plain chamfer); and the fleurons decorating the 'bridges' beneath them. Moreover, the use of foliage looking rather like an arum lily to decorate one of the main bosses in the Chapel vault seems to relate to a similar motif used occasionally in the S. choir aisle and Berkeley Chapel at Bristol.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Morris *op.cit.* note 15, 16–18, 'Western, Third Variety'.

<sup>20</sup> See further R.K. Morris, 'Ballflower Work in Gloucester and its Vicinity', in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Gloucester and Tewkesbury* (Trans. of B.A.A. Conference 1981, publ. 1985), 104.

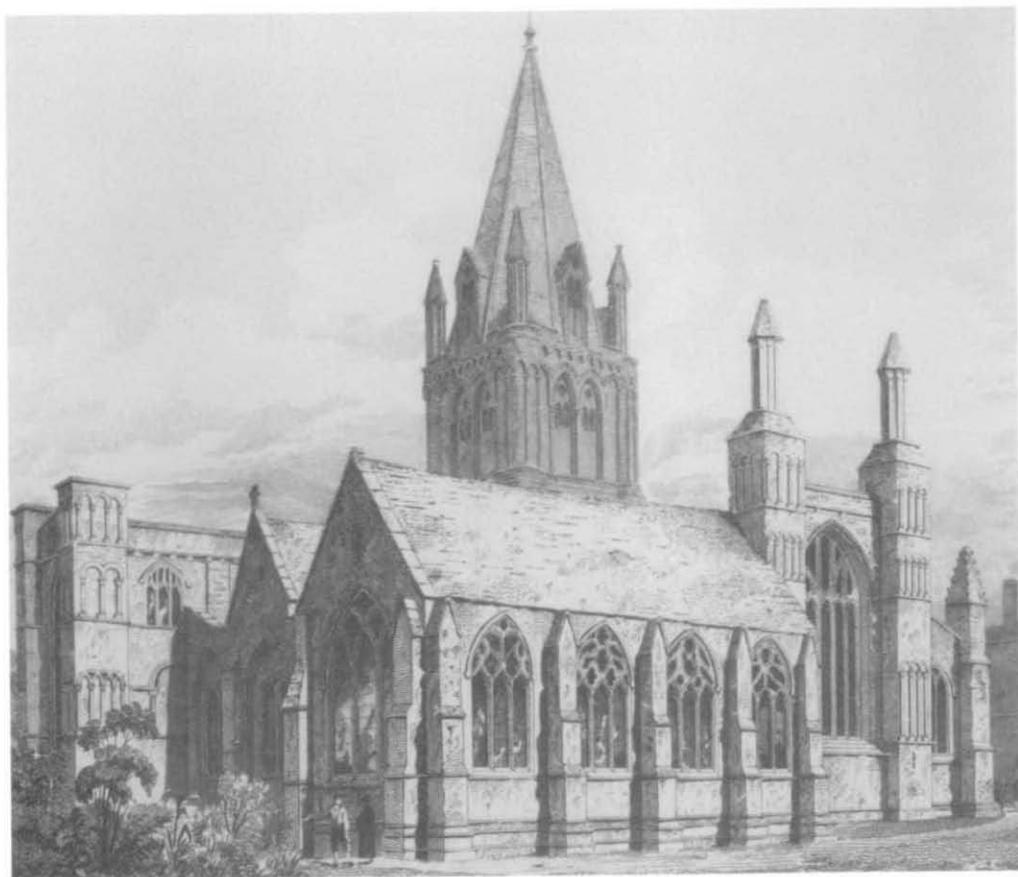


Fig. 74. The Cathedral from the N.E., showing the Latin Chapel and spire: engraving from J. Britton, *Cathedral Church of Oxford* (1821), Pl. II.

