# St. Frideswide's Monastery: Problems and Possibilities

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SUMMARY

*This final paper reviews the evidence for the Anglo-Saxon minster at Oxford; its churches and cemeteries; the process of the Romanesque rebuilding; and the locations of St. Frideswide's grave and shrine. An early precinct, pre-dating the creation of the town, may have been laid out along the edge of the gravel terrace, its main church sited on a bluff overlooking a now-lost channel of the Thames; possibly it included St. Aldate's church as well as the church on the later Priory site. Radiocarbon evidence shows that the cemetery existed probably by the 9th and certainly by the 10th century; the balance of probability favours the establishment of a minster here in Frideswide's own day. The minster was apparently given to Abingdon Abbey in the early 11th century, re-founded as a house of canons in 1049, and finally reformed as an Augustinian priory c.1120. The Romanesque church and cloister were probably laid out by Prior Robert c.1140–50 (in an extension to the precinct obtained by diverting the town wall) but built in slow stages. The E. cloister range, choir and N.E. chapel existed by 1180, when Frideswide's relics were translated; the canons then took a new decision to build both transepts with W. and E. aisles, producing curious anomalies in the ground-plan as the church was completed during the 1180s and 1190s. The square four-bay N. chapel, possibly part of an ensemble recalling the Holy Sepulchre, housed Frideswide's relics from 1180 onwards; the shrine was moved slightly in 1289, but remained in the N.E chapels until the Dissolution. This location may perpetuate the original grave site on the central axis of the Anglo-Saxon church, which probably lay on the N. side of its Romanesque successor. The replacement or supplementation of pre-Conquest minster churches by Romanesque conventual churches is discussed in the light of this and other cases.*

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## OXFORD BEFORE THE TOWN

Oxford was a fortified late Anglo-Saxon town, listed in the Burghal Hidage.[1] Evidence is growing that some of the formally-planned burghal towns existed well before the age of

[1] The best summaries of the extensive literature are in E.M. Jope, 'Saxon Oxford and its Region', in D.B. Harden (ed.), *Dark-Age Britain: Studies Presented to E.T. Leeds* (1956), 234–58; T. Hassall, 'Archaeology of Oxford City', in G. Briggs, J. Cook and T. Rowley (eds.), *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region* (1986), 115–34.

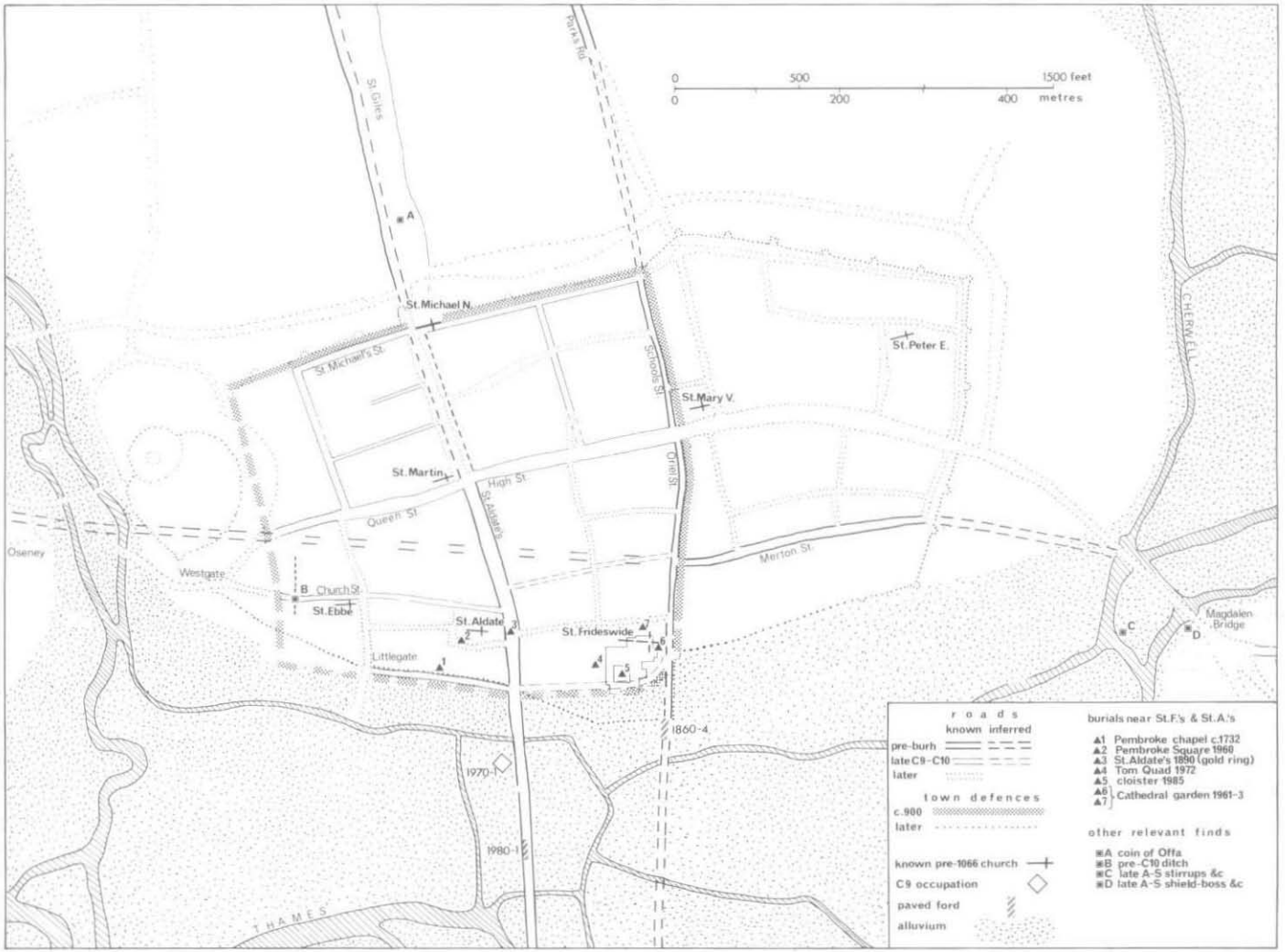


Fig. 90. Anglo-Saxon Oxford, showing churches, burials and other finds mentioned in the text in relation to possible pre-*burh* features.

Alfred, but not, so far, for Oxford; indeed, such archaeological evidence as we have suggests that the rectilinear grid of streets and the enclosing bank were laid out *de novo* around the year 900.[2] If there was an 8th-century minster on the site of St. Frideswide's, the town must have been established around or beside it: we need to consider the topography of Oxford before Oxford. Fig. 90 shows the street-plan of the *burh*, in so far as it can at present be reconstructed, in relation to possible older features.

The southwards-projecting tongue of the gravel terrace on which Oxford stands is a classic Upper Thames settlement site, likely to have seen human occupation from the Neolithic period onwards. For the same reasons, it is a place where river-crossings and intersections of through-routes can be expected. One W.-E. track, from Wytham and Binsey to Headington and Shotover, crossed the gravel terrace well to the N. of Oxford (above, pp. 6–10 and Fig. 1). The course, and indeed the very existence, of another W.–E. route further S., through the site of the town, remains uncertain. Topographical anomalies, notably the sharp bend of High St. between St. Mary the Virgin (at the presumed original East Gate) and Magdalen Bridge, suggest a drastic re-alignment when the town was laid out. Any earlier route is likely to have been nearer to the edge of the gravel terrace, perhaps (as suggested in Fig. 90) running eastwards from Oseney through the area to the N. of Church St.,[3] following Jury Lane and Merton St., and joining the later road at Magdalen Bridge.[4]

Better-defined are the routes from N. to S. The funnel of St. Giles, where the Woodstock and Banbury roads converge on the North Gate of the town, was to all appearances created for this purpose: before the 10th century these roads, and perhaps others parallel with them, may well have continued southwards to separate Thames crossings.[5] Activity from the 8th century onwards on the line of St. Aldate's, the main crossing and perhaps the original 'oxen-ford', has been demonstrated archaeologically.[6] The northwards continuation of this route, through the site of Oxford and along the Woodstock Road, may explain the coin of Offa found at the Martyrs' Memorial (Fig. 90, site A).[7]

The obvious candidate for a 'pre-town' continuation of the Banbury Road towards the Thames is Parks Road, which can be projected southwards, along Schools St. and Shidyard (now Oriel) St., as an intramural road on the E. side of the primary town. The former existence of a major route here receives strong support from early 12th-century writs allowing the canons of St. Frideswide's to block up an intramural road bordering their precinct and to control a gate in the town wall (below, pp. 236–7): the Parks Road – Oriel St. alignment now stops at the N. boundary of the precinct, but it once continued southwards to a former gate in the wall flanked by the Corpus Christi bastion, due E. of

[2] One indication of the date of origin may be the penny of Edward the Elder found lying on primary road metalling in New Inn Hall St. (B. Durham in *C.B.A. Group 9 Newsletter*, x (1980), 158).

[3] Church St. itself cannot be the line of a pre-burghal route, since it crosses a ditch filled by *c.*1000 (below, note 77).

[4] A bridge over the Cherwell ( *(of) cere willa bricga*) existed by 1004 (*Cart. Frid.* i, 8). Two groups of late Anglo-Saxon military equipment (Fig. 90, sites C and D) have been found to the S.W. of Magdalen Bridge: see W.A. Seaby, 'Late Dark Age Finds from the Cherwell and Ray', *Oxoniensia*, xv (1950), 29–43. Another possible line for the early route (albeit through the marshy flood-plain) is slightly further to the S., over Milham bridge and causeway (Wood, *City*, i, 412–14).

[5] David Sturdy (pers. comm.) suggests, on the basis of a detailed analysis of deeds, surveys, maps etc., that there were as many as four medieval N.–S. routes through North Oxford.

[6] B.G. Durham, 'Archaeological Investigations in St. Aldate's, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xlii (1977), 83–203; Idem, 'The Thames Crossing at Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xlix (1984), 57–100. Cf. R.H.C. Davis, 'The Ford, the River and the City', *Oxoniensia*, xxxviii (1973), 258–67.

[7] *Oxoniensia*, xvii–xviii (1952–3), 106 note.

the Priory church (Fig. 92).[8] South of the gate, this road crossed a former river-channel by a paved ford uncovered during building work in 1863 (below, p. 229 and Figs. 91–2). The date of the ford could be anything from Roman to late medieval (in 1266 Henry III ordered a ford below St. Frideswide's Priory to be deepened and dug out),[9] but at least it shows that St. Aldate's was not the only Thames crossing, and need not necessarily have been the oldest.

This evidence suggests a context for St. Frideswide's before the *burh*: on a favoured settlement location, at an intersection of routeways and between two Thames crossings. The prospect of a *burh* established around an older minster church need cause us no problems. In mid to late Anglo-Saxon England, minsters were among the most important foci for urban growth;[10] several Roman towns re-used as *burhs* contained minsters before that re-use took place,[11] as did some other non-Roman burghal sites.[12] In this respect there is a striking resemblance between Oxford and Wareham, which also encapsulates a pre-burghal minster (Lady St. Mary) on the river which forms its southern boundary.[13]

## THE CHURCH IN ANGLO-SAXON OXFORD

Like most large towns in southern and eastern England, Oxford abounded in churches by *c.*1130.[14] This proliferation may be a distinctively post-1050 phenomenon,[15] and the small Oxford churches known to be older were all in a special category, serving the urban *curiae* of substantial rural landlords:[16] St. Martin (Abingdon Abbey),[17] St. Ebbe (Eynsham Abbey),[18] St. Mary the Virgin,[19] and possibly St. Peter-le-Bailey.[20] St. Aldate's, where the case seems rather different, is discussed below (pp. 233–5).

There were also, apart from St. Frideswide's itself, two pre-Conquest churches of

[8] The bastion is in the angle between the S. town wall and its return southwards to enclose the E. side of the Priory precinct. Its function to defend a postern is proposed by B. Durham in *C.B.A. Group 9 Newsletter*, xii (1982), 156–9. Shidyard St. still ran to the bastion in 1299, when a house on its E. side was said to be 'at the head of the high altar of St. Frideswide': H.E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford*, i (O.H.S. n.s. xiv, 1960), 212, tenement SE 93.

[9] *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1258–66*, 663.

[10] See for instance J. Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (1986), 140–6; J. Blair, 'Minster Churches in the Landscape', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (1988), 40–50.

[11] E.g. Winchester, Gloucester, Chester.

[12] E.g. Hereford, Wareham.

[13] See plan in *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxl (1983), 53.

[14] For the general context see C.N.L. Brooke, 'The Missionary at Home', *Studies in Church History*, vi (1970), 59–83, and D. Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester* (*Winchester Studies*, ii, 1985), ch.5. For histories of individual Oxford churches see *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 369–412.

[15] E.g. All Saints: *Oxoniensia*, xxxix (1974), 54–7.

[16] These are most fully discussed by D.A. Sturdy. 'Topography of Medieval Oxford' (unpub. Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1965), esp. Appendix 6. For parallel cases see M. Biddle (ed.), *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages: an Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday* (*Winchester Studies*, i, 1976), 334–5, 340–2.

[17] In 1034 Cnut confirmed to Abingdon land at Lyford (Berks.), with the *monasteriolum* of St. Martin and the adjacent *praediolum* comprising the *haga* or *curia* in Oxford where Æthelwine had lived: *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls Ser. iia, 1858), i, 439–42.

[18] St. Ebbe's served the *curia* given to Eynsham by its re-founder Æthelmær at the beginning of the 11th century, by which time it was probably already in existence (*Eynsham Cart.*, ed. H.E. Salter, i (O.H.S. xlix, 1906–7), p.viii); it is almost certainly mentioned, though not by name, in Domesday Book (*V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 397).

[19] In 1086 St. Mary's, which belonged to Earl Aubrey's land, had two houses attached to it (*V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 396); the parish later included Littlemore (*V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 390).

[20] Later claimed as a chapel of the W. Oxfordshire minster church of Bampton (*Curia Regis Rolls*, ii, 143), possibly because it served a *curia* attached to Bampton rectory manor.

greater importance, with entries in Domesday Book which suggest minster status.[21] St. Peter-in-the-East was a wealthy church, with suburban land in Holywell in 1086 and a large extra-mural parish including the chapelries of Wolvercote and St. Cross;[22] its Romanesque crypt includes a late version of the *confessio*, presumably for displaying an important relic.[23] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate, incorporated in the northern defences, had priests with houses in the town in 1086.[24] With its three minsters of St. Frideswide (perhaps originally St. Mary, see p. 235 below), St. Peter and St. Michael, Oxford conforms to the normal pattern of Mercian towns, a distinctive feature of which was the possession of several minsters.[25]

The seniority of St. Frideswide's cannot be taken for granted. By analogy with other burghal towns it might be argued that St. Peter-in-the-East, with its apostolic dedication,[26] is the genuinely early minster, St. Frideswide's being founded in the immediate post-Viking period to house a saint's body translated from some other location. The obvious parallels are the translations of St. Oswald from Bardney to Gloucester and St. Werburgh from Hanbury to Chester, both into new minsters founded by the lady Æthelflæd.[27]

In the case of Frideswide's relics, however, the hagiographical tradition completely fails to support such an interpretation. The later communities at Chester and Gloucester never tried to disguise the source of their relics through false hagiography: they were proud of their acquisitions, and honoured Æthelflæd as a benefactor. The Lives of St. Frideswide, by contrast, locate her activities firmly in Oxford, though with episodes at Bampton and Binsey.[28] The 12th-century belief that her body still lay in her original grave, under the floor of her church (below, p. 247), points in the same direction. It is hard to believe that all memory of a translation of the relics from some rural minster to Oxford, presumably under royal patronage, could have been so totally displaced by a spurious story. The most reasonable interpretation of the evidence is that the historical Frideswide was genuinely associated with a pre-Viking minster at Oxford.[29]

[21] A possible fourth case is the college of St. George in the Castle, for which a pre-Conquest origin has been suggested: see J. Cooper, 'The Church of St. George's in the Castle', *Oxoniensia*, xli (1976), 306–8.

[22] *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 413, 415; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 398. The church lands comprised the whole township of St. Cross (where there were market-gardeners in 1086), and a small farm at Wolvercote.

[23] *R.C.H.M. Oxford*, 143–7. Excavations inside the church in 1968 revealed a stone church overlying a stone and timber church, which in turn overlay earlier domestic occupation: D. Sturdy pers. comm., and *Oxoniensia*, xxxvii (1972), 245.

[24] B. Durham, C. Halpin and N. Palmer, 'Oxford's Northern Defences', *Oxoniensia*, xlviii (1983), 14–18, 33–5; *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 397.

[25] A useful recent discussion of this phenomenon is in A.M. Pearn [Bennett], 'The Origin and Development of Urban Churches and Parishes: a Comparative Study of Hereford, Shrewsbury and Chester' (unpub. Cambridge Ph.D., 1988).

[26] Cf. dedications listed R.K. Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology* (C.B.A. Research Rep. xlvii, 1983), 35–8.

[27] A.T. Thacker, 'Chester and Gloucester: Early Ecclesiastical Organisation in Two Mercian Burhs', *Northern History*, xviii (1982), 199–211; these and other translations are also discussed by D. Rollason, 'The Shrines of Saints in Later Anglo-Saxon England', in L.A.S. Butler and R.K. Morris (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers . . . in Honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor* (C.B.A. Research Rep. lx, 1986), 36–40.

