

Excavations in the Latin Chapel and outside the east end of Oxford Cathedral, 1962/3

by DAVID STURDY

With a contribution by NIALL DONALD

SUMMARY

Excavations in and outside the N.E. chapels of the Cathedral revealed stages in the development of this part of the building. No evidence was found for Anglo-Saxon structures. A few graves (mainly with stone linings) were cut by the late 12th-century footings. The N. and E. walls of the late 12th-century 'pre-Latin' Chapel, and the N. wall of the early 13th-century Lady Chapel, were located. These and subsequent developments of the N.E. chapels, including the existing mid 14th-century Latin Chapel, were probably associated with St. Frideswide's shrine. The excavation also defined later phases in the development of the Latin Chapel, including the lowering of the floor and installation of wall-benches. Some time later the floor was raised again. Many decorated tiles from successive medieval floors were found, enough from the floor of c.1500 remaining in situ to permit a partial reconstruction of its pattern.

INTRODUCTION

In 1963 the old floor of the Latin Chapel (Fig. 34), of red tiles and bricks set in mortar with some stone and marble slabs, was replaced by a stone floor laid on concrete. The new floor was designed by Mr. S.E. Dykes Bower as adviser for a larger scheme, initiated by the then Dean, the Very Revd. C.A. Simpson, to 'clean up' the Cathedral. Unable to avert the destruction of the old floor, in fact a much-altered and badly-worn medieval tile floor unrecognised by any previous scholar, we recorded it in detail and then excavated beneath it. Unfortunately the medieval stalls were not studied or recorded during removal. Generally presumed to have been the main choir-stalls, ejected to the Latin Chapel in the early 17th century, they were replaced after over-restoration. Volunteers from the Ashmole Club, the Oxford University Archaeological Society and elsewhere excavated Cuttings 1-3 within the chapel throughout the winter of 1963.¹ The Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, lent tools and equipment, and the writer paid all expenses of the work.

Stained glass fragments found in the Latin Chapel are reported on below by Niall Donald (pp. 100-2), and floor-tiles by Julia Green (pp. 103-14); the worked stone is described together with the material found in the cloister (above, pp. 48-52). The pottery and small-finds are stored in the Ashmolean Museum; no report on them is included. A report by Mary Harman on the skeletal remains (which were re-buried in the Cathedral Garden in 1989) is deposited, with the site records, at the County Museum, Woodstock.

¹ *Oxoniensia*, xxviii (1963), 91.



Fig. 34. Latin Chapel, looking S.W. towards Nowers monument, before removal of tile floor.

FLOOR-LEVELS, DEPTHS, LAYERS AND STRUCTURES

The general floor-level of the transepts and nave of the cathedral has remained, to judge from the column-bases, unchanged since the 12th century, during several relayings of the floor-slabs and many minor alterations. All depths noted below are from this level, which formerly extended across the E. aisle of the N. transept. The present floor of the Latin Chapel, like its predecessor, the late-medieval tiled floor destroyed in 1963, lies 15 cm. *below* this general level. An earlier floor of hard mortar, dating from about the mid 14th century, was found over much of the chapel 52–55 cm. below the general level. The laying of this floor involved the removal of over 50 tons of well-built rubble-foundation and other material. A similar, but less drastic, lowering of levels has also affected the three eastern bays of the Lady Chapel and N. choir aisle. The bases indicate that the floors here were about 23 cm. higher than at present before the 15th, or perhaps the 17th, century. There was probably a similar step-up of 23 cm. between the W. bay of the small two-bay precursor of the Latin Chapel, which was also part of the transept aisle, and its E. bay. The bases here were largely renewed in the 19th century, and cannot be entirely relied on to confirm this. If this step-up was indeed present in the 12th-century form of the chapel, the original floor of the second bay from the W. was 38 cm. higher than today. In the mid 14th-century lowering of the chapel floor, the level was brought down to 70 cm. below the 12th-century floor.