Parallels in the west can also be found for other features. The only usage known to the author of the main wall-rib design (Fig. 75, 375) is in the choir clearstorey at Tewkesbury (Archive TEW.214), and exactly the same design for the interior rere-arch of the windows also occurs in the same location (Fig. 75, 357; Archive TEW.206). The clearstorey zone is well dated to c.1330–40 and therefore constitutes a useful indicator as to the likely date of the Latin Chapel. The form of the other wall-rib/arcade arch moulding (Fig. 75, 362), used only in the W. bays abutting the earlier arcade arches (bays II.3–4 and II.4–5), recalls features in the retrochoir area of Wells Cathedral, but specifically resembles the recess arch of Sir Robert Stapledon's tomb at Exeter, c.1320 (Archive EXE.935). The steeply angled chamfer mouldings, as found in the N. window mullions (Fig. 75, 354), became increasingly popular during the 14th century, particularly in the west. Examples which are very close in size to either the interior or exterior profiles (Fig. 75, 354, 'INT', 'EXT') include the W. clearstorey window of Exeter Lady Chapel (same template as INT), the S. porch of Bristol St. Mary Redcliffe, and the great hall of Berkeley Castle (Archive EXE.307, BRR.650, BER.821). More locally, an early example of this type which is firmly dateable is the mullion profile of the sacristy at Merton