[28] Blair, 'St. F.' If the lives contain any clue to an earlier location of the relics, this can only be Bampton or Binsey. In the case of Bampton, the spurious localisation of miracles in a place 12 miles away, where St. Frideswide's claimed no rights and which had a minster church of its own, would be odd in the extreme (Christopher Hohler's observation, pers. comm.). The simplest and most natural interpretation of the Bampton episode is that it is, in a generalised sense, a true reflection of events in Frideswide's own day, though a posthumous translation of her remains from Bampton to Oxford cannot be completely ruled out as an alternative explanation.

[29] As suggested Blair, 'St. F.', 88–91, where a possible early connection between St. Frideswide's and Eynsham minster is noted.

ST. FRIDESWIDE'S MINSTER, 1002–1139: THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

The two earliest references to St. Frideswide's community and relics are almost contemporaneous: the entry *Ðonne resteð Sancta Fryðeswyð on Oxnaforda* in the early 11th-century resting-place list,[30] and Æthelred II's charter of 1004 making reparation for the burning, two years previously, of 'a certain minster situated in the town called Oxford where the most blessed Frideswide rests' (*monasterium quoddam in urbe situm que Oxenford appellatur ubi beatissima Frid' requiescit*).[31] It is generally assumed that St. Frideswide's was at this date a house of canons, though in fact the text leaves unclear the nature of the community which the *monasterium* housed.

According to a narrative in the Priory's late medieval Cartulary, 'this church with its possessions was given to a certain abbot of Abingdon by a certain king' before the Norman Conquest; the canons were driven out, and the monks enjoyed their possessions 'for a few years' (*per annos aliquot*).[32] Another, apparently independent, narrative tells the same story: the original nuns were succeeded by secular clerks, and when these had been expelled because of their laxity (*ob eorum insolentiam*) the monks of Abingdon held everything for some time (*per aliquot tempora*), and were later suspected of having stolen Frideswide's bones.[33] That this tradition may have some substance is suggested by the note *[F]reoðeswyðe [uirg]inis* which appears under 19 October (the traditional date of Frideswide's death) in an early to mid 11th-century martyrology from Abingdon Abbey, the earliest known reference to the saint in any liturgical text.[34]

The Abingdon episode, then, must be taken seriously. The minster could have been reformed in the late 10th century as a cell of Abingdon, though if so it is odd that Æthelred's charter makes no reference to the fact, and survives in the St. Frideswide's rather than the Abingdon archive. It seems more likely that St. Frideswide's still housed canons in 1002–4, and was annexed to Abingdon for some probably quite brief period during the reigns of Cnut or his successors. If the Abbey lost all rights over it before the Conquest, the absence of any reference in the Abingdon Cartulary is not particularly surprising.

The St. Frideswide's Cartulary narrative goes on to say that by the beneficence of a certain king the canons' property was restored to them.[35] This statement makes sense of an otherwise puzzling annal for 1049 in an early 14th-century Rochester chronicle, noting the 'institution of canons' at St. Frideswide's.[36] The 'Monastic Reform' was not an exclusively one-way process: monks' property could sometimes revert to clerks, and early 11th-century kings and nobles saw nothing wrong in re-founding minsters for the benefit of communities of canons, sometimes following the Rule of St. Chrodegang.[37] It

[30] F. Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hannover, 1889), No. 46; D.W. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting-Places in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, vii (1978), 65, 93.

[31] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 2.

[32] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 3.

[33] Blair, 'St. F.', 117.

[34] Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 57; see M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the MSS in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, i (1912), 118. Michael Lapidge notes (pers. comm.): 'The entry for Frideswide has been copied in the left-hand margin by an Anglo-Saxon scribe (i.e. writing Anglo-Saxon minuscule), datable on palaeographical grounds to the middle of the 11th century, not I think later.' I am very grateful to Alan Thacker for drawing my attention to this important piece of evidence.

[35] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 3.

[36] B.L., MS Cotton Nero D.2 f.98 (printed *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.R. Luard, i (Rolls Ser. xcva, 1890), 568): *Eodem etiam anno institutio canonicorum Sancte Fredeswide de Oxonia.* This MS is a version of the standard *Flores Historiarum*, but the only one to contain the St. Frideswide's entry.

[37] For other cases see J. Blair, 'Secular Minster Churches in Domesday Book', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Domesday Book: a Reassessment* (1985), 120–3.

is perfectly possible that St. Frideswide's had reverted to the crown, and that Edward the Confessor restored it in 1049 as a house of canons. Domesday Book shows 'the canons of St. Frideswide' holding their land in King Edward's day and in 1086.[38] Both the Cartulary narrative and Henry I's 'foundation charter' for the Augustinian community say that the minster had pertained to the king's chapel,[39] which suggests that it was among those regarded by the early 12th century as 'royal free chapels'.[40]

After 1100 royal minsters became prime candidates for re-foundation as houses of Augustinian canons, support for whom centred on Henry I's court.[41] The Cartulary narrative describes Henry's gift of St. Frideswide's to his chaplain Master Wimund, who ejected the seculars and gathered regular canons there (evidently from Holy Trinity Aldgate).[42] William of Malmesbury, a first-hand witness, says that 'only a few clerks remained there, who lived as they pleased, so Roger bishop of Salisbury gave the place to Wimund, a canon of excellent learning and no mean holiness'.[43] These stories are not necessarily incompatible, since Roger could have organised the reform of this royal minster as viceroy rather than as a private patron. But he seems to have had some previous involvement in the management of its endowments, for in 1113 × 16 he exchanged parcels of land beside St. Frideswide's church with Abbot Faritius of Abingdon.[44] The context for the reform of the minster is clearly the court circle to which Roger, Faritius (formerly Henry I's physician) and Wimund all belonged.

Wimund's canons were probably installed *c.*1120,[45] and received a royal confirmation then or soon afterwards.[46] They did not, however, escape from Roger of Salisbury: despite two vice-regal writs in which he protected their property, he found it necessary as he lay dying in 1139 to restore 'whatever I had taken from them unjustly'.[47]

[38] *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 397, 409; *V.C.H. Bucks.* i, 243. The Oxfordshire entries lack T.R.E. data, but the entry for the Buckinghamshire manor of Over Winchendon notes the canons' tenure T.R.E.

[39] *Cart. Frid.* i, Nos. 4–5.

[40] Cf. Blair op. cit. note 37, 137; J.H. Denton, 'Royal Supremacy in Ancient Demesne Churches', *Jnl. Ecclesiastical Hist.* xxii (1971), 289–302. It may well be significant that Wolverhampton, another 'royal free chapel', was also appropriated by Roger of Salisbury (below, note 49).

[41] See Blair op. cit. note 37, 138, and J.C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (1950), which includes (pp. 113–15) an earlier discussion of the re-foundation of St. Frideswide's.

[42] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 4. For Wimund, about whom we know nothing else for certain, see D. Knowles, C.N.L. Brooke and V. London, *The Heads of Religious Houses* (1972), 180. The evidence for colonisation from Aldgate is that house's own chronicle: see *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, ed. G.A.J. Hodgett (London Record Soc. vii, 1971), 2, 228.

[43] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton (Rolls Ser. lii, 1870), 316.

[44] *Chron.Ab.* op.cit. note 17, ii, 76 (*RG*, ii, No. 1128): a ratification by Henry I of this exchange.

[45] The canons' traditional foundation date of 1122 first occurs in the 15th-century Cartulary narrative (*Cart. Frid.* i. No. 4; another 15th-century copy of this text is in B.L. MS Harl. 79 f.1$^{v}$). However, in the early 13th century Malmesbury's narrative was re-worked by Roger of Wendover as an annal for 1111 (*Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.O. Coxe, ii (1841), 188); Matthew Paris copies this (*Matthæi Parisiensis . . . Historia Anglorum*, ed. F. Madden, i (Rolls Ser. xliva (1866) 215–16). If Wimund reigned as prior for 19 years, as stated by *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 4, he must have been installed by 1120, since he was dead by 1139 (*Oseney Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter, ii (O.H.S. xc, 1929), No. 794). In 1122 the house subscribed to the bede-roll of Vitalis abbot of Savigny in the form *T[itulus] Sanctae Trinitatis et Sanctae Fridesvidae Oxinefordensis*, which it would scarcely have done if the house had not already been regularised (A. Clapham, 'Three Bede-Rolls', in *Memorial Volume to Sir Alfred Clapham: Archaeol. Jnl.* cvi suppl. (1952), 49). Henry I's three 'foundation charters', *Cart. Frid.* i, Nos. 5–7 (*RG*, ii, Nos. 1342–3, 1345), can only be dated by the witnessing of the chancellor Ranulf (1107–23). The precise dates of Augustinian foundations are often far from clear-cut, and in this case it is possible that Wimund held the minster for some time as a royal clerk before colonising it from Aldgate.

[46] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 5.

[47] E.J. Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury* (1972), document Nos. 12, 17, 29, 30, 31. Cf. comments in ibid., p. 122, on Roger's ambiguous relations with St. Frideswide's.

Roger was a great architectural patron,[48] whose patronage may well have benefited St. Frideswide's; but he was also a minster pluralist in the time-honoured tradition of Spirites, Regenbald and Ranulf Flambard, in this respect a distinctively 11th-century figure.[49] After 1139 the canons, freed from his clutches, were ruled by a new and scholarly prior, in all respects a distinctively 12th-century figure: Master Robert of Cricklade.[50] Despite the civil war which came to their very doors, the early 1140s must have seemed to offer them a fresh start.

## THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MINSTER PRECINCT

### *The configuration of the site*

The S. edge of the *burh* corresponds roughly with that of the gravel terrace. West of St. Aldate's the line of Church Street marks a natural break of slope, from which the gravel slopes gently downwards to the S. (from 60.60 m. to 54.27 m. O.D.) into the marshy floodplain over which the Dominican Friary was built in the 13th century.[51] On this side of the town, therefore, there was no abrupt drop from the gravel terrace to the Thames.[52]

The configuration of the terrace-edge to the E. of St. Aldate's, where St. Frideswide's Priory stands, seems to have been rather different. Natural gravel has been located under the cloister at 59.40 m. O.D. (Fig. 17), and under the Latin Chapel and E. end of the N. choir aisle at 58.90 m. (Figs. 38, 42).[53] While the natural surface of the gravel did not survive in any of these exposures, and had evidently been lowered slightly under the N.E. chapels,[54] it is clear enough that the church and cloister occupy an essentially flat expanse of gravel. From the N. wall of the S. range, however, the modern ground-level falls southwards from 59.50 m. O.D. in the cloister walk to 58.35 m. at the N. wall of the Meadows Building (see section at bottom of Fig. 92). Excavations for the foundations of that building in 1863 revealed that the ground had been made up over a much more dramatic fall of level (Figs. 91–2). The clerk of works in charge of the project reported removing made ground to a depth of *c.* 20 ft.; further N.,

[48] R.A. Stalley, 'A Twelfth-Century Patron of Architecture', *J.B.A.A.* 3rd ser. xxxiv (1971), 62–83.

[49] Kealey op. cit. note 47, Nos. 26, 27, 28, shows that he had also appropriated prebends at Salisbury, the royal minster at Wolverhampton and the recently-reformed minster at Cirencester. For the annexation of minsters by earlier generations of royal clerks see Blair op. cit. note 37, 132–8; Campbell op. cit. note 10, 149–51.

[50] Blair, 'St. F.', 80, notes 8–9. Robert came from the Augustinian house at Cirencester, which had lately been controlled by Roger of Salisbury (see note 49); he may have come to Oxford at Roger's instigation.

[51] Natural gravel has been observed at 60.60 m. on the N. frontage of Church St. (*Oxoniensia*, xxxvi (1971), 5); at 59.22 m. (with ploughsoil) on the city wall line just S. of the W. end of Church St. (Ibid. xxxv (1970), 17); at 58.55 m. (with topsoil) at Littlegate 60 m. S. of St. Ebbe's church (Ibid. xxxvii (1972), 144); and at 53.80 to 54.27 m. (under alluvium) in an area around 200–300 m. S. of St. Ebbe's church, on the Blackfriars site, where it is interpreted as marsh rather than river-channel (Ibid. 1 (1985), 135. For the topography of this area see T.G. Hassall et al., 'Excavations in St. Ebbe's: Part i', *Oxoniensia*, liv (1989, forthcoming), where the N.–S. section illustrated as Fig. 3 may be compared with the present Fig. 92.

[52] An observation made by David Sturdy in 1957 indicates that St. Ebbe's church overlies the fill of 'a small stream which cut deeply into the edge of the gravel terrace' (Sturdy op. cit. note 16, i, 81; Sturdy informs me that the stream ran S.W.). However, the terrace has been observed to the S. of this (see note 51).

[53] Above, pp. 81, 87. Sturdy's observation of natural gravel in Cuttings **1** and **2E** at 2.10 m. below the Latin Chapel floor (61.00 m O.D.), and in Cutting **5** at 1.70 m. below modern ground-level in the angle between the choir and N. choir aisle (60.60 m O.D.), can both be calculated at 58.90 m. O.D.

[54] Sturdy found somewhat modified loamy topsoil in Cutting **5** (above, p. 88: **5**.4); but the gravel which it overlay was 50 cm. below the gravel observed in the cloister, and since a natural downwards slope from S. to N. is unlikely the topsoil in Cutting **5** was probably redeposited after a lowering of the gravel surface.

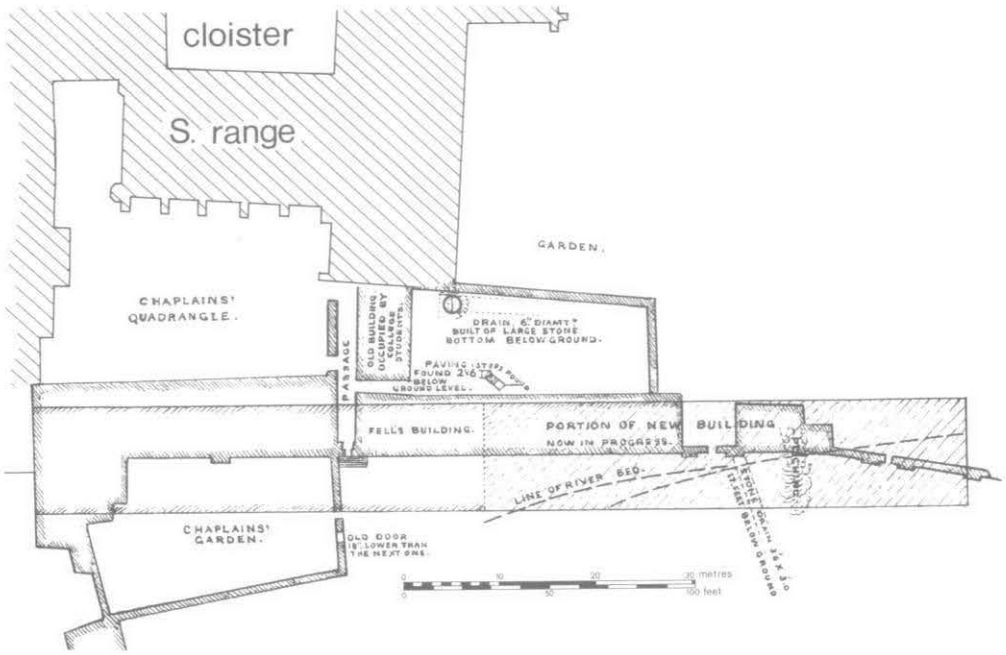


Fig. 91. Discoveries made during the construction of Christ Church Meadows Building, 1863: Conradi's plan (from *Proc. Oxford Archit. and Hist. Soc.* n.s. i (1860–4), opp. p. 218), with scale and outline of cloister and S. range added.

> when digging about 2 ft. 6 in. below the present level of the ground I noticed some paving (Bladon stone) . . . and five steps leading down from the level of the paving, about 3 ft. 3 in. in the direction as shewn on the plan. At the foot of these steps a space about 5 ft. long and as wide as the steps (viz. 2 ft. 9 in.) was paved, forming a landing, and enclosed in front by a well-worked stone 8 in. high. From here a piece of masonry was carried along parallel with the line of Fell's Building . . . . [F]arther east, at the depth of nearly 20 ft., we had to remove made-up soil before we came to solid ground. The very mud we removed contained several matters of interest . . . . When we removed the last layer of this made-up soil the water rushed in . . . . From all circumstances connected, and from the section of our digging, there cannot be much doubt that we had come upon one of the old river beds or ditches on the outside of the old city wall. . . . About twenty-five yards from where we found the steps, and sixteen feet below the present ground, we came upon a large, well-constructed drain, 3 ft. 6 in. wide and 3 ft. high. . . . Between this drain and the east end wall of our Building we found some rough pitching right across the river bed, and on one side a large curb-stone . . .; and the first glance upon the curb-stone tells one that for a considerable time it had stood wear and tear from carts and other vehicles.[55]

A river-channel (surviving residually as the Trill Mill Stream) is indeed the obvious explanation. If the pitched-stone ford was 16 feet below present ground-level it lay at *c.* 53.30 m. O.D. – exactly the level of the late Anglo-Saxon paved ford found at the St.

[55] Mr. Conradi in *Proc. Oxford Archit. and Hist. Soc.* n.s. i (1860–4), 218–19 and figure opposite 218. The accumulation of material found in this operation (itemised Ib., 222 note) was not excavated stratigraphically, and included human bones, late medieval worked stonework, pottery, and 'portions of encaustic tiles, fourteenth century'; among the latter were presumably the tiles reported on above, p. 110, and below, pp. 259–63.