A widespread lowering of levels is in fact well-attested elsewhere in the area: in the S. choir aisle; in the cloisters and probably within the chapter-house (below, pp. 240–2); in

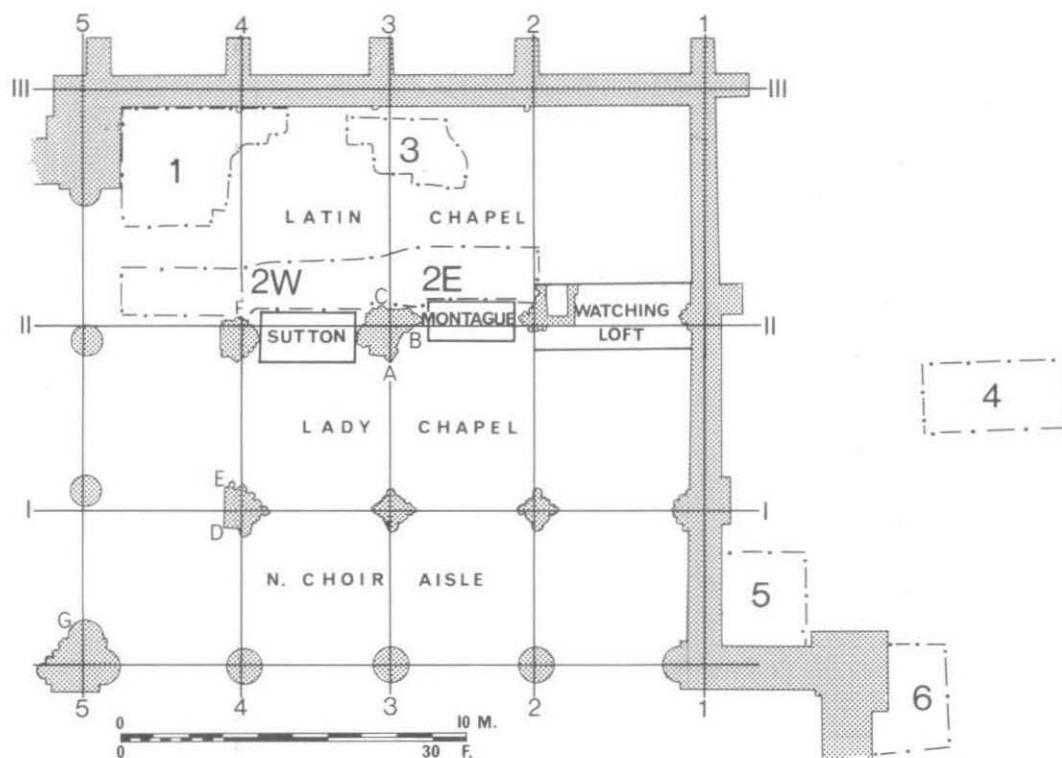


Fig. 35. The N.E. chapels, showing the locations of the 1962-3 trenches and the pier numbering system used in this and other papers.

Tom Quad to the W. of the cathedral, lowered by almost a metre in the 1660s² with the removal of well over 500 tons of soil and debris; in the gateway of Tom Tower, where the Tudor gates themselves have extra sections spliced on at the bottom; and even in the roadway of St. Aldate's outside, as can be seen from the plinth- and footing-lines of Wolsey's Almshouses, now the Master's Lodgings of Pembroke College. In this southern fringe of the town, large quantities of soil and rubble could readily be shovelled up, carted off and dumped on nearby meadowland. Indeed, the meadows' vulnerability to flood may sometimes have encouraged such dumping.

Layers and soil-deposits are numbered, structural features lettered. The excavation was measured in feet and inches, here converted into metric. The different cuttings are expressed in bold type (e.g. **6**), the various structures as A to K and layers as 1 to 12. Piers are referred to by the numbering system shown on Fig. 35.

² Wood, *City*, ii, 174; *Colleges and Halls*, 448.

EXCAVATIONS INSIDE THE LATIN CHAPEL (Figs. 34-41)

Structures and Layers in Cutting 1

This cutting, 4.70 m. E. to W. by 3.65 m., occupied the N.W. corner of the Latin Chapel. On the S. it was limited by the need to allow access to the rest of the chapel and by the brick burial-vault of Edward Venables Vernon (1841-86).