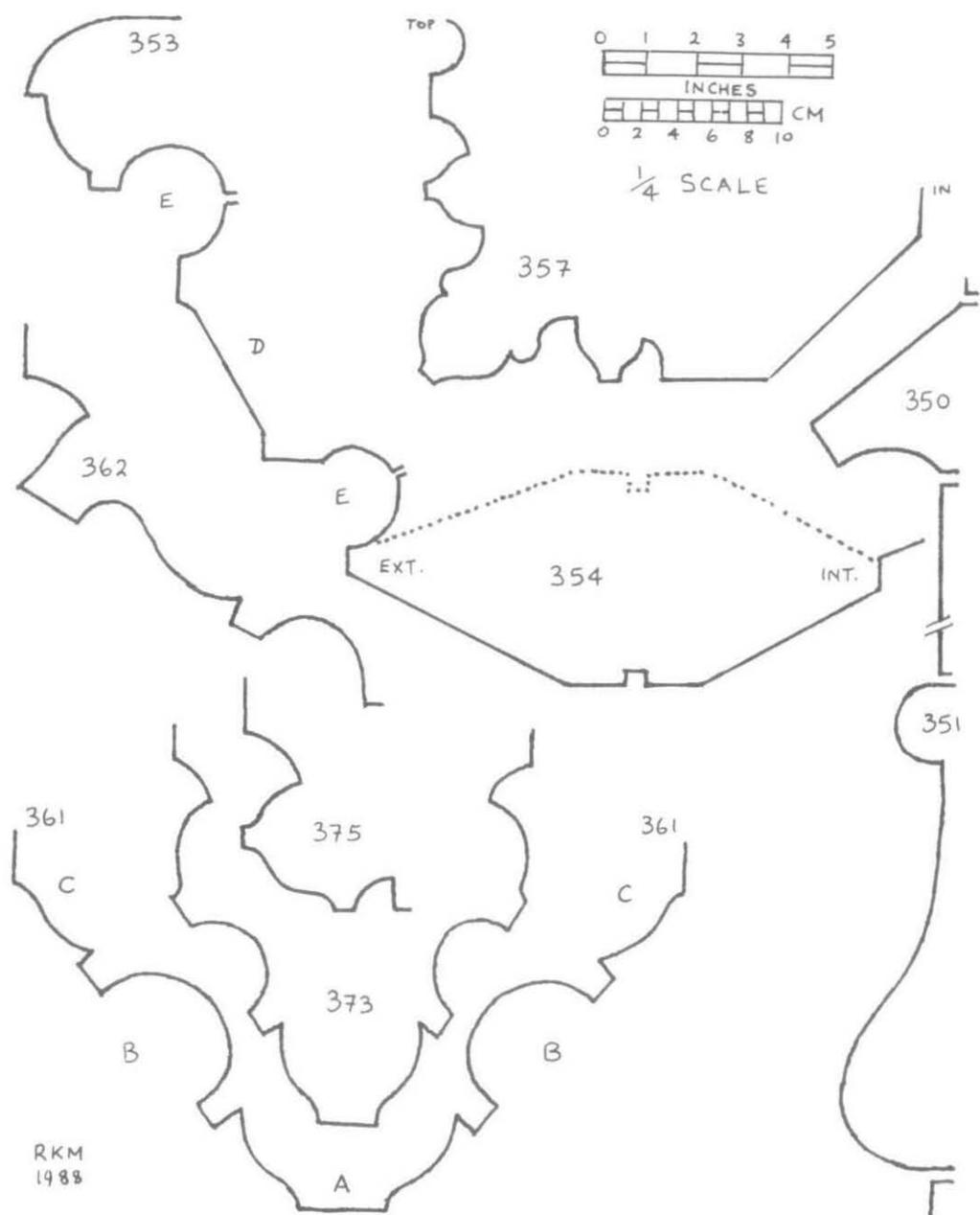


Fig. 75. Latin Chapel profiles, windows, ribs, arches: 350/351, exterior stringcourse and ground-course; 353, N. windows, exterior rere-arch; 354, N. windows, mullion; 357, N. windows, interior rere-arch; 361, S. arcade, E. bays, arch; 362, vault, wall-rib, S. side (W. bays only); 373, vault, diagonal and transverse rib; 375, vault, standard wall-rib.

College chapel, 1309–11 (Archive OME.404), which combines the exterior dimensions and interior geometry of the Latin Chapel mullion.

Turning to consider the arch design employed for the S. arcade in the two E. bays of the Latin Chapel, this is the most stylish element of the Decorated work but hard to appreciate fully because of the interference from the later 'watching-chamber'. Comparison with the main rib profile suggests a strong affinity in design between them (Fig. 75, cf. 361 and 373), and we have seen that the rib has a western pedigree. Therefore it is not surprising to find several parallels in that area for its main characteristic, the axial moulding of the arch treated as a broad roll and fillet, flanked on each side by a semi-circular hollow with paired canted fillets (Fig. 75, 361.A and B). The best parallels are the main arches of the pulpitum at Exeter, 1317–25, a work of Master Thomas of Witney, and the S. arcade arches of the nave at St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, perhaps c.1340 (Archive EXE.907, BRR.615). However, the most exact comparison for the whole arch formation, with the demi-roll and fillet moulding returned at the top on each side (Fig. 75, 361.C), is the soffit of the N. arcade arches in the three W. bays of the E. arm at Ely, 1321–37 (Archive, ELY.202); and this leads one to consider other possible links with East Anglian workshops.

For example, another feature of the Latin Chapel which has always suggested Ely to the author is the use of fleurons to decorate the ridge-ribs of the vault, as found in the choir aisle vaults at Ely: though also employed at Bristol Cathedral, as we have seen. In addition, the design of the exterior frame of the N. windows (Fig. 75, 353) is of a type favoured in the E. of England in the later Decorated period. The characteristic feature is the sunk chamfer moulding in the centre of the formation, undercut at each end by deep three-quarter hollows (Fig. 75, 353.D and E). Numerous examples may be seen at Ely and Snettisham (Norfolk), and other Decorated churches in East Anglia use the three-quarter hollow moulding and the sunk chamfer, though not in combination, e.g. Trumpington (Cambs.), Ingham (Norfolk).<sup>21</sup> However, the feature was also in use in the south and nearer to the Oxfordshire area by the time the Latin Chapel was being built. An early example of the design is in one of the S. aisle tomb-recesses at St. Thomas's, Winchelsea (after 1322; Archive, WIA.901), and the design is also found in the upper parts of the S. nave bays at St. Albans, after 1323.<sup>22</sup> It is also relevant to note that Merton College chapel, Oxford, had consistently used comparable moulding formations for arches since 1289/90, through the sacristy of 1309–11 to the entrance arches for the proposed nave aisles (?1330). The formation shared with the Latin Chapel the use of a prominent scroll hoodmould and a series of three-quarter hollows with fillets; the hollow-chamfer was never used, but in the nave aisle arches a wave moulding is worked in a similar fashion on the chamfer plane between two of the hollows (Archive OME.752).