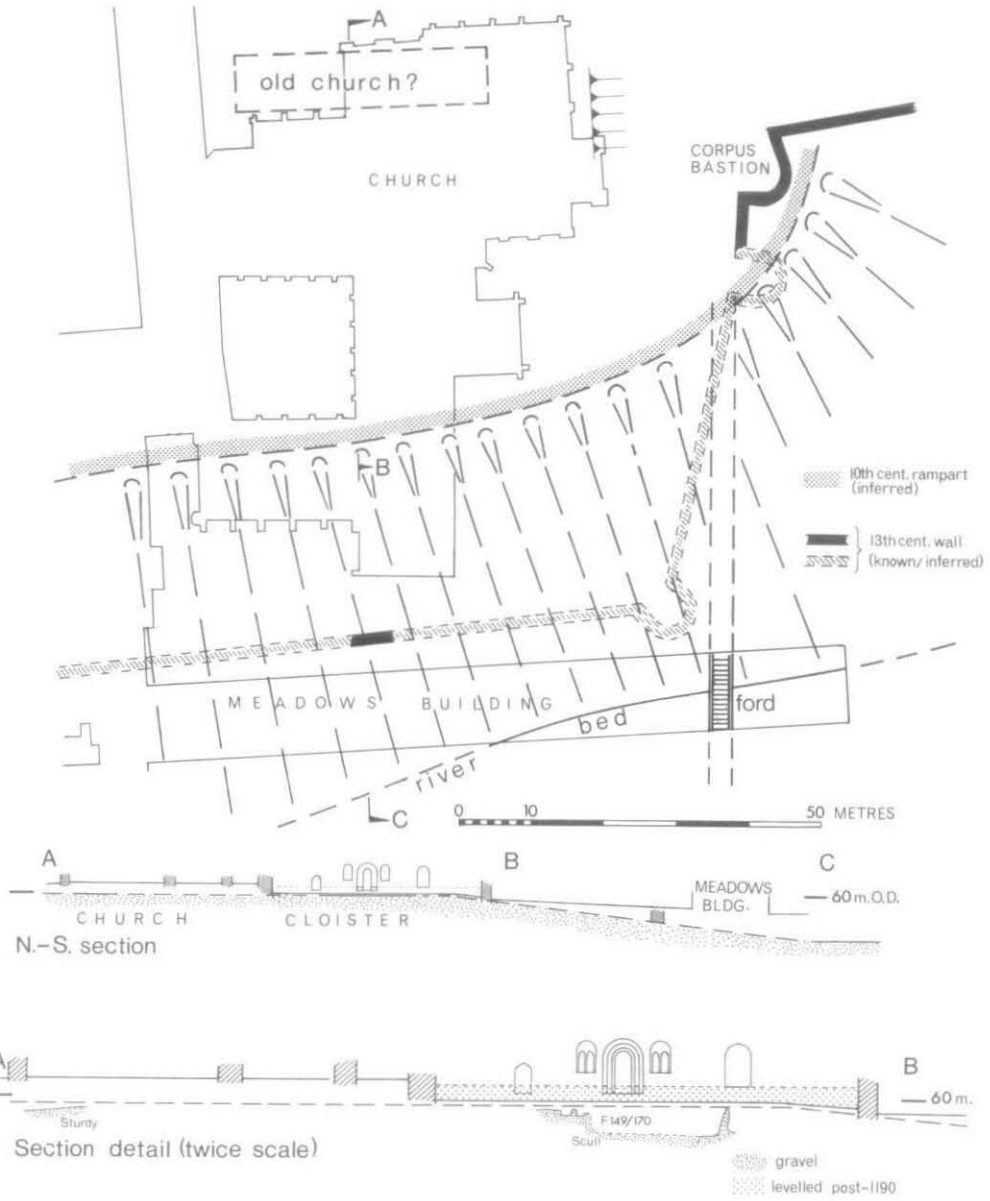


Fig. 92. *Above*: Suggested natural configuration of the Priory site, incorporating data from Fig. 91 (inferred line of later city wall after B. Durham). *Below*: Sketch sections from N. to S. through the church, cloister and Meadows Building site, showing the fall in levels from the S. range to the river-bed, and the late 12th-century levelling down of the cloister. Natural gravel encountered by Sturdy further E., in the Latin Chapel, is projected onto the section.

Aldate's crossing in 1981;[56] the alluvial deposits found outside the S.W. corner of Tom Quadrangle, and under Merton Grove,[57] may have been fill-layers in the same channel. There are also indications that the edge of the gravel terrace curves back northwards on the E. side of the Priory. Under the end wall of the choir the gravel surface steps down (presumably artificially) by about a metre from W. to E. (above, pp. 87–90 and Fig. 42); further eastwards the modern level falls appreciably, and 60 m. N.N.E. of the cathedral, in Corpus Christi quadrangle, loam has been observed to a depth of 4 m. below the modern surface without any exposure of natural gravel.[58]

What emerges from this evidence is that the configuration of the site, now softened after centuries of alluviation, dumping and levelling,[59] was originally more dramatic. On the S. and S.E., the ground fell from the cloister to the river-bed by 6 metres across a distance of some 40 metres; any Anglo-Saxon church on the site would have appeared from the river to be raised up on a bluff or promontory, especially if the channel curved around its E. side. Some major Anglo-Saxon ritual monuments, both pagan and Christian, were deliberately placed on headlands and promontories overlooking water;[60] could St. Frideswide's minster have been among them?

*The precinct, cemeteries and churches*

At the time of the Augustinian reform the precinct was in the extreme S.E. corner of the walled town, bounded by an intramural road (below, p. 236), and there is every reason to suppose that this relationship had persisted since the original laying-out of the *burh* (cf. Fig. 94). The Oxford Danes who fled to the minster in 1002 to escape the citizens must have been inside rather than outside the wall, and Æthelred's charter in any case describes it as *in urbe situm*.[61]The early 12th-century Life of St. Frideswide ('Life A') says that her monastery was founded *in urbe Oxinefordia*, a phrase which Robert of Cricklade ('Life B') re-casts as *infra urbis ambitum*.[62]

One of Sturdy's reasons for not believing that the 12th-century Priory occupies an earlier monastic site is what he claims to be evidence that it lies outside the 10th-century town: the lack of material remains, 'coupled with the prospect that the site lies outside the Saxon defences, requires us to consider other locations for the church that housed Frideswide's relics in about the year 1000' (above, p. 91). But given that the bank and ditch must have run S. of an urban *curia* including St. Ebbe's church (above, p. 224), and given too that the 13th-century town wall between Westgate and Littlegate was found at one point to overlie earlier domestic occupation,[63] Sturdy's proposed line for the

[56] Durham 1984 op. cit. note 6, 84, Fig. 14.

[57] D. Sturdy, 'Recent Excavations in Christ Church and Nearby', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), 20–25; T.G. Hassall, 'Excavations in Merton College', Ibid. xxxvi (1971), 34–48.

[58] *Oxoniensia*, xxxviii (1973), 273–5. In 1989, excavation by A. Millard and the OUAS against the Corpus boundary wall, due E. of the N.E. corner of the Latin Chapel, augured to a depth of 57.71 m.O.D. without reaching gravel.

[59] As Sturdy points out (above, pp. 76–7), the sharp fall at the edge of the terrace has been much reduced by massive levelling-down in Tom Quadrangle and the roadway outside.

[60] Cf. M. Biddle, 'Archaeology, Architecture and the Cult of Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', in Butler and Morris op. cit. note 27, 22: 'The crypt at Repton . . . stands on a bluff above the River Trent . . . the king was buried overlooking the floodplain in just such a way as the dying Beowulf instructed Wiglaf (!) to build his memorial mound on a promontory by the sea.' Minsters seem to have been built on the N. banks of river-channels with a remarkable frequency (the early Northumbrian monasteries of Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Bywell and Seaham, for instance). The point is well made by R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (1989), 111–12.

[61] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 2.

[62] Blair, 'St. F.', 96, 104.

[63] *Oxoniensia*, xxxvii (1972), 141–3; Hassall op. cit. note 51.

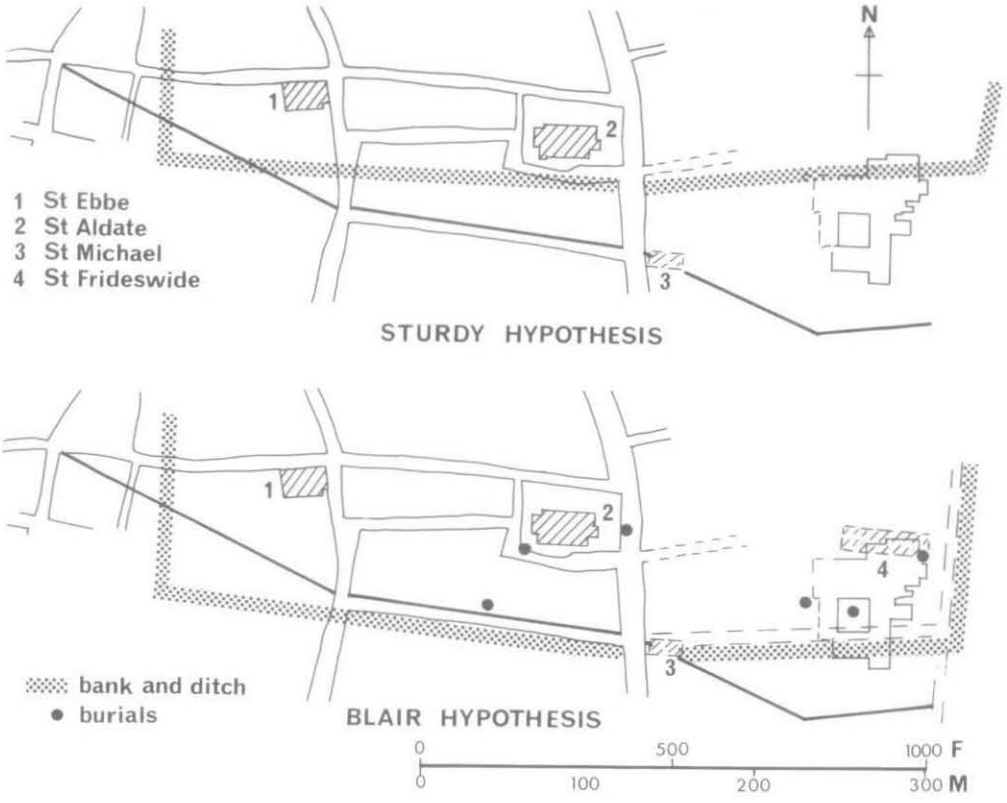


Fig. 93. The S. side of Anglo-Saxon Oxford: two hypotheses. (For the burials cf. Fig. 90 and p. 223.)

original southern defence is surely too far to the N. (see the two versions in Fig. 93). The only evidence for it is the slight depression in the natural gravel (falling only 20 cm. from S. to N. across the width of the Latin Chapel) encountered in the 1963 excavations (above, p. 78 and Figs. 36, 38), which seems far too slight to be interpreted as a defensive ditch. In the light of the abrupt drop into a river-channel immediately S. of the cloister, common-sense suggests that the builders of the town would have taken advantage of the topography by scarping the natural river-bank and building a wall or bank along its top, leaving the Priory site on the inner side.[64] Sturdy's trenches were too small, and the site too disturbed, for his failure to find Anglo-Saxon structures to have any weight as negative evidence. Given the 9th- to 10th-century burials, and the early 11th-century floor-tile, described elsewhere in these reports, it seems perverse to entertain serious doubts that the Augustinian Priory stands on the site of its predecessor.

If the minster existed before the town, then so, presumably, did some kind of monastic precinct. Analogy with other minsters suggests that this precinct was probably

[64] Exactly this conclusion is reached by Hassall et al. op.cit. note 51 in relation to the southern defense further W.: 'Either there was no S. rampart in St. Ebbe's and the Trill Mill Stream was considered a sufficient obstacle, or alternatively the rampart followed the N. bank of the stream'.

larger than the premises of the 12th-century canons.[65] Hints – no more – pointing in this direction come from finds of human burials, and from possible relationships between St. Frideswide's and other churches on the southern edge of the town.

Graves from a large cemetery earlier than the Romanesque buildings have been found by Scull, Hassall and Sturdy (Figs. 14–15, 90, 93–4). Scull's excavation in the cloister found sequences of up to four superimposed burials, yielding calibrated radiocarbon dates which prove that the cemetery existed certainly by the 10th and probably in the 9th century (above, pp. 60–2 and Table 9). The two burials on beds of charcoal found by Hassall in the N.E. corner of Tom Quadrangle also appear (though on less stringent radiocarbon evidence) to have been 9th- or 10th-century.[66] In the cloister only the latest (i.e. 12th-century) graves included burials in stone cists, which seems elsewhere to be a distinctively 12th-century practice (above, p. 63); the similar cist-graves found by Sturdy are therefore probably quite late, only slightly earlier than the walls of the Romanesque E. end which cut through them (above, p. 91 and Figs. 42–3).

For topographical reasons the cemetery presumably cannot have extended much further to the S. or E., but its westwards limit is unknown; at least one other grave has been found in Tom Quadrangle.[67] Anglo-Saxon minsters sometimes had enormous cemeteries, later invaded by urban development;[68] some finds of stray burials are worth considering in this context, even though they are a long way W. of the Priory church and on the other side of the main road (Figs. 90, 93). It is hard to know what to make of the 'great Numbers of human Skeletons . . ., some 16 Feet deep, many with their Feet inverted to the South', which were found while digging the vault under Pembroke College chapel in 1732.[69] Christian-orientated burials have, however, been found by Pembroke College gate;[70] more important, a burial in a stone coffin under the road on the E. side of St. Aldate's churchyard, opposite Tom Gate,[71] was accompanied by an elaborate 11th-century plaited gold finger-ring (below, pp. 263–6 and Fig. 104).

St. Aldate's church is first mentioned (as *monasterium quoddam Sancti Aldadi episcopi venerationi consecratum*) in the second quarter of the 12th century, when it was held in equal halves by a priest named Nicholas and by two brothers and 'clerks of the town', Robert and Gilbert.[72] This pattern of ownership, characteristic in the late 11th and early

[65] See Blair op. cit. note 10, 48–50.

[66] T.G. Hassall, 'Excavations at Oxford, 1972', *Oxoniensia*, xxxviii (1973), 270–4. (For calibrations of the radiocarbon dates from these burials see above, p. 61 Table 9.)

[67] *Proc. Oxford Archit. and Hist. Soc.* n.s. i (1860–4), 220.

[68] Cf., most dramatically, Aylesbury: D. Allen and C.H. Dalwood, 'Iron Age Occupation . . . Aylesbury, 1981', *Records of Bucks.* xxv (1983), 1–8.

[69] A. Wood, *The Antient and Present State of the City of Oxford*, ed. J. Peshall (1773), addenda p. 29. ('In digging the Vault of Pembroke College', which probably refers to the chapel, built 1732.)

[70] *Oxoniensia*, xxv (1960), 134.

[71] The burial must, therefore, have lain almost directly opposite the E. end of St. Aldate's church, a position likely to have been an especially honorific one (Martin Biddle's observation). Burials in stone coffins are rare before the 12th century, and given the opulence of the finger-ring this one must have been of high status.

[72] *Chron. Ab.* op.cit. note 17, ii, 174–5. According to this narrative the brothers became monks at Abingdon *temp.* Abbot Ingulf (1130–59), taking their half of the church with them, but the canons of St. Frideswide's obtained Nicholas's half by trickery in the early 1150s. 'Half of St. Aldate's church' appears in Henry I's charter (*Cart. Frid.* i, No. 5), but since it is absent from the earliest papal confirmations this must (applying the argument of p. 5 note 12 above) be dismissed as an interpolation. Probably the first genuine reference in the St. Frideswide's material is in a papal confirmation of 1158 (*Cart. Frid.* i, No. 23), where it appears as *quicquid habetis in ecclesia Sancti Aldati*; this would be consistent with the Abingdon story if the canons acquired their half of the church 1154 × 8. However, Eugenius III confirmed St. Aldate's to Abingdon (*Chron. Ab.* ii, 192, 196). Properties between St. Aldate's church and the city wall later paid rents to Abingdon, to St. Frideswide's or to the church itself, suggesting that this block had been divided between the two monasteries (Sturdy op. cit. note 16, ii, 42).