- A. The stone base for the late-medieval stalls moved to the Latin Chapel in the 16th or 17th century. This base remained to be recorded only on the E. of the cutting.
1. Stone step and stone-and-brick floor in soft brown mortar bedding, all at the general level of the church. The floor ran above Structures D and E.
2. Loose filling of brown loam and off-white mortar (7-10 cm. thick) with jetton.
3. The main tiled floor of the chapel with off-white mortar bedding, in all 6 cm. thick (see pp. 97-100). The mortar-bedding abutted on the wall-benches C and E. A section of 52 tiles, about 18 cm. square and all badly worn, remained in position, while the mortar-bedding just to the E. of the cutting preserved the impressions of ten more. All the tiles in this sector of the floor presumably lay square.
4. Loose rubble and mortar with tips of brown gravelly loam (together 23 cm. thick) with broken floor-tiles (pp. 103-4) and 14th- to 15th-century pottery.
- B. Rough stone packing around a scaffold-pole hole dug through Layer 5.
- C. Plastered rubble wall-bench (34-37 cm. wide) along N. wall of chapel, abutting on wall-bench E.
- D. Rubble footing (40-43 cm. wide) in line with the W. wall of the chapel, blocking access from the W. into the chapel. This footing may be presumed to have carried a wooden screen.
- E. Plastered rubble wall-bench (38-43 cm. wide) along W. wall, just in front of footing D.
5. Hard off-white mortar floor (10-14 cm. thick and 46-47 cm. below the general level). The footing D, the wall-bench E and this floor appeared to be contemporary.
- F. The coursed-rubble N. wall of the Latin Chapel, dated on architectural grounds to the 1340s or 1350s, abutting the 12th-century N.E. buttress of the N. transept. The base of the wall's foundation may lie at a depth of 2.20 m. or more, but space and safety alike prohibited any deep sounding in the narrow gap between this and the 12th-century footing G. The foundations are trench-built; they have no pronounced offset, but there is a slight bulging-out from a depth of 70 cm. to 1.30 m., the lowest point reached. Above 70 cm., the foundations are face-built, again with no offset, and merge into the wall-face. The shaft-bases indicate that the chapel was designed to be floored at the general level, but no sign of a floor could be seen at that level and the chapel may have been *lowered* to Layer 5 during construction. Fragments of red roof-tiles and ridge-tiles with greeny-brown glaze are built into the foundations.
- G. The rubble foundations of a small, two-bay, chapel of the 12th century, 1.50 m. wide, thickening to 2.30 m. for the transept buttress (Fig. 39) and to 1.95 m. for the central buttress of the N. wall. On its S. face, the footing is 2.30 m. deep, trench-built below 85-115 cm. Against the transept buttress it could be seen to have been face-built with an offset of 7-8 cm. at a depth of 45 cm., while on the N. face there was a wider offset of 15-19 cm. which showed that the alignment of this part of the church had been corrected by about five degrees anti-clockwise when the walls were set out.
- H. Stone-lined burial dug through Layers 7-9 and perhaps through Layer 6; perhaps earlier than the 12th-century footings.
6. Hard-packed yellow-brown gravel and loam (22-24 cm. thick).
7. Dark-brown gravelly loam (23-27 cm. thick).
8. Hard-packed pale-yellow gravel (15-27 cm. thick).
9. Dark-brown gravelly loam (90-115 cm. thick). Natural gravel was found at a depth of 2.10 m. at the S. end of the cutting and 2.20 m. in the centre, where the 12th-century footing G had been dug a further 10 cm. down into the gravel. This slope might continue to give a depth of 2.40-2.50 m. at the N. There was no trace of the natural red-brown loamy topsoil, and this part of the church was built in the filling of a considerable earlier ditch or hollow.

Structures and Layers in Cutting 2W

A zone along the S. side of the Latin Chapel, roughly 1.20-1.50 m. wide and 11 m. long, had not been disturbed for the massive brick burial-vaults, some of them roomy enough for up to a dozen coffins, of Georgian and early-Victorian canons which filled the centre of the chapel and had destroyed all earlier deposits and burials over more than half its area. The high chantry chapel or 'watching chamber' stands in this