Considering all this information together, the case is still strongest for the west of England as the main source of the Latin Chapel's architectural style. In particular, there is evidence for the presence of a mason with experience of a major workshop at Bristol, and for links with the north Cotswolds area around Tewkesbury. In addition, one must take account of the inevitable presence of more local influence, as demonstrated in the connexions with the Merton College works, and also in this context the similarities with the Decorated bays in the nave at St. Albans must be given full consideration. Despite the one striking parallel with Ely, the overall weight of the evidence suggests that there

<sup>21</sup> See further Morris *op.cit.* note 15, 'Part I', Vol. xxi (1978), 29–31.

<sup>22</sup> Neale *op.cit.* note 18, Pl. 20.

is no direct link with the workshop there, but it could well be that St. Albans is the intermediary between them, as it shares features with both. For example, apart from the undercut sunk chamfer mentioned above, its arches and ribs make extensive use of the lower part of the Latin Chapel arcade arch design (Fig. 75, 361); and its decorative repertoire includes square fleurons.<sup>23</sup> Other parallels specifically with the Latin Chapel include the frequent use of bead mouldings and deep hollows to flank a roll and fillet, as in the Chapel window rere-arch, and also of a 'three-unit scroll' capital with a pear moulding for the bell, comparable to the capital type on the N. wall of the Latin Chapel, as noted above. Furthermore, we know from Neale that one of the nave aisle windows at St. Albans used plain sunk chamfer mouldings for its frame,<sup>24</sup> and this finds a parallel in the rere-arch of the E. window of the N. choir aisle at Oxford, which must belong with the Latin Chapel windows because their exterior mouldings are identical (as Fig. 75, 353).

In fact, a case can be made that the master mason of the Latin Chapel could have been Henry Wy, the master to whom the nave bays at St. Albans are attributed.<sup>25</sup> If so, it would appear possible that at some stage in his career he had gained experience in one of the western workshops, and that his might be an important name to consider in assessing the stylistic connexions between architecture in the home counties and the south-west in the early 14th century. Unfortunately, for the purposes of comparison with other buildings, we can glean little from St. Albans of Henry Wy's preferences in tracery design, partly because of later damage and restorations but mainly because most of the apertures in the new work consist of single lancets to blend in with the Early English bays. However, the surviving tracery of the Latin Chapel may now help to fill this gap and make further research possible.

#### SUMMARY OF THE LATIN CHAPEL WORK AND ITS DATES

For the arcade in the two E. bays linking the Latin and Lady Chapels, the evidence of the bases and piers will allow a date anywhere in the last quarter of the 13th century, and thus might be connected with the translation of St. Frideswide's relics in 1289. If the capitals are considered to be part of the same work, then a date much before c.1290 is precluded.

If the hypothesis is correct that the lower parts of these arcades predate the rest of the work in the Latin Chapel, then it is unclear why the Chapel required rebuilding within fifty years. One explanation might be that the initial extension of the 'pre-Latin Chapel' was piecemeal and unsatisfactory in its narrow proportions: another might be that it was never finished. As for the date of the final remodelling, the parallels cited above give a clear indication that the work cannot be earlier than the 1320s, and most probably belongs to the decade c.1330-40. This tallies with the date towards the mid-century usually given for the glass in the N. windows, and may well be related to the establishment of the Burghersh chantry at St. Frideswide's altar in 1338 (below, p. 245). If so, it would provide a rare example of later Decorated architecture in Oxfordshire with a relatively firm date.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Pls. 18-22, for illustrations of these and what follows.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Pl. 22.

<sup>25</sup> J.H. Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects: a Biographical Dictionary down to 1550* (revised ed. 1984), 351.



Fig. 76. Latin Chapel: interior looking E. c.1865. (Taunt photograph: Local History Collection, Oxford City Library.)