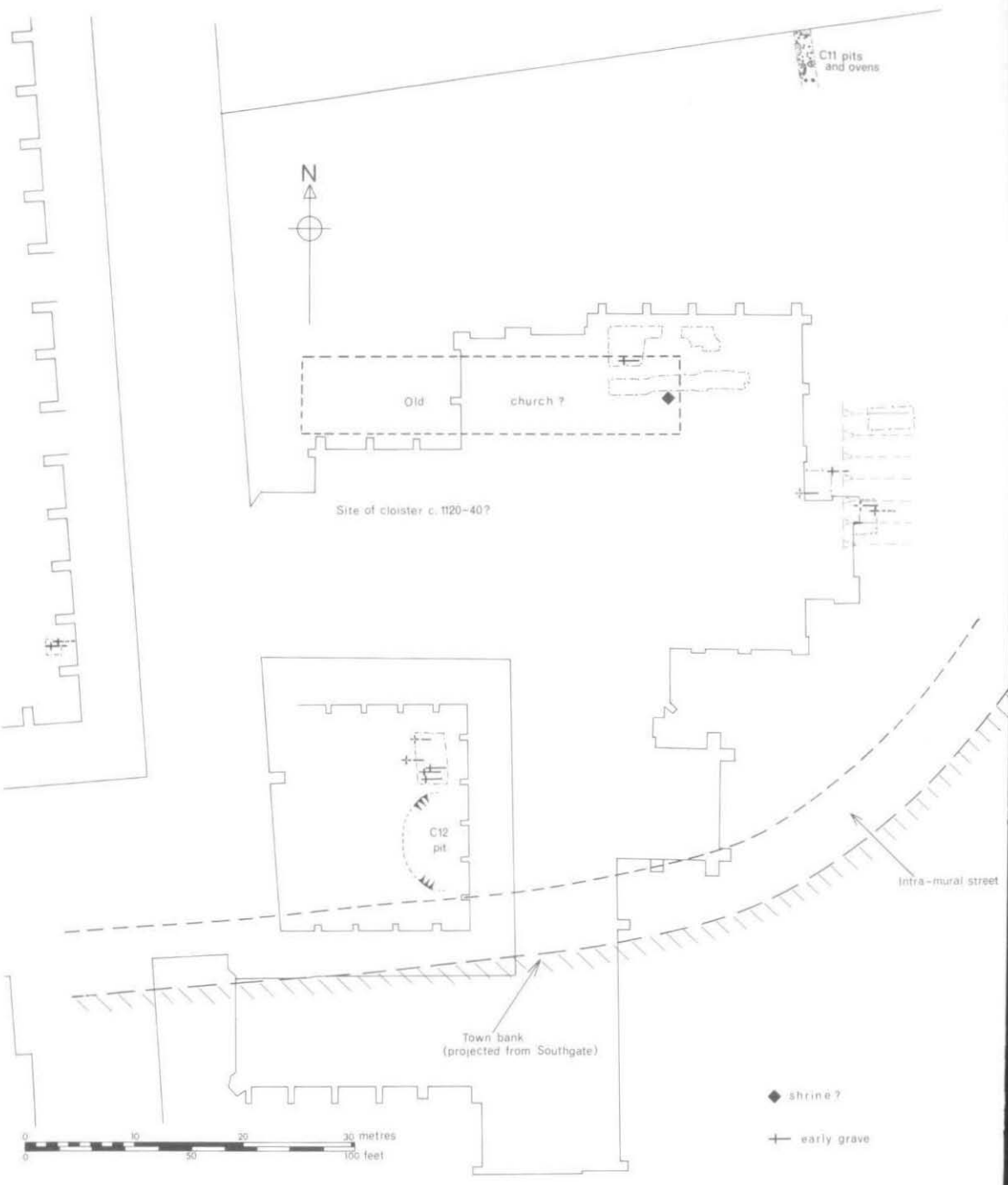


Fig. 94. The site before the Romanesque buildings, showing projected intra-mural road and known pre-Priory burials.

12th centuries of ex-minster property appropriated by individual canons,[73] may be a clue that St. Aldate's had once belonged to the community at St. Frideswide's.

It is becoming increasingly clear that important minsters often, perhaps usually, had two or more churches, and that these were frequently set out on axial alignments.[74] If, as suggested below (pp. 239, 250), the Anglo-Saxon minster stood on the site of the N. transept and N.E. chapels of the Priory church, St. Aldate's, and St. Ebbe's further W., would lie on much the same topographical axis, on the crest of the scarp but not in conformity with the main street-axes of the town (Figs. 90, 93).The early 12th-century Life of St. Frideswide mentions an 'original' dedication to the Holy Trinity, St. Mary and All Saints, possibly a garbled memory of two or three churches of which St. Mary's, where the saint was believed to have been buried, was the predecessor of the Priory church.[75]

The possibility raised by this line of argument is that the S. side of pre-urban Oxford consisted of a large ecclesiastical precinct, traversed by the two N.–S. routes and containing two or more churches[76] aligned along the terrace-edge. The S.E. and E. sides of this precinct would have been defined by the natural topography; its northern boundary could be the early W.–E. route proposed above (p. 223), while a possible candidate for its western boundary is the ditch found to the W. of St. Ebbe's church across the line of Church Street, filled in by the 10th century (Fig. 90, site B).[77] The constraints imposed upon the subsequent planners of the *burh* by their need to respect this established enclosure would be complex, and may explain why the topography of the S. half of the town seems so much less regular than that of its N. half.

*The early 11th-century church*

St. Frideswide's seems to have been one of the relatively few major churches rebuilt under royal patronage in the early 11th century.[78] Æthelred II's charter says that the minster was 'renewed by me and mine' (*a me et a meis constat renovata*) after the burning of the Danes in 1002,[79] and 12th-century tradition ascribed to him the church inherited by the first Augustinian canons. William of Malmesbury says that 'the sanctuary was purified by the king's repentance and the monastery restored',[80] and Robert of Cricklade adds that Æthelred 'enlarged the perimeter of the basilica' (below, p. 247). Malmesbury believed that the pre-1002 church had had a tower, in which the Danes hid,[81] and miracle stories of the 1170s mention a tower which may have survived from the pre-Augustinian buildings (below, p. 248). Such analogies as we have suggest a church on the model of St. Mary's at Dover, with aisleless nave, central tower and N., S. and E. *porticus*.[82]

[73] Cf. Blair op. cit. note 37, 127–31.

[74] See Blair, 'St. F.', 89 note 46, and the examples discussed on pp.257–8 below.

[75] Blair, 'St. F.', 89.

[76] It is not impossible that St. Ebbe's is also an early church; but its recorded history is very different, and see note 52 above.

[77] *Oxoniensia*, xxxvi (1971), 3–6; Hassall et al. op.cit. note 51.

[78] Cf. R.D.H. Gem, 'A Recession in English Architecture during the Early 11th Century', *J.B.A.A.*, 3rd ser. xxxviii (1975), 32.

[79] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 2.

[80] Loc. cit. note 43.

[81] *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, ed. W. Stubbs, i. (Rolls Ser. xca, 1887), 213.

[82] See R. Gem, 'Church Architecture in the Reign of King Æthelred', in D. Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready* (B.A.R. British Ser. 59, 1978), 105–14.

What architectural changes, if any, resulted from the grant to Abingdon Abbey and the re-foundation in 1049 is unknown. The only pre-Conquest ecclesiastical object so far recorded from the site is a relief-decorated floor-tile, the best artistic parallels for which are provided by pennies of the late 1030s(below, pp. 259–63 and Figs. 102–3). Such tiles have been found exclusively on late Anglo-Saxon monastic and cathedral sites, including Coventry where they may be associated with work of Leofric and Godiva in the 1040s. The Oxford tile provides a hint of high-level patronage at a similar date.

## THE AUGUSTINIAN PRIORY BUILDINGS

### *The formation of the Augustinian precinct*

Changes to the environs of St. Frideswide's during the first half of the 12th century are implied by a series of royal documents, the earliest of which is a writ of Henry I allowing the canons 'to enclose the road next the wall and the wall of Oxford itself, as far as their land extends, for the enlargement of their yard' (*ut includant viam iuxta murum et ipsum murum de Oxenn', quantum terra sua extenditur, ad incrementum orti sui*).[83] This writ (witnessed by Roger of Salisbury and William d'Albini) cannot be dated closely and may even be addressed to the pre-Augustinian community, but its most probable context is the creation of a precinct for the first Augustinians.[84] Henry I's 'foundation charter' (before 1123) confirms the licence to enclose the road by the wall, and further allows the canons to 'enclose or block all gates of the whole Priory' (*do eis viam iuxta murum civitatis Oxenf' quantum extenditur terra eorum; et volo quod predicti canonici eandem viam includant, et concedo quod iidem canonici claudere possint vel obstruere omnes portas totius prioratus*).[85]

An unmistakable implication of these texts is that the pre-1122 minster was bounded on the S. or E. side, or on both, by an intra-mural road (the counterpart of St. Michael's St. on the N. side of Oxford, and characteristic of burghal towns generally) along which traffic passed. The canons were to absorb this road and cut off all access to it, creating a fully-enclosed precinct. What seems to be archaeological evidence for the same operation, but defining the N. side of the precinct, was found by Sturdy's 1961 trench on the N. side of the Cathedral Garden: dense 11th- to early 12th-century occupation features comprising post-holes, pits and kilns were overlain in the early to mid 12th century by a boundary wall with a new road on its outer side (compare Fig. 94 with Fig. 97).[86] It may have been because the intra-mural roads along the E. and S. sides of the precinct had been closed off that this new road, outside its N. boundary, was needed. The environs of the secular minster, surrounded by the traffic and bustle of urban Oxford, required adaptation to the stricter lifestyle of the Augustinians.

That the town wall cramped the canons' precinct somewhat is suggested by the recognition, in 1136 × 40, that they had long enjoyed (*ab antiquitate usi sunt*) the rights of holding their gate in the city wall within their enclosure built for their use, and of erecting and maintaining buildings over the wall so long as they kept those sections of it in repair (*habeant . . . portam suam in muro eiusdem civitatis infra clausum monasterii sui ad*

[83] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 514 (*RG* ii, No. 1344).

[84] The exchange in 1113 × 16, between Roger of Salisbury and Abingdon Abbey, of different plots of land by St. Frideswide's church (above, note 44), may be connected with these transactions.

[85] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 6 (*RG* ii, No. 1343).

[86] D. Sturdy, 'Excavations in Christ Church', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), 30–1 and Fig. 8.

*proprium usum suum edificatam, necnon aisiamentum ipsius muri ad superedificandum et eorum edificia sustentandum, ita quod loca per eos superedificata reparent et ad aisias suas reficiant.*[87] The need to have buildings in so inconvenient a position must have been a compelling one; it suggests that the church, the essential focus of the community, already lay very close to the wall (cf. Fig. 94).

The implications of this text contrast with the 13th-century line of the town wall, running south-eastwards from Southgate to pass well to the S. of St. Frideswide's cloister (Figs. 90, 92).[88] Given the evidence for a major change of levels further N., on the line of the S. (refectory) range, it is hard to avoid concluding that the wall still followed this northern line in 1136 × 40, but was later diverted to allow more room on its inner side. Precisely when this diversion occurred is uncertain, but the laying-out of the cloister must have rendered it highly desirable, if not essential. The vaulted basement of the E. range, running at least 22 m. southwards from the chapter-house, would have projected through the old rampart onto the river-bank beyond, with the refectory perched awkwardly along the very line of the rampart. The new town wall would have facilitated the levelling or terracing of the former river-bank between it and the refectory, the basement of which may have lain at external ground-level on this outer side.

### *The first Romanesque church and cloister*

The starting-point for analysis of this complex building must be the two parts of it on which it has been possible to reach broad agreement. Halsey argues from stylistic evidence that the E. range of the cloister must date from the late 1140s or 1150s, and the chancel from *c.*1165–70 (above, pp. 160–7, 133–4). I accept his evidence as conclusive, and Sturdy essentially agrees (pp. 91–4) though with a preference for slightly earlier dating. There is therefore a consensus that the E. range and chancel both date from the priorate of Robert of Cricklade (before 1139–1174 × 80). Robert was a notable scholar, and moved in circles interested in artistic patronage.[89] If he found old or makeshift buildings at St. Frideswide's he is unlikely to have been satisfied with them, and would have been well-placed to plan and see through a fully-fledged Romanesque scheme of conventual buildings.

It is also common ground among the present authors that the completed Romanesque church has peculiarities which must reflect the constraints of a simpler and earlier plan. The intrusion of the slype into the third bay of the S. transept (pp. 92–3, 147–50),

[87] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 12 (*RG* iii, No. 637). The right of the canons of St. Frideswide's to have the use of the city wall, and a gate in it, is cited as a precedent in a late medieval Chichester text: see W.D. Peckham, 'Dean Croucher's Book', *Sussex Arch. Colls.* lxxxiv (1945), 16, 32. I am grateful to David Palliser for this reference.

[88] The line of the 13th-century town wall shown on Fig. 92 is Brian Durham's reconstruction, from his forthcoming report on the southern defences of Oxford. At present the only archaeological evidence for it between South Gate and the Corpus bastion is a short length of wall immediately N. of the Meadows Building, with a weathered N. face, observed in a contractors' trench in 1974 (Oxfordshire County Museum PRN 6296). This is almost certainly identical with the 'piece of masonry . . . parallel with the line of Fell's Building' observed by Conradi (above, p. 229).

[89] For Robert see note 50 above. There are intriguing hints in the use of giant-order elevations at St. Frideswide's and Jedburgh (above, p. 155), and in a possible Scottish parallel for the chapter-house painting (below, p. 269), at an Anglo-Scottish cultural milieu with links to the well-developed architectural school of the Severn valley. Robert was interested in Scottish hagiography, and visited Scotland at least once. The gift of Piddington to St. Frideswide's by Malcolm king of Scots *c.*1159 (*Cart. Frid.* ii, No. 786) reinforces this notion.

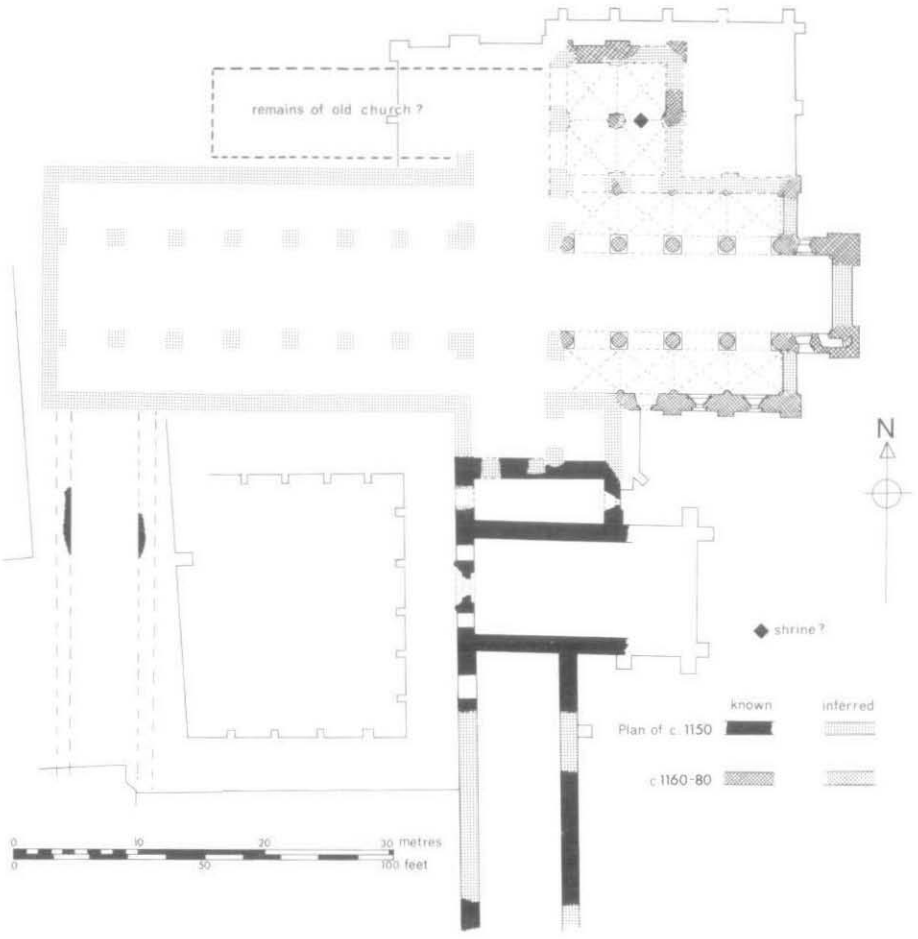


Fig. 95. The original Romanesque scheme: reconstruction of Robert of Cricklade's plan, and the parts completed during his priorate.

the clumsy arrangement adopted to provide the same transept with a W. aisle (pp. 149–52)[90] and the awkward junction between the E. aisle of the N. transept and the N. aisle of the chancel (pp. 139–46, 242–4) all betray the modification of a plan which included unaisled transepts, one and perhaps both of which were of two bays only.

When this church was built, and indeed *if* it was built, is more problematic. Halsey assumes that Robert's cloister and choir were added either to Æthelred II's church of 1002–4 or to an Augustinian church of the 1110s or 1120s (pp. 117, 120). Sturdy, who denies the existence of a pre-Conquest minster on the site, opts for the latter alternative and proposes a symmetrical church with stepped transeptal chapels (pp. 91–3 and Fig. 43A). There is, however, a third and perhaps more likely possibility: that a new church was planned and laid out *c.*1145–55, together with the cloister, but only built in slow stages (Fig. 95).

[90] Though Sturdy believes that it was never built (above, p. 92).

The view that Prior Robert accommodated his cloister and choir to an existing church has to contend with two difficulties. First, Scull's 1985 excavation showed that the cloister was built over what had previously been waste ground used for quarrying gravel and burying rubbish. The big pit (F149/170) contained pottery of the early to mid 12th century; the turf-line over its sunken backfill was cut by burials, themselves deposited when the area was still far from level and contained a gully (F140) running W.–E. under the chapter-house (Figs. 15, 17). The laying-out of the cloister must therefore post-date these burials, and it is clear that 'none of the claustral buildings was begun much before the middle of the [12th] century at the earliest' (above, p. 65). In other words, the existing chapter-house front belongs to the first claustral buildings on the site, set out *c.*1150. Since the canons, whom William of Malmesbury had praised for the regularity of their life, can scarcely have lived for thirty years without a cloister, the first Augustinian cloister must have been somewhere else. It does not inevitably follow that their church too was in a different position, but the circumstance tends to point in that direction.

Secondly, no Anglo-Saxon church other than the very grandest would have been large enough to take the cloister and chancel as additions to its nave and crossing without substantial further remodelling, including the addition of aisles. Fully-fledged Romanesque churches were scarcely ever built in this fashion: the piercing of arcades through standing walls, common in lesser churches, was an impracticable way of creating complex internal elevations with triforia and clearstories. The new style represented an ideology basically opposed to the retention of old buildings: they were rarely worth bringing up to date and, as many recent excavations have shown, architects preferred a *tabula rasa*.[91] Once the decision to rebuild had been taken it was often convenient to do so on a slightly different site, leaving the old church in use until part of the new one was ready, and when Anglo-Saxon minsters and cathedrals were replaced by Romanesque ones this was normally what happened (below, p. 257).

If Prior Robert inherited pre-Romanesque buildings, the setting-out of a new church and cloister in such a way as to leave the old ones temporarily in use is exactly what we should expect of him.[92] To build the E. range and chancel first would be quite logical if it enabled the canons to be re-housed domestically and liturgically before demolition of their old quarters commenced.[93] But the chapter-house, slype and chancel were built to suit a church with unaisled two-bay transepts, and the canons had to live with the constraints thus imposed on the plan as their church progressed during the next two decades and their ideas became grander (compare Fig. 95 with Fig. 97).

If this interpretation is correct, it follows that the old church is likely to have been somewhere on the N. side of the new one. Prior Robert's cloister, built over what had once been graveyard and more recently a waste area, impinged on the old town wall and occasioned its re-alignment further S.: a general southwards expansion of the monastic

[91] Cf. R. Gem, 'The English Parish Church in the 11th and Early 12th Centuries: a Great Rebuilding?', in J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches* (1988), 23; idem, 'England and the Resistance to Romanesque Architecture', in C. Harper-Bill et al. (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown* (1989), 129–39.

[92] The development of the Augustinian abbey of Haughmond (Salop.), as revealed by excavation, provides a close parallel for the sequence proposed here. A small, older church had a little cloister added to it *c.*1130, probably at the time of regularisation; then, *c.*1170–90, new ranges were built around a much bigger cloister enclosing and burying the old claustral ranges and the nave of the old church, the E. arm of which underlies the S. transept of its successor. See J.J. West in *Med. Arch.* xxiv (1980), 240–1.

[93] At this stage access from dormitory to choir would probably have been down a temporary night-stair on the external E. face of the E. range, and through the small doorway, now blocked, in the S. wall of the choir (above, pp. 124–5).

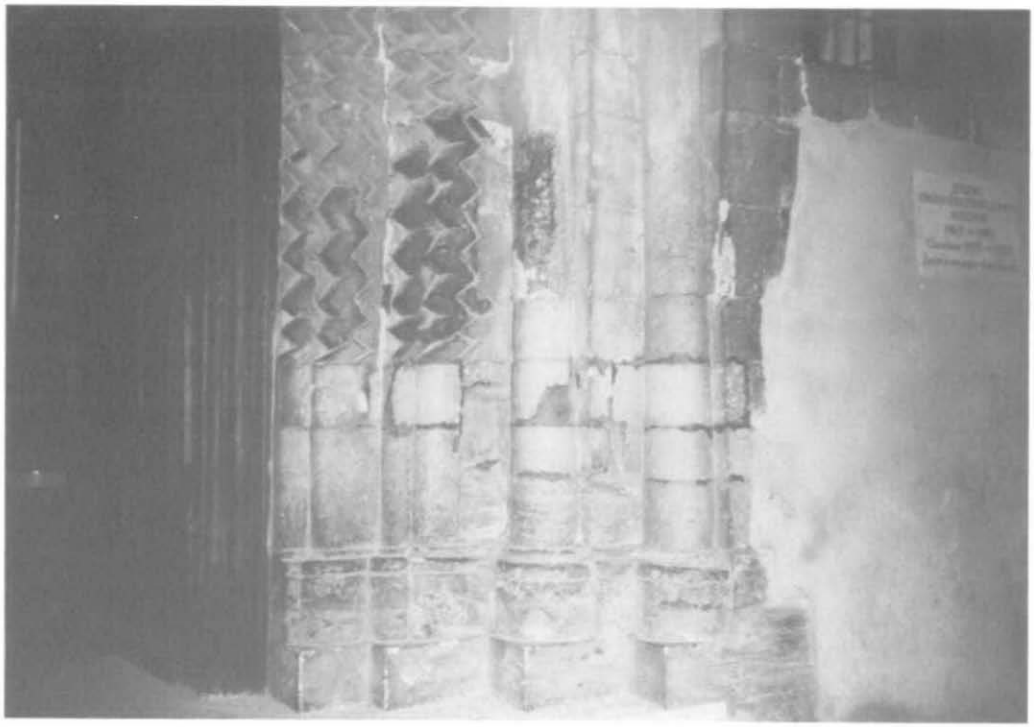

Fig. 96. The S. jamb of the chapter-house entrance, showing how the original work of *c.*1150 was extended downwards to the new ground-level after the 1190 fire (cf. Fig. 92, bottom).

buildings seems indicated. An early 12th-century cloister on the S. side of a pre-Conquest church could have delayed the building of the nave and N. transept, which need not, on Halsey's chronology, have begun until around the time of the translation of the relics in 1180.

The architectural evidence points clearly enough to the building of the transepts and crossing-tower during the 1180s, and the completion of the nave in the years immediately following the 1190 fire and Alexander Neckam's sermon (above, pp. 133–5 and Figs. 60, 97). The easternmost bay of the chancel poses special problems, however: its footings are integral with those of the N. choir aisle (Fig. 42), yet the awkward junction between the side windows and the arcade responds (Fig. 56), and the use of keeled shafts in the external blind arcading of the buttresses, suggests work subsequent to the main building of the chancel. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that this bay was reconstructed on its old foundations during the 1190s, to provide the chancel (already a generation old) with an up-to-date visual focus.

The chronology of the S. and W. claustral ranges is uncertain, but there was evidently a significant lowering of the garth and cloister walks towards the end of the Romanesque campaigns (see section at bottom of Fig. 92). The fire-stained mid 12th-century masonry of the chapter-house entrance starts 115 cm. above the present floor-level in the E. walk, being continued downwards with jambs and bases of *c.*1190–1200 (Fig. 96). This work, presumably carried out after the 1190 fire, involved not merely repair but a wholesale reduction of levels: the chapter-house front is

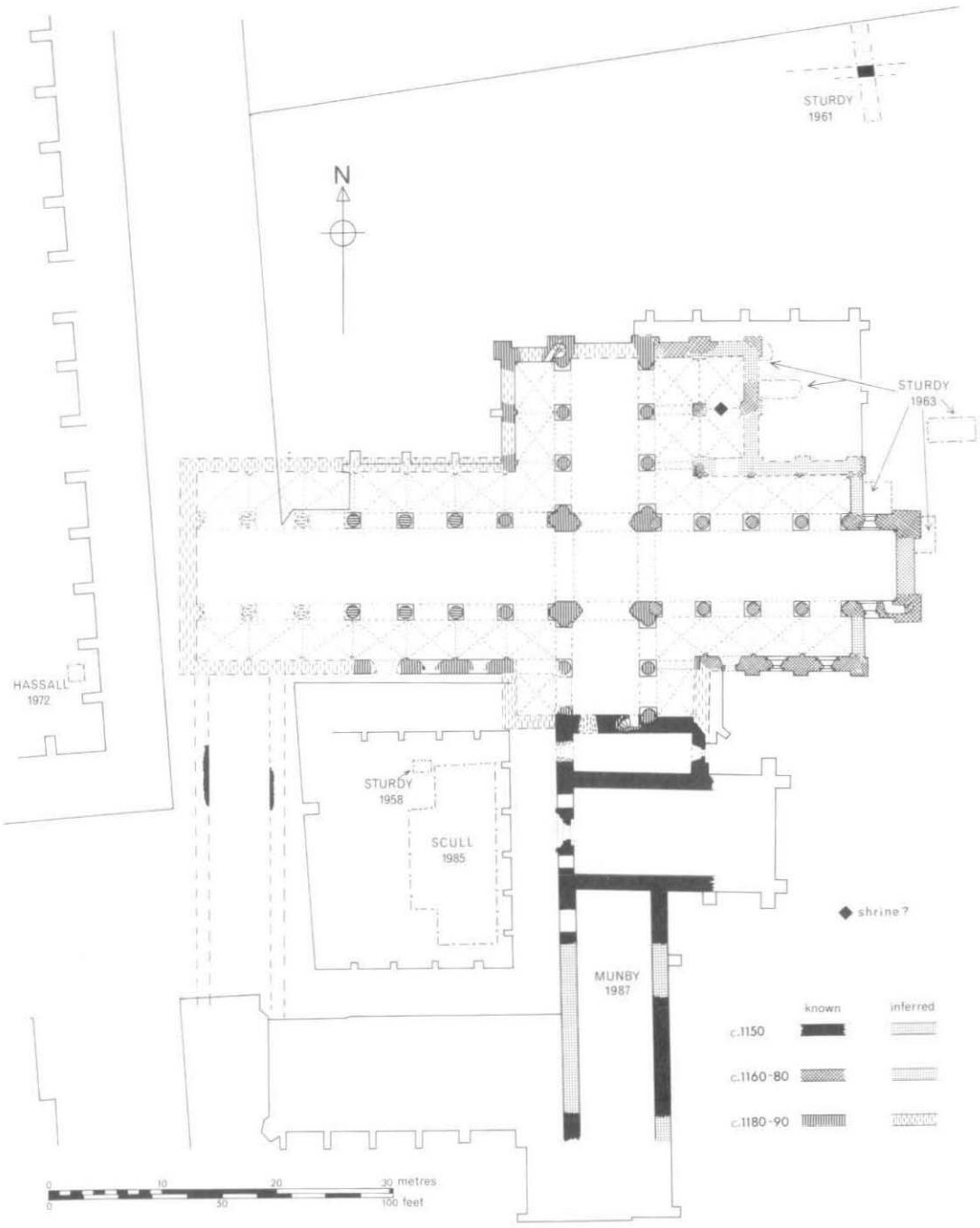


Fig. 97. Reconstruction of the plan of the church and cloister as completed *c.*1200. (cf. Fig. 60).

unnaturally heightened so that it is impossible to see through the windows which flank the entrance, or even to see the figure painted on one of their jambs.[94] Likewise, the threshold of the original dormitory entrance is now 110 cm. above the floor of the E. walk (above, p. 186 and Figs. 79–80). Clearly the cloister walk floor-level as conceived *c.*1150 was 110 cm. higher than the present floor, and therefore only 40 cm. below that of the church.[95] This earth-moving operation of the 1190s may have been connected with the construction of the S. range, the outer wall of which was presumably built up from the old river-bank: lowering the cloister garth would have gone some way towards evening out the natural fall, as well as providing material for building up the levels southwards.

## THE NORTH-EASTERN CHAPELS

The chapels in the angle between the N. choir aisle and E. transept are a strikingly idiosyncratic feature of the Romanesque and later plan. Since they almost certainly housed St. Frideswide's shrine, they are especially important in the present context. Thanks to the analyses of Halsey and Morris, and above all to Sturdy's excavations, it is now possible to interpret their development with some confidence. The following discussion uses the pier numbering system shown on Fig. 35 (p. 77), and should be read in conjunction with this plan and with Figs. 36 and 98–100.

### *The late 12th century*

The footings of the Romanesque precursor to the Latin Chapel are interpreted by Sturdy (p. 94) as a one-bay chapel projecting eastwards from the northernmost bay of the transept aisle. Halsey (pp. 143–6), however, sees them as the N. and E. walls of a square, four-bay chapel, vaulted on a central square pier with corner nook-shafts (II.4).

Only excavation in the Lady Chapel could settle the point, but there are some powerful arguments in support of Halsey. The plain voussoirs above the 13th-century arch between piers II.3 and II.4 are best interpreted as the remains of an earlier arch (above, p. 143), making it unlikely that there was solid walling here in the Romanesque period. Similarly, Sturdy's footing **2W** L, which he interprets as the N.E. corner of an earlier transeptal chapel (above, p. 83), might more convincingly be read as the corner of an isolated square footing under pier II.4. Perhaps most persuasively, the excavated footings and standing components of the N.E. chapel conform in their alignments and bay-divisions to the chancel, not to the transept (above, p. 140), and this seems incompatible with a 'pre-Latin Chapel' planned as a mere appendage to the chancel aisle.[96]

The hypothesis of a square, four-bay chapel will be accepted for the rest of this

[94] Martin Biddle's observation. The floor of the chapter-house was presumably also lowered, as indeed is suggested by the height of the internal blind arcading surviving at the W. end of its N. wall.

[95] In the early 1870s J.C. Buckler noted (B.L. MS Add. 27765E f.69$^{v}$) that 'the evidence of changes repeatedly made by the builders, from a high to a low level of pavement, and back again to a midway line of floor, has lately been laid open to view on two sides of the cloisters, the north and the south, and were of a nature to explain clearly how from time to time the levels had been varied'.

[96] Sturdy claims that the N. wall of the 'pre-Latin Chapel' was integral with the N.E. corner buttress of the N. transept (above, p. 94, and cf. Fig. 36). However, the excavated evidence would be exactly the same if an originally free-standing N.W. corner buttress for the chapel had been subsequently incorporated into the transept buttress.

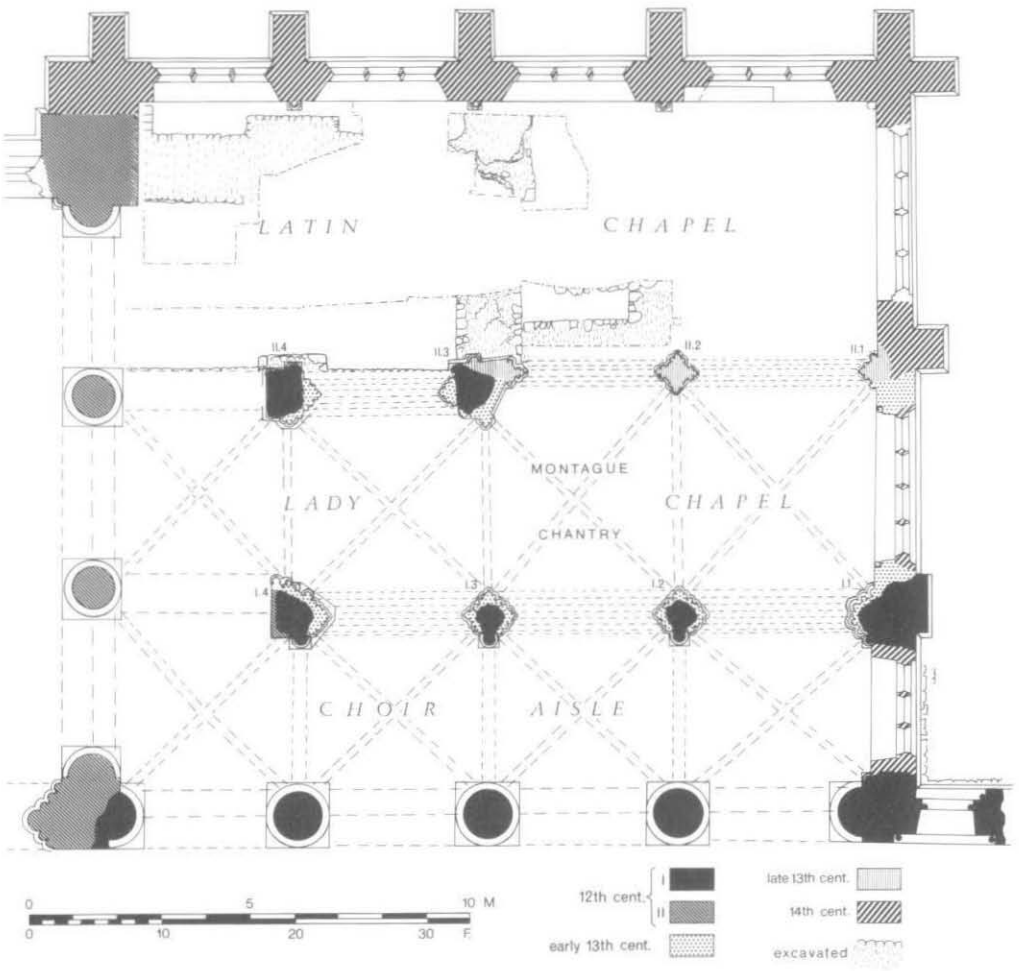


Fig. 98. Plan of the N.E. chapels in their final medieval form, showing footings found in the 1963 excavations.

discussion. It follows from it that the chapel was built with the chancel, before the decision had been taken to add aisles to the transepts. Probably it was separated from the N. chancel aisle by solid walling, and from the projected aisleless transept by a pierced wall or by square piers like II.4 (cf. above, p. 146). As originally conceived it would have been self-contained and isolated, and its undercroft-like form even suggests the possibility that the main chapel was raised above it on an upper floor.[97] On Halsey's chronology it seems likely that the chancel and chapel, but not the transept, were complete by the translation of Frideswide's relics in 1180.

[97] I am grateful to Julian Munby for pointing out the interesting parallel of Chichester Cathedral, where the 'chapel of the Four Virgins', square with a central column, was built *c.*1210–20 to replace the N. transept apse (see *V.C.H. Sussex*, iii, 108–9 and plan after p.112). It had an upper chamber containing an altar of St. Edmund the Martyr, and although a generation later than the Oxford chapel it reinforces the possibility that this too may have had a chapel above.

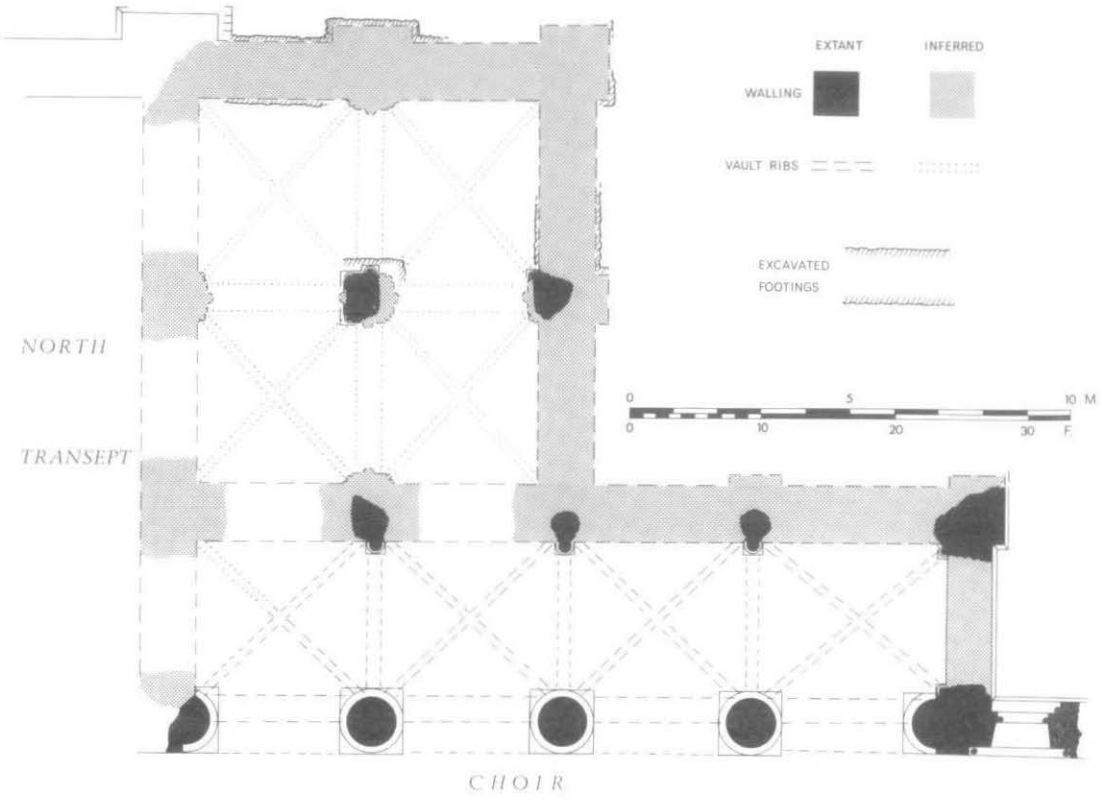


Fig. 99. Reconstructed plan of the N.E. chapel in its original state, before the E. arcade of the N. transept was inserted.

The concept of an altogether grander church with aisled transepts, probably adopted as the cult prospered during the late 1170s or 1180s, changed the whole character of the N. chapel. The building of the columnar arcade (I.5-III.5) absorbed the two western bays of the chapel, together with the westernmost bay of the chancel N. aisle, to create an E. aisle for the N. transept. The obvious reason for the mis-match between these bays is that the new arch between piers I.4 and I.5 was thinner than the solid wall which it replaced, and had to conform to the rhythm of the transept arcade (cf. Fig. 62); the N.W. quarter of the vault in the westernmost bay of the choir aisle was therefore rebuilt to a grossly distorted profile, its rib (onto pier I.5) spanning a greater distance than the other three (cf. above, p. 145). The two eastern bays of the chapel, too, would have become more integrated with the body of the church, assuming almost the character of a second aisle. If the chapel had been built to house the shrine of 1180, this rather enclosed setting seems to have been quickly modified to cope with the flood of pilgrims recorded over the next two decades.[98]

[98] See H. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Shrine: the Miracles of St. Frideswide', in H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (eds), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis* (1985), 193–206.

*The 13th century*

The Lady Chapel was built *c.*1230 along the N. side of the N. chancel aisle (above, pp. 169–75). Its westernmost bay, a re-modelling of the S.E. bay of the original square chapel, is slightly narrower than the other two bays, which were not restricted by earlier structures. The arcade (I.1–I.4) between the Lady Chapel and the choir aisle, replacing the aisle wall, marks the final stage in the integration of the original N. chapel with the body of the church.

The footing of the Lady Chapel N. wall, with a buttress or wall-stub opposite pier I.1, was found by Sturdy (**2E**.G, above, p. 85 and Fig. 36). To interpret this feature as a wall-stub makes sense of the otherwise puzzling shaft II.3.C, with its early 13th-century base, on the S. side of the Latin Chapel. This shaft may well be re-used (the explanation favoured by Morris, p. 178 above), but if not it shows that the E. wall of the 'pre-Latin' chapel was pierced for an arch; this arch could have led into a small square chamber (perhaps a tomb-house or sacristy?), its E. wall represented by the northwards projection on **2E**.G, in the angle between the remains of the old chapel and the new Lady Chapel.

The next stage was the extension eastwards of the 'pre-Latin' chapel by two bays (or by one bay if the small square chamber already existed) , which were divided from the central and eastern bays of the Lady Chapel by a two-bay arcade (II.1–II.3). Morris considers that the piers of this arcade may be of *c.*1290, though surmounted by capitals and arches of the later Latin Chapel work (above, pp. 175–8). A short section of the E. wall of this late 13th-century chapel remains bonded with pier II.1 (Fig. 72); the line of its N. wall remains uncertain, but can most probably be associated with the robber-trench-like feature **3**.E found by Sturdy (Fig. 36).

*The 14th century*

The two northern bays of the original chapel were removed, together with the 13th-century eastwards extension, to make way for the unified building now known as the Latin Chapel (Figs. 74, 76). A likely context for its construction is the chantry which the canons established for Bishop Burghersh in 1338 as a *quid pro quo* for permission to appropriate Churchill rectory. The chantry ordinance, dated January 1338, provides for masses to be celebrated 'by one of our brethren before the altar of the Blessed Virgin Frideswide constructed in the conventual church of our house';[99] the following August a licence was issued for the dedication of 'certain altars newly constructed in the conventual church of St. Frideswide'.[100] If 'St. Frideswide's altar' adjoined the shrine it must have been somewhere near the Montague chantry (below, p. 252), and the establishment of new altars may reflect more extensive building works. A connection between Burghersh and the Latin Chapel is strengthened by the 14th-century tiles bearing a fork-tailed leopard (Fig. 50 No. 18), the Burghersh arms, which were re-used in its early Tudor floor (above, p. 104 and Figs. 37, 47). The construction of the Latin Chapel during the summer of 1338, to house the Burghersh and other chantries, would accord with the architectural parallels in the 1320s and 1330s adduced by Morris (p. 182 above).

[99] Linc. Reg. VI ff.124$^{v}$–125 (*et* [error for *coram?*] *altari beate Fredeswide virginis in ecclesia conventuali domus nostre predicte constructo*). Cf. *Cal. Papal Letters*, ii, 383.

[100] Linc. Reg. V. f.563. The canons had a licence to consecrate three further altars in 1344 (Linc. Reg. VII f.56$^{v}$).

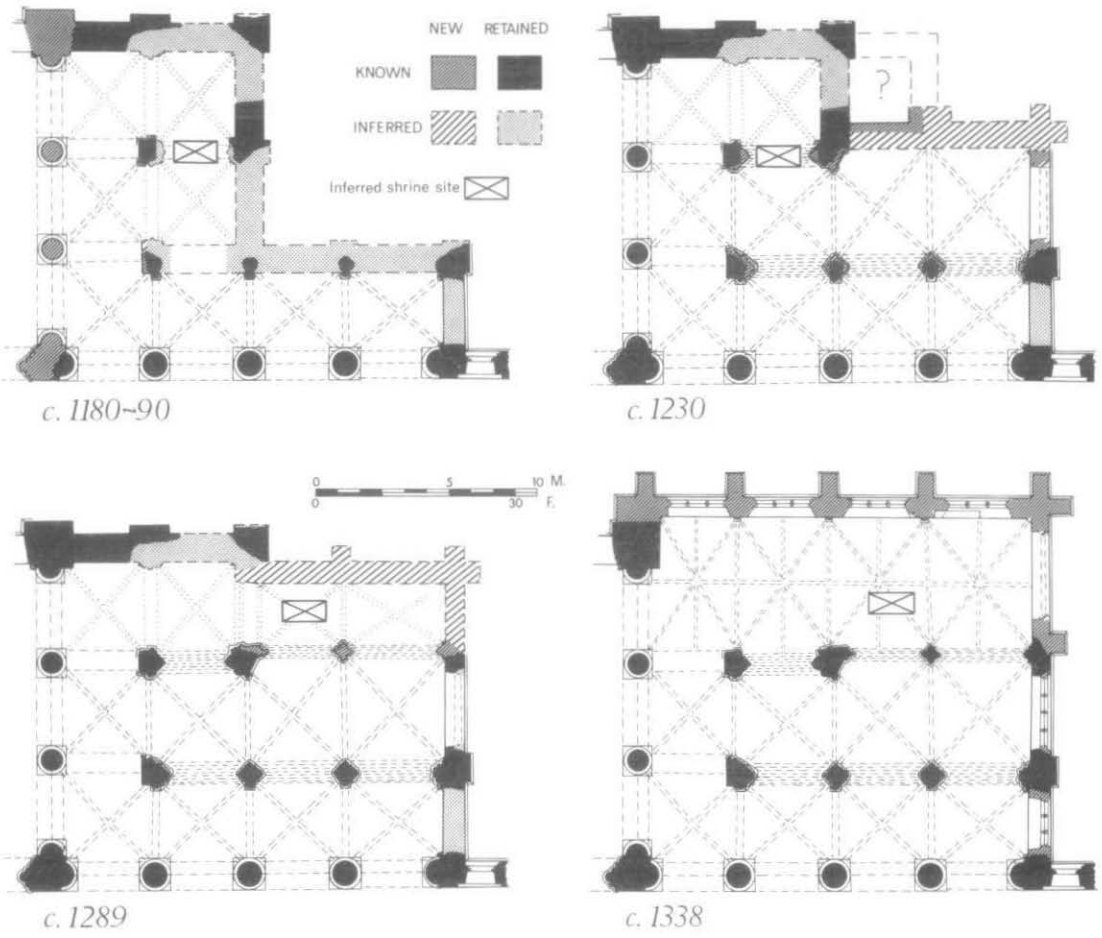


Fig. 100. The N.E. chapels: development plans (second and subsequent phases).

## THE LOCATIONS OF ST. FRIDESWIDE'S GRAVE AND SHRINE

### *Before the Romanesque church*

Frideswide's relics are first recorded at Oxford at the beginning of the 11th century (above, p. 226). Between then and the 12th-century references to her grave, the church experienced many vicissitudes. There was a rumour in the early Augustinian community that Frideswide's bones had been stolen by the monks of Abingdon, and the pains taken to refute this belief suggest that it may have been all too true.[101] We can be far from confident, therefore, that the grave which the 12th-century canons venerated was really an 8th-century feature.

[101] Blair, 'St. F.', 116–18.

The artless early 12th-century author of 'Life A' merely says that Frideswide 'was buried in St. Mary's church on the south side' (*sepultaque est in ecclesia Sancte Marie in australi parte*);[102] he was probably drawing on some earlier source, and in itself the tradition may well be genuine. Prior Robert of Cricklade's re-working of this passage in 'Life B' is more explicit:

> The blessed virgin was buried in the basilica of the spotless Virgin Mary mother of God, on the south side, beside the bank of the River Thames. The site of the basilica remained thus until the time of King Æthelred, who, after the burning of the Danes who had fled thither [i.e. in 1002], enlarged the perimeter of the basilica as he had previously vowed. It was undoubtedly done in this way, for the grave, which had previously been on one side [*or* on the south side?], came thenceforth to be the middle. (*Sepulta est beata virgo in basilica intemerate semper virginis Dei genitricis Marie in parte australi prope ripam fluminis Thamesis. Sic enim se tunc habebat situs basilice usque ad tempus regis Athelredi, qui, combustis in ea Dacis qui confugerant illuc, basilice ambitum sicut ante voverat ampliavit. Hinc nimirum actum est, quia sepulchrum, quod ante fuerat in parte, medium extunc esse contigit.*)[103]

It is important to note the element of inference in this passage: Robert deduces that the church must have been enlarged around the grave, because he assumes that the latter has never moved and must reconcile the tradition of a southwards position with his own knowledge of an axial one. Even if Frideswide really was buried on the S. side of her church, the validity of Robert's deduction depends on the dubious proposition that the 'grave' known to him was genuine.

Nonetheless, the passage throws light on the immediately pre-Augustinian arrangements. Robert must have known by personal observation, or on first-hand testimony, of a church which he believed to be Æthelred's. The church in question must have been significantly older than the Augustinian re-foundation, only some twenty years before Robert's arrival, and it is a reasonable conclusion that it was indeed the church of 1002–4. On its central axis lay a spot which was venerated as 'St. Frideswide's grave' and which was presumably marked by some kind of monument, probably a flat slab; it is even possible that a slab laid on the grave by the first Augustinians, or by their patron Roger of Salisbury, still survives (below, pp. 266–8 and Fig. 105).

A later narrative describes how the 12th-century canons opened the grave and found an empty stone coffin; suspecting a ruse to foil relic-thieves they dug deeper, and found bones which were identified as Frideswide's by a miraculous extinction of the excavators' candles.[104] This story may be accurate enough as an archaeological report, even if its outcome is painfully contrived. At this date only very important graves had stone coffins, and it seems likely enough that this one had formerly contained bones thought to be Frideswide's. A buried stone coffin with its cover-slab level with the floor would be quite appropriate for a local saint before the late 12th-century fashion for translations (cf. below, p. 268).

The bones thus found were presumably those subsequently enshrined. Fragments were taken away, either on this occasion or in 1180, and are later recorded among the relics at Winchester, Reading and Waltham.[105]

[102] Ibid. 101.
[103] Ibid. 116.
[104] Ibid. 116–18.
[105] Winchester: Biddle op. cit. note 16, 320–1 n, and Keene op. cit. note 14, 1406, 1440. Reading: *V.C.H. Berks.* ii, 70. Waltham: B.L. MS Harl. 3776 f.33$^{c-v}$ (relic-list including *os de Sancta Frithesuida* given by Peter, first sacristan of the regular canons, in the time of Prior Ralph [1177–84]). I am grateful to Nicholas Rogers for the last reference.

*Between the 1170s and 1289*

In 1180 the bones were translated into a raised shrine at the instigation of Prior Philip, who had recently succeeded Robert of Cricklade. The prelude to the ceremony, and the numerous miracles which followed it, are recorded in a treatise written by Prior Philip and extant in a manuscript of *c.*1200; this throws a certain amount of light on the setting of the grave and shrine.[106]

Three pre-translation miracles are included as evidence of divine approval. All involve emissions of light from the grave, in one case 'from the fabric of the tower of the glorious virgin's church', and in another (dated to some eight years before the translation, i.e. to *c.*1172) in the form of a golden column rising from the grave to above the top of the tower.[107] On Halsey's chronology (above, pp. 124, 133) it is most unlikely that the Romanesque crossing-piers were complete by 1172, let alone the tower which they support: the tower mentioned in these stories must have been something older. Since the choir and N.E. chapels are the only parts of the present church likely to have existed by the early 1170s, the possibility remains open that 'the glorious virgin's church' was substantially still Æthelred's, and distinct from the half-built conventual church. However, Prior Philip's account of the 1180 translation describes the archbishop of Canterbury entering 'the same glorious virgin's church', lifting the bones from the grave and putting them straight into a feretory,[108] which suggests that the grave and the subsequent shrine site were by then under one roof, or at least in connected buildings.

Thirty of the post-translation miracle stories mention specific foci of Frideswide's cult, and make it clear that in the 1180s two such foci existed: the empty grave, and the feretory containing the bones. Fifteen miracles[109] are said to have occurred at the grave (*ad* or *super sepulcrum*, *ad* or *super tumulum*), which in three cases[110] is specifically described as the place where the bones had formerly lain or from which they had been translated. In eight cases[111] the petitioners are said to have spent one or more nights by the grave, and in six[112] to have prostrated themselves upon it. One witness saw 'a lady of wonderful beauty and dignity go around the grave with anxious care, asperging and then wiping one by one the faces of all the invalids who lay there' (*cum igitur nocte super beate virginis sepulcrum oraret . . . , vidit dominam quamdam mire venustatis et gravitatis, singulorum qui ibidem decumbebant infirmorum ex ordine facies aspergentem et postmodum extergentem, sepulcrum sollicite circuire*).[113] The fifteen miracles[114] which involve the feretory (*coram feretro*, *ad feretrum*, *ante feretrum*) show a slightly different pattern. Only three[115] are associated with nocturnal vigils; two[116] happen while the feretory is being carried in procession, and two others[117] while services before it are in progress. One petitioner offers a candle at the feretory, and two others return thanks there after their cures.[118]

[106] Bodl. MS Digby 177, printed *Acta Sanctorum: Octobris: VIII* (1853), 568–89. Miracles are cited here according to their numbers in the *Acta Sanctorum* edition.
[107] Nos. 5–7.
[108] Blair, 'St. F.', 119.
[109] Nos. 9, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 31, 33, 34, 37, 70, 76, 78.
[110] Nos. 10, 13, 31.
[111] Nos. 10, 13, 17, 31, 37, 70, 76, 78.
[112] Nos. 9, 11, 18, 20, 76, 78.
[113] No. 76.
[114] Nos. 8, 12, 21, 35, 38, 42, 44, 45, 46, 62, 64, 77, 82, 106, 109.
[115] Nos. 35, 77, 106.
[116] Nos. 38, 45.
[117] Nos. 12, 62.
[118] Nos. 8, 44, 46.

The impression given by these stories is that the normal *locus* for invalids spending long-term vigils in the church was the grave, whereas the main liturgical focus of the cult was the feretory. The locations of the grave and feretory within the church are nowhere mentioned, unless a clue is provided by the miracle story which involves 'a great crowd of people entering the church by the north side' (*vidit copiosam plebis multitudinem a parte aquilonari ecclesiam ingredi*).[119]

Later documentary evidence shows that the site to which the feretory was moved in 1289 was near the old one, and was almost certainly in the N.E. chapel (Fig. 100 and below, pp. 251–2); it follows that the site of the feretory between 1180 and 1289 was probably also in the N.E. chapel. This probability is made near-certainty by the unusual square plan of the original chapel, which must have had some special liturgical purpose and was probably built before 1180 (above, pp. 145–6, 242–4). Unless the feretory was raised up in a first-floor chamber, Sturdy's suggestion that it stood under the arch between piers II.4 and II.3, in the space where Prior Sutton's tomb was re-sited in the 17th century,[120] seems reasonable, in which case the excavated footing **2W.K**(2) might be interpreted as its base (above, p. 83 and Fig. 36). This arch was remodelled *c.*1230 as part of the Lady Chapel work (above, pp. 173–5), perhaps to give the shrine a more imposing setting.

Where, then, was the grave? Before speculating on this problem it is worth considering some parallels for the simultaneous veneration of raised feretory and empty grave. It was an established belief that earth long sanctified by a holy corpse retained the saint's *praesentia* despite removal of the physical relics, and there are well-attested English cases of graves still venerated centuries after their contents had been translated to new liturgical or architectural settings.[121] 'Tombs' marked the former resting-places of St. Cuthbert's body at Lindisfarne, Chester-le-Street and the pre-Conquest cathedral of Durham; the original graves of St. John of Beverley and St. William of York also had cenotaphs.[122] The best example is St. Swithun's former grave at Winchester, which was marked by a cenotaph even after the new cathedral of the 1090s, where the relics themselves were enshrined, had left it eccentrically placed outside the N. wall of the nave; thereafter 'a long sequence of monuments and chapels . . . preserved the precise location and alignment of the saint's grave to the end of the Middle Ages'.[123]

But translation did not necessarily involve removing the relics to a new location: sometimes they were merely elevated on a shrine-base over the original grave, confining in a single monument the physical remains and the spot which they had hallowed. St. Swithun's relics, at an earlier stage in their history, are again a good instance: between 974 and 1093 the reliquary evidently stood on a raised structure above the grave, the focus of a special memorial building at the W. end of the Old Minster.[124] Two cases where such an arrangement is suggested by surviving physical evidence are the early 13th-century shrine of St. Wita at Whitchurch Canonicorum (Dorset) and the mid 13th-century shrine of St. Bertelin at Ilam (Staffs.).[125] At Whitchurch the shrine-base

[119] No. 46.

[120] Wood, *City*, ii, 175.

[121] See Biddle op. cit. note 60, 3; examples are Jarrow (Ibid. 8); possibly Derby (ibid. 7–8); and Wells (W. Rodwell, 'From Mausoleum to Minster: the Early Development of Wells Cathedral', in S.M. Pearce (ed.), *The Early Church in West Britain and Ireland* (B.A.R. British Ser. cii, 1982), 49–59).

[122] H.D. Biggs, E. Cambridge and R.N. Bailey, 'A New Approach to Church Archaeology', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 5th ser. xi (1983), 92–3.

[123] Biddle op. cit. note 60, 25.

[124] Ibid. 22–4.

[125] The following comments are based on personal inspection of both shrines in 1988. For Whitchurch see also *R.C.H.M. West Dorset* (1952), 263 and Pl. 210.

supports a stone coffin which, with its marble cover-slab, appears to be an older under-floor tomb (cf. below, p. 268). The Ilam shrine-base encloses an obviously older slab, coped and probably hog-backed, which was trimmed in the 13th century to allow the panels of the base to fit neatly around it. Both structures imply a concern to preserve the monument which had covered the relics before their elevation, imbued like the grave itself with borrowed sanctity.

The miracle stories provide no evidence that St. Frideswide's grave and shrine were near each other, but neither do they contain anything which excludes the possibility that the relics were raised above the grave. Such an arrangement would have been compatible with invalids prostrating themselves on the grave, for the feretory would probably have stood on a table supported by columns or arches. The distinction in the stories between grave and feretory is one of context, but not necessarily of location: suppliants keep vigil around the grave, fixed and at floor-level, whereas liturgy focusses on the feretory, elevated and portable.

A fruitful approach to the location of the grave may be to consider whether it is likely to have influenced the siting of the feretory. In Æthelred's church, if we are to believe 'Life B', the grave lay on the central axis. The lack of any suggestion that the relics were ever axially placed in the Romanesque church, either above or below ground, is therefore a fact requiring explanation. Sturdy suggests that the grave was in the projecting, easternmost bay of the existing Romanesque choir, which he interprets as a relic-chapel screened off behind the high altar (above, pp. 93–4). This idea starts from the assumptions that the choir conforms to the axis of the older church, and that the sort of architectural setting which became normal for major raised shrines is equally likely to have been built around a floor-level grave. These assumptions are dubious, especially since the shrine probably stood in the N.E. chapel after 1180. It would have been a reasonable enough suggestion, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the relics were translated *into* a shrine behind the high altar from a grave elsewhere; to propose the opposite movement seems much less convincing.

An alternative possibility is that the Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque churches were so placed in relation to each other that the central axis of the former ran through the N. transept of the latter: in other words, the church moved around the grave and the grave determined the position of the shrine, which was accordingly on the N. side of the church as existing after 1180. Good analogies are Lyminge, where St. Æthelburh's grave in the N. *porticus* of the old church adjoined the S. wall of the later church, built along its N. side; and Durham, where St. Cuthbert's grave on the central axis of the pre-Conquest church was later marked by a cenotaph in the garth of the Romanesque cloister.[126]

This hypothesis would be consistent with the archaeological evidence discussed above (pp. 237–40), and would help to explain what is, for a major shrine in a high medieval setting, an abnormal arrangement. There are good Anglo-Saxon parallels for shrines on the N. sides of churches,[127] but at Oxford the arrangement cannot, on the clear evidence of Life B, pre-date the 12th century. Although some post-Conquest shrines in N. transepts may perpetuate Anglo-Saxon arrangements, others evidently resulted from the rebuilding of the church on a more southerly axis in the way suggested here for

[126] *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxvi (1969), 259, and Biddle op. cit. note 60, 8, for Lyminge; Biggs, Cambridge and Bailey op. cit. note 122, 91–7, for Durham.

[127] Biddle op. cit. note 60, 11.

Oxford.[128] At Bury St. Edmunds, for instance, the Romanesque church was built to the S. of the earlier round church containing Edmund's relics, which was left attached to the E. side of its N. transept in a position exactly equivalent to the N.E. chapel at Oxford.[129] In short, the position of St. Frideswide's shrine is more easily explained if we assume that it stood over her former grave than if we assume that it did not.

*Between 1289 and the Reformation*

On 10 September 1289, the old feretory was placed inside a new and more precious feretory near the former site ( . . . *translatum est vetus feretrum Sancte Fritheswythe Oxonie, et cum honore quo decuit collocatum est in novo et pretiosiori feretro in eadem ecclesia, et prope situm quo prius fuerat collocatum, quod quidem feretrum diu ante fuerat preparatum*).[130] It stood on a sumptuous shrine-base of Purbeck marble, the major pieces of which were found in a well-lining in 1875 and reconstructed;[131] the discovery of more pieces in 1985 is reported above (pp. 48–9, 191 and Fig. 29).

Since the piers of the two easternmost arches between the Latin Chapel and Lady Chapel (II.1–3) date from around 1290, it is a reasonable proposition that the chapel to which they belonged was designed to house the shrine of 1289 (above, p. 245). If the feretory stood in one of the bays of this chapel, or under one of the arches, it need have been no more than 15 or 20 feet from its inferred position since 1180 – indeed *prope situm quo prius fuit collocatum*. An important reason for building a new chapel, and for moving the shrine slightly, may have been to provide more prime grave-spaces for the rich and favoured, such as the clerk Thomas de Blewbury who was buried in 1293 *iuxta feretrum Sancte Fredeswide*.[132] In its turn, the replacement around 1338 of what was probably a cramped and irregular structure with the uniform, elegant and roomy Latin Chapel may reflect a growing pressure to fit tombs and altars into the space around the shine, Burghersh's chantry being only the most important (above, p. 245).

In 1346, Lady Elizabeth Montague established her chantry 'in our monastery, in the Lady Chapel, next St. Frideswide's feretory' (*in monasterio nostro, in capella beate Marie, iuxta feretrum Sancte Frideswide*).[133] Since the Montague chantry provides the most explicit evidence for the position of the shrine, locating it is of some importance. Lady

[128] Examples of this are Whitchurch Canonicorum (see note 125), Bampton (J. Blair, 'St. Beornwald of Bampton', *Oxoniensia*, xlix (1984), 50–4), and Rhoscrowther (*Archaeologia Cambrensis* 6th ser. xv (1915), 385–9). The matter is, however, a complex one, for there seems to have been a late 12th- and 13th-century fashion for putting *new* shrines in N. transepts. St. Hugh's request to be buried in the N.E. transept of Lincoln Cathedral (D.A. Stocker, 'The Mystery of the Shrines of St. Hugh', in H. Mayr-Harting (ed.), *St. Hugh of Lincoln* (1987), 89–124, esp. 111), may reflect a special preference for locating the tombs of revered bishops in eastern transepts (David Stocker's suggestion, lecture 1989), but this explanation cannot apply to shrines such as St. William's at Rochester (ex inf. Sarah Blair). Some north-side shrines may be part of the same phenomenon as north-side Easter Sepulchres, reflecting a concern to imitate the Tomb of Christ. More work is needed on this problem.

[129] R. Gem and L. Keen, 'Late Anglo-Saxon Finds from the Site of St. Edmund's Abbey', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. of Arch. and Hist.* xxxv (1984), 1–2.

[130] *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, iv (Rolls Ser. xxxvid, 1869), 318. In the preceding years gifts had been made to the work of the new feretory (*Cart. Frid.* i, Nos. 237, 585).

[131] J.C. Wall, *Shrines of British Saints* (1905), 64–71; N. Coldstream, 'English Decorated Shrine Bases', *JBAA* cxxix (1976), 17.

[132] Linc. Reg. I, f.75; the abstract in *Reg. Sutton*, iv (Linc. Rec. Soc. lii, 1958), 92, mistranslates *feretrum* as 'window'.

[133] *Cart. Frid.* ii, 10. For Lady Montague, who died in 1354, see Ibid. 1–17 and *Complete Peerage*, ix, 82.

Montague's tomb now stands under the arcade between the Latin and Lady Chapels, in the second arch from the E. (II.2–II.3; see Fig. 98). Although the excavations showed (above, pp. 84, 96, Fig. 36) that this tomb stands on a medieval sub-base (**2E**.C), the tomb itself shows clear signs of disturbance, notably in the poor fit between the side panels and the top slab, in the absence of a plinth-course, and in the clumsy tile packing under the S. side of the chest. Wood recorded a first-hand tradition that the tomb, originally surrounded by railings, had been moved in Dean Duppa's time from a position on the opposite side of the Lady Chapel.[134] The fine carvings on its end panels, now hard to see, suggest that it was meant to stand in an open space where it could be viewed from all sides, and the centre of the same Lady Chapel bay seems the most likely original location. The vault of this bay is richly decorated with censing angels, the paint and technique of which resemble the painted decoration on Lady Montague's tomb.[135] Whatever the exact position of the tomb, it is surely in this bay that the Montague chantry should be located.

From this it follows that in 1346 the feretory stood either in the Lady Chapel (W. or E. of the Montague chantry), in the second bay (counting from the E.) of the N. choir aisle, in the second bay of the Latin Chapel, or exactly where the Montague tomb now stands. The last two alternatives are consistent with the evidence already discussed, and have a further point in their favour: the centrepiece of the second window from the E. in the N. wall of the Latin Chapel, directly opposite the Montague tomb, is a figure of Frideswide herself, flanked by St. Catherine and St. Margaret.[136] Viewed from the choir, this image of the patroness in the company of other holy virgins would have formed a suitable and effective background to her shrine.

Sturdy suggests (above, pp. 95–6 and Fig. 37) that the shrine stood in the Latin Chapel but S. of the central axis, with an elaborate tile pavement defining the liturgically important area to its W., and with a screened-off area behind it in the easternmost bay. This off-centre position can be explained on the hypothesis that the shrine stood on the central axis of the narrow late 13th-century chapel, and remained undisturbed when the much wider Latin Chapel was built around it. This interpretation seems on the whole the best, and is adopted in Fig. 100. It remains possible, however, that the shrine stood directly under the arch II.2–3, the footing **2E**.C now under Lady Montague being in fact the foundation of the shrine-base.

Two further pieces of late medieval evidence have a bearing on the location of the shrine, though neither is very explicit. First, the large Perpendicular tomb under the easternmost arch between the Latin and Lady Chapels (II.1–2) is surmounted by a timber loft (Figs. 76, 101), usually interpreted as a watching-chamber for the guardian of the relics.[137] If this interpretation is correct it confirms that the shrine stood somewhere in this part of the church, though the loft has open sides to N., S. and W. Secondly, in 1473 the will of Thomas Bloxham requests burial in St. Frideswide's, 'near the feretory of the same, between the altar there towards the choir and Dr. Boteler's tomb' (*iuxta*

[134] Wood, *City*, ii, 173 says explicitly that the tomb had stood under the arcade between the N. choir aisle and Lady Chapel, opposite its present location. This passage, however, is a re-working of an earlier and more ambiguous statement, where Wood recalls the archdeacon telling him in 1661 that it stood 'on the N. side of Christ Chur. quire in the middle betw. 2 pillars, about the place where the singing men sitt. It was railed in with Iron grates . . . ' (T. Hearne, *Liber Niger Scaccarii* (1728), 575).

[135] Ex inf. Martin Stancliffe.

[136] *R.C.H.M. Oxford*, Pl. 99. Doubt has been cast upon the locations of these windows, but the glass fragments found by Sturdy (above, pp. 100–2) show that they are original to the Latin Chapel, and there is no reason to think that the figures have been transposed.

[137] *R.C.H.M. Oxford*, Pl. 90.

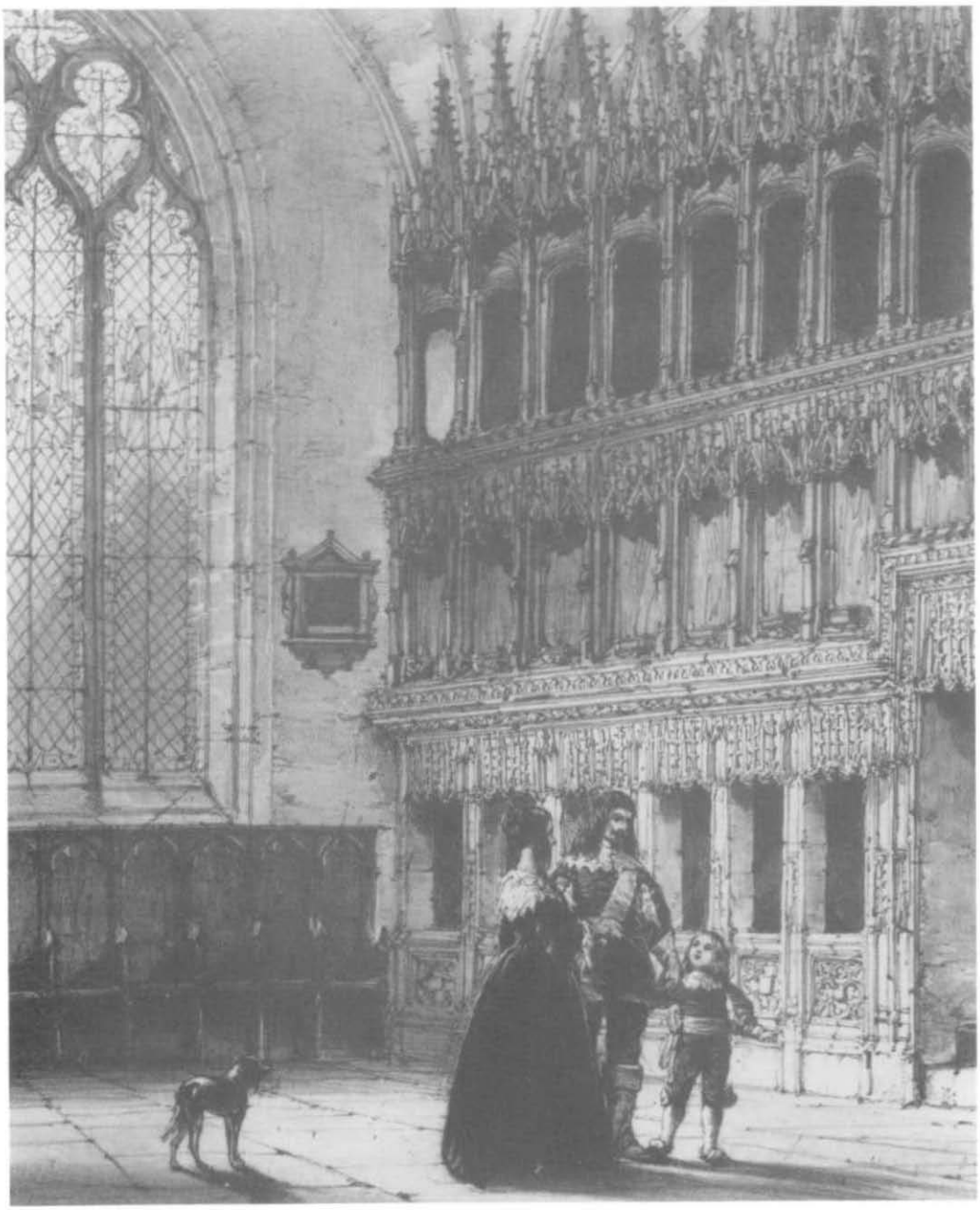

Fig. 101. The S.E. corner of the Latin Chapel: mid 19th-century lithograph, showing the stalls formerly under the E. window (cf. p.100 and Figs. 44, 76) and the 'watching-loft'. (Bodl. G.A. Oxon.a.67, No. 115. Reproduced by permission of the Curators of the Bodleian Library.)

*feretrum eiusdem inter altare ibidem versus chorum et sepulturam doctoris Boteler*).[138] This is tantalising, but impossible to interpret until more evidence for the surrounding tombs and altars comes to light.

*The Reformation and after*

The bizarre adventures of St. Frideswide's relics between the 1530s and 1560s are well-known. James Calfhill's pamphlet of 1562[139] recounts the death and burial of Catherine Martyr in 1552, the ejection of her bones from the church during Mary's reign, and his own efforts to return them to seemly Christian burial. On demanding to see where Catherine had been buried he was 'taken to Frideswide's tomb, and the former grave was pointed out not far from that place, on the N. side of the church' (*ad Fridesuide tumulum adducimur, atque non longe ab eo loco, in parte templi septentrionali, sepulchrum quod fuit, ostenditur.*[140] It appears, though Calfhill does not say so, that after the destruction of the shrine the relics had been buried: Cardinal Pole had ordered the removal of Catherine's body because it lay so close to Frideswide's (*quoniam iuxta corpus sanctissimae Fridesuidae iacebat corpus Catharinae*),[141] polluting the holy relics. On the other hand, the grave cannot have contained the relics in 1561, for Calfhill later found them in two silk bags and buried them, mixed with Catherine's bones, 'in the upper part of the church towards the east' (*in superiore fani parte ad orientem spectante*).[142] One wonders whether the *Fridesuide tumulum* might not have been the original grave from before 1180, still venerated as a holy spot in its own right.

This conjecture aside, Calfhill's explicit statement that the tomb was on the N. side of the church is useful in the present context. It must, however, be added that there is an independent source for these events which could be held to point in a different direction. Bartolomé de Carranza, who conducted the Marian visitation of Oxford, returned to Spain and in 1562 was tried for heresy. Eager to demonstrate his Catholic zeal, he recounted his actions on discovering that the wife of the great heretic Peter Martyr 'had been buried in the *capilla mayor* of the collegiate church of Oxford next to a saint's body' (*estava enterrada en la capilla mayor de la yglesia colegial de Oxonia junto a un cuerpo santo*).[143] The significance, if any, of this passage hinges on the term *capilla mayor*, which in recent Spanish usage means the chancel, or eastern chapel beyond the choir.[144] Whether 16th-century usage was so precise as to suggest that Carranza was thinking specifically of the chancel of St. Frideswide's, rather than the eastern arm in general, is unclear. If so, the fact can merely be recorded as in apparent conflict with the other evidence.

During the century after 1561 the site of the shrine seems to have been forgotten. Anthony Wood, who clearly had no reliable information, says in different places that the feretory was placed 'on the north side of the quire, somewhat distant from the ground',

[138] P.R.O. PROB 11/6 f.66$^{v}$.

[139] J. Calfhill, *Historia de Catharinae uxoris D. Petri Martyris Piisimae Exhumatione, ac Eiusdem ad Honestam Sepulturam Restitutione*, in C. Hubertus, *Historia Vera de Vita* . . . (1562).

[140] Ibid. 202.

[141] Ibid. 199$^{v}$.

[142] Ibid. 201$^{v}$–202$^{v}$.

[143] *Documentos Historicos*, ed. J.I. Tellechea Idígoras, iii (Madrid, 1966), 26; see also . . . . Salazar de Miranda, *Vida y Sucesos Prósperos y Adversos de don Bartolome de Carranza* (Madrid, 1788), 27. For both these references I am extremely grateful to Glyn Redworth.

[144] Cf. G.E. Street, *Some Account of Gothic Architecture in Spain* (1865), 17. I am grateful to Howard Colvin for this reference.

and 'on the north side of the high altar'; elsewhere he calls the 15th-century watching-loft 'St. Frideswyde's repository', and reports without contradiction a belief that Lady Montague's tomb and effigy commemorated the saint.[145] Numerous drawings and engravings of the watching-loft between the mid 18th and mid 19th century are captioned 'St. Frideswide's shrine', a view which seems to have prevailed until the rediscovery of the fragments of the 1289 shrine. By then it was believed to have stood 'somewhere in the North Choir Aisle of this Church', probably a deduction from the Montague chantry deed.[146] No genuine tradition, therefore, is represented by the modern slab inscribed FRIDESWIDE which is set in the Lady Chapel floor beside the Montague tomb.

*Some implications of the grave and shrine sites*

On the evidence presented above, the following conclusions may be suggested:
(a) The house preserved a tradition that Frideswide had originally been buried on the S. side of her church.
(b) The church which the 12th-century canons believed to have been Æthelred II's work of *c.*1004, and which survived until the Romanesque rebuilding, contained on its central axis a site identified, whether rightly or wrongly, as Frideswide's original place of burial.
(c) This spot, which continued to be venerated as her grave after the first translation, lay within the church as existing in 1180.
(d) The 1180 shrine stood 'near' the spot later occupied by its successor of 1289, and therefore somewhere on the N. side of the Romanesque choir. The unusual square chapel in the angle between the N. transept and N. choir aisle was almost certainly built to house it.
(e) Since it seems improbable that the relics would have been moved from an axial to a non-axial position within the Romanesque church, the most likely reason for the position of the 1180 shrine is that it was raised over the supposed grave site, which was regarded as holy because of its long contact with the saint's bones.
(f) It follows from points (b) and (e), if both are accepted, that the central axis of the late Anglo-Saxon church passed through the N. transept and N.E. chapels of the Romanesque church.

## THE PAROCHIAL ALTAR OF THE HOLY CROSS AND THE 'JERUSALEM CHAPEL': A CLUE TO THE PRE-ROMANESQUE CHURCH, AND SOME ANALOGUES

At this stage one more strand of evidence may be woven into the argument: the parochial attributes of the Priory, considered in the light of some analogous cases of pre-Conquest minsters with parochial functions which were replaced by Romanesque conventual churches.

St. Frideswide's, like other regularised ex-minsters, retained direct control over an urban parish, first mentioned (for purposes of locating a tenement) in a deed of *c.*1180.[147] Parochial duties, presumably discharged during the 12th century by the

[145] Wood, *City*, ii, 165, 166 note, 173; Hearne loc. cit. note 134.
[146] H.G. Liddell, *St. Frideswide: Two Sermons, Preached . . . 1880, . . . 1889* [not publ.: Bodl. 11113 e. 10(1)], 19.
[147] *Cart. Frid.* i, No. 99.

canons or their curates, were formalised in 1225 when Bishop Hugh de Welles established 'a vicarage in St. Frideswide's conventual church', with revenues divided between the vicar and canons.[148] Vicars were presented to 'the vicarage of St. Frideswide's parish church' in 1239/40, to 'the vicarage of St. Frideswide's church' in 1243/4, and to 'the vicarage of the altar of the Holy Cross in St. Frideswide's church' in 1249/50.[149] In 1298 the benefice was suppressed and all parochial functions and revenues transferred to St. Edward's, three reasons being stated: (a) the livings were both poor, and inadequate on their own; (b) the parochial offices of St. Frideswide's church and those of the canons had been celebrated 'not merely under one roof but in completely adjoining places, with no space between them worth mentioning' (*nedum sub eodem tecto sed in locis admodum vicinis sine notabili distantia*), causing mutual irritation and musical cacophony; and (c) the arrangement caused danger both to the canons through the opening of the church doors for visiting sick parishioners at night, and to the parishioners 'through the difficulty of having thence what their status requires'.[150]

Parish altars were often located in the naves of conventual churches, and it may be (as proposed by Halsey, p. 135) that this was the case at Oxford. But there is one clue which points in a different direction. The will of James Zouch (d.1503) requests burial 'under the myddell of the greet window yn the north part of the cross wynd yle in a chapell callyd chapell of Jh[erusale]m', and his tomb still remains against the N. wall of the N. transept.[151] The probability of a liturgical link between a 'chapel of Jerusalem' and an altar dedicated to the Holy Cross suggests some likelihood that the latter was also in the N. transept or N.E. chapels, the position which in any case best agrees with the statement of 1298 that it stood immediately next to the canons' choir.

This conclusion, coupled with the location of the shrine in the N.E. chapels, has two interesting implications. First, it suggests that the shrine and parochial altar may have belonged to an *ensemble* embodying some reminiscence of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where the 12th-century church also includes the reputed hiding-place of the True Cross. The symmetrical and very unusual plan of the original N.E. chapels – a square containing four vaulted bays on a central column – becomes more explicable as an element in such an *ensemble*, which would presumably also have included a scaled-down rotunda associated with, or even serving as, the shrine.[152] Relevant in this context is T.A. Heslop's suggestion (below, p. 274) that the canopy over St. Frideswide's head on the late 12th-century Priory seal is copied from the bulls of the masters of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, where it apparently represents the Holy Sepulchre (see Fig. 107). A programme of architectural symbolism likening Frideswide's shrine to the Tomb of Christ could well have originated in Robert of Cricklade's fertile brain, even if not realised until after his death.

Secondly, the location of a parochial altar near the shrine, and therefore on the N. side of the church, may provide a further clue to the pre-Romanesque arrangements. We have already noted possible indications that Æthelred's minster may have stood immediately N. of its successor; if it survived the initial laying-out of the conventual

[148] *Liber Antiquus de Ordinationibus Vicariarum Tempore Hugonis Wells*, ed. A. Gibbons (1888), 1; cf. *Rot. Hugonis de Welles*, i (Linc. Rec. Soc. iii, 1912), 182.

[149] *Rot. Grosseteste* (Linc. Rec. Soc. xi, 1914), 465, 481, 496.

[150] *Reg. Sutton*, vi (Linc. Rec. Soc. lxiv, 1969), 106–7.

[151] P.R.O. PROB 11/14 f.18v; H.F. Owen Evans, 'The Tomb of James Zouch in Oxford Cathedral', *Trans. Monumental Brass Soc.* ix (1952–62), 509–11.

[152] For copies of the Holy Sepulchre see R. Krautheimer, *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance Art* (1971), 116–30; see also note 128 above.

church during *c.*1140–55, and if the removal of the canons into a new choir during the 1160s left it exclusively for its pre-existing parochial functions, it is entirely likely that a parish altar would have been allowed to remain on its site when the shrine-chapel and enlarged N. transept finally obliterated it during *c.*1170–90.

This series of *ifs* is not so hypothetical in context as it may seem in isolation: the transformation of Anglo-Saxon minsters into 12th-century monasteries was rarely simple, and the kind of sequence just proposed was more the rule than the exception. To put Oxford in context it is worth citing some analogues:

(a) Some great Romanesque churches replacing lines of older and smaller churches were built directly over their predecessors, on the same axes (Glastonbury, St. Augustine's Canterbury),[153] but such cases may be in a minority. More often the pre-Romanesque church or churches had been differently sited and aligned, either to the N. or N.W. of their successors (Winchester Old Minster, Exeter, Rochester),[154] or to the S. (Wells, Peterborough, Lyminge, Durham, Haughmond, perhaps Abingdon and Hereford).[155] Bury St. Edmunds, where the vast late 11th-century church replaced heterogeneous pre-Conquest structures aligned along its N. side,[156] is a particularly telling parallel for St. Frideswide's.

(b) Where an Anglo-Saxon minster complex contained two churches, separation of monastic and parochial functions might be effected by rebuilding one as a fully-fledged conventual church and leaving the other for parish use. This certainly happened at Winchcombe,[157] and may be the true explanation of the pre-Conquest church which lay W. of Exeter Cathedral;[158] the arrangement at Lindisfarne, where the 11th-century or earlier parish church lies due W. of the Romanesque priory church,[159] is *prima facie* similar.

(c) Where a minster community was re-founded as a strict monastery, a new church might be built attached to, or near, the old one, which once again would be left for the use of secular clergy and parishioners. This happened after the Benedictine reform of Worcester in the 960s and the Cluniac reform of Daventry *c.*1108.[160] More relevant in the present context are Augustinian examples of the mid to late 12th century, involving

[153] H.M. and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, i (1965), 253, 136.

[154] Winchester: Biddle op. cit. note 16, Fig. 9; Exeter: C.G. Henderson and P.T. Bidwell, 'The Saxon Minster at Exeter', in Pearce op. cit. note 121, 145–76; Rochester: Taylor and Taylor op. cit. note 153, ii (1965), 519.

[155] Wells: W. Rodwell, *Wells Cathedral: Excavations and Discoveries* (3rd edn., 1987); Peterborough: Taylor and Taylor op. cit. note 153, ii, 492; Lyminge and Durham: above, note 126; Haughmond: above, note 92; Abingdon: G. Lambrick, 'Buildings of the Monasteries at Abingdon from the Late Seventh Century to 1538', *Med. Arch.* xii (1968), 43, 51; Hereford: the cathedral obstructs the main W.–E. route through the town in such a way as to suggest that it has moved northwards: see R. Shoesmith, *Hereford City Excavations: II* (C.B.A. Research Rep. 46, 1982), 13–20, 74–83.

[156] Gem and Keen loc. cit. note 129.

[157] S.R. Bassett, 'A Probable Mercian Royal Mausoleum at Winchcombe, Gloucestershire', *Antiq. Jnl.* lxv (1985), 87.

[158] This is not the view of Henderson and Bidwell op. cit. note 154; but *two* aligned churches, the eastern always dedicated to St. Peter and the western to St. Mary, seems a more satisfactory hypothesis than their suggestion that the Anglo-Saxon cathedral was re-dedicated and assigned for parish use when the Romanesque one was built.

[159] See Taylor and Taylor op. cit. note 153, i, 398–9, and R.N. Bailey, E. Cambridge and H.D. Biggs, *Dowsing and Church Archaeology* (1988), 34, 83–5. A photograph of the early work in the parish church was published by P.F. Ryder in *Popular Archaeology*, June 1983, p. 41.

[160] C. Dyer, 'The Saxon Cathedrals of Worcester', *Trans. Worc. Archaeol. Soc.* 3rd ser. ii (1968–9), 34; M.J. Franklin, 'The Secular College as a Focus for Anglo-Norman Piety: St. Augustine's Daventry', in Blair op. cit. note 91, 97–9.

a new conventual church and cloister either attached to the E. end of the old church (Goring)[161] or free-standing a short way further E. (Bicester, Repton).[162]

(d) In some cases where a Romanesque church is known to have replaced the church or churches of a secular minster, a parish aisle or altar recorded in the later middle ages may represent a previously free-standing church with parochial attributes. A late Chester tradition relates that a church for St. Werburgh's relics was built in the 9th century against the E. end of the old minster of Sts. Peter and Paul there, which was re-dedicated to St. Oswald; if there is any truth in this story it suggests that the parish altar of St. Oswald, recorded in the nave of St. Werburgh's conventual church by the 13th century, perpetuates the memory and perhaps the site of the original church.[163] At Daventry, where the first Cluniac church had been built *c.*1108 against the 'parish church' (i.e. secular minster), parish functions were housed by the 15th century in a large S. aisle.[164] A particularly odd case is St. Martin-le-Grand in Dover, which absorbed under its roof the parish churches of St. Nicholas and St. John Baptist, each incumbent having his own high altar and distinct area within the church.[165]

These cases of minsters overshadowed or swallowed by large conventual churches may help us to understand the sequence at Oxford. Winchcombe, Exeter and Lindisfarne reinforce the suggestion that St. Aldate's may have been separated off, as a parish church, from the complex of which it had been an integral part; Goring, Bicester and Repton are cases of a mid to late 12th-century Augustinian community assigning its old church for parish use and moving to an up-to-date church and cloister nearby; Bury, Wells, Peterborough, Lyminge, Durham, Haughmond and Daventry illustrate a recurrent practice of building the new church directly alongside the old one; while Chester and Daventry show how an old church thus overshadowed might survive for a while but eventually vanish, its residual functions coming under the roof of the new church in the guise of a parish altar.

If we cannot at present prove that any of these things happened at Oxford, we can at least claim that the various hints and clues can be fitted into a wider context, and are consistent with the archaeological evidence from the cloister area which suggests a general shift southwards. Future archaeological planning should reckon with the prospect that an Anglo-Saxon minster church awaits discovery under the turf of the Cathedral garden.

[161] J. Blair, 'The Foundation of Goring Priory', *Oxoniensia*, li (1986), 194–7.

[162] Bicester: Blair op. cit. note 37, 136 note 161; D.A. Hinton, 'Bicester Priory', *Oxoniensia*, xxxiii (1968), 22–52. Repton: H.M. Taylor, *St. Wystan's Church, Repton: A Guide* (new edn., 1989); W. St. John Hope, 'On the Augustinian Priory of the Holy Trinity at Repton', *Derbs. Arch. Jnl.* vii (1885), opp. p. 154.

[163] Thacker op. cit. note 27, 203–4; *The Life of St. Werburge of Chester by Henry Bradshaw*, ed. C. Horstmann (E.E.T.S. lxxxviii, 1887), 151–2; *Chartulary of Chester Abbey*, ed. J. Tait, i (Chetham Soc. n.s. lxxix, 1920), 117–19.

[164] Franklin loc. cit. note 160.

[165] Canon Scott Robinson, 'The Old Church of St. Martin at Dover', *Arch. Cant.* xx (1893), 295–304.