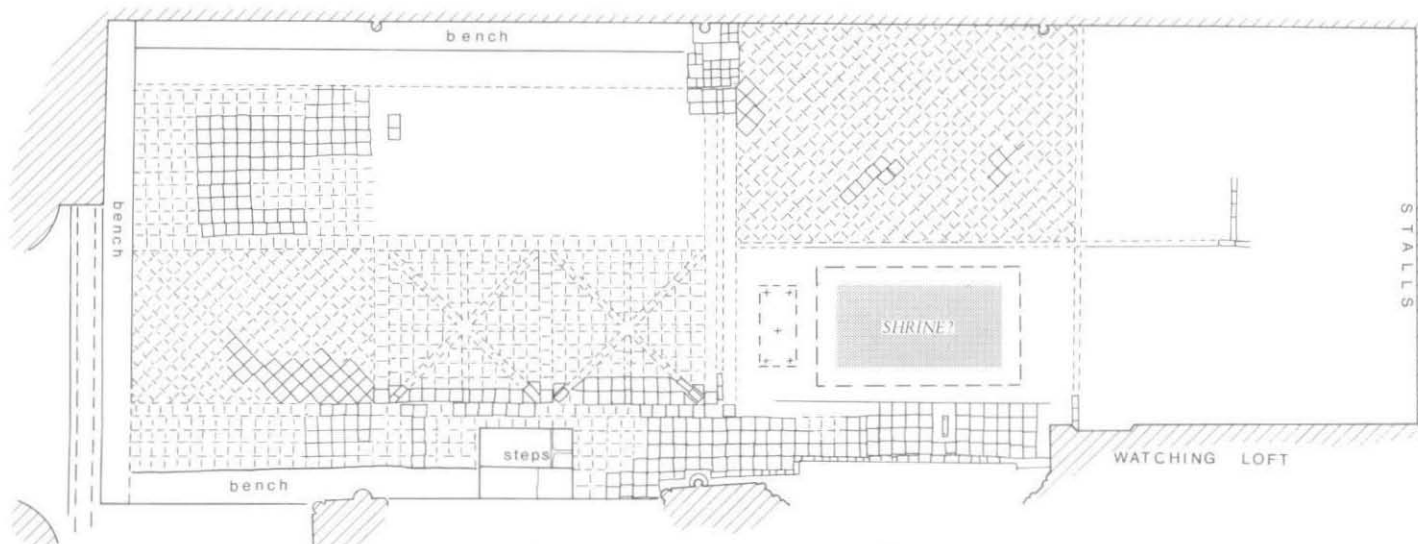
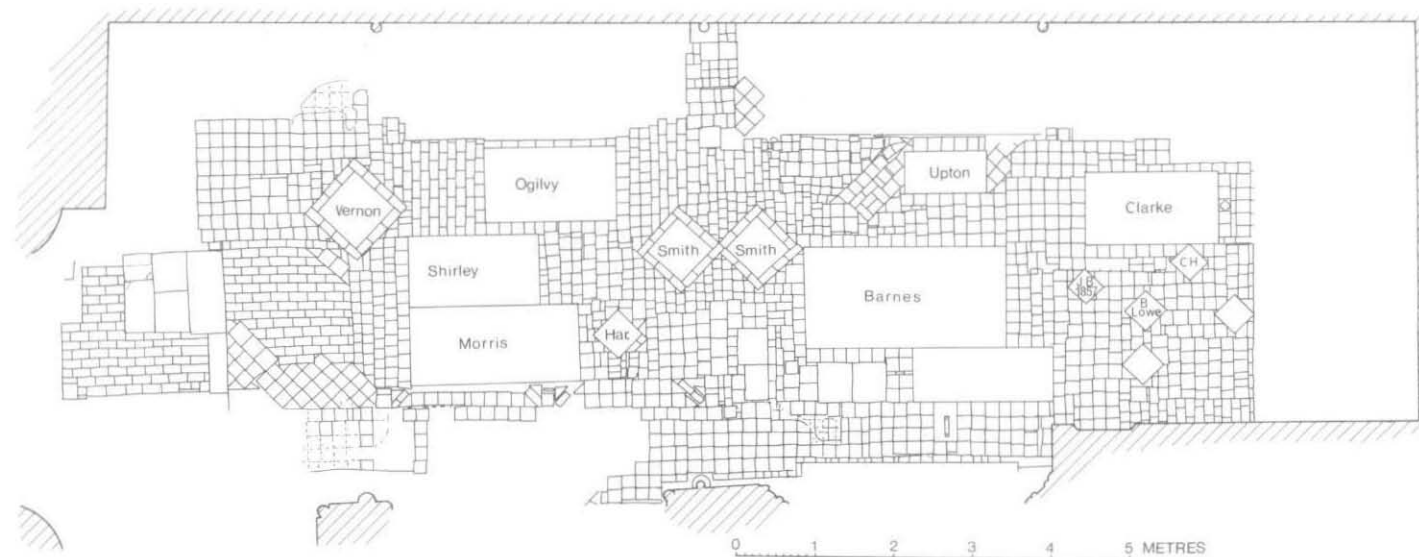


Fig. 37. Latin Chapel: latest tile floor. *Above*: as existing 1962; *below*: proposed reconstruction of design c.1500. (Re-drawn by John Blair.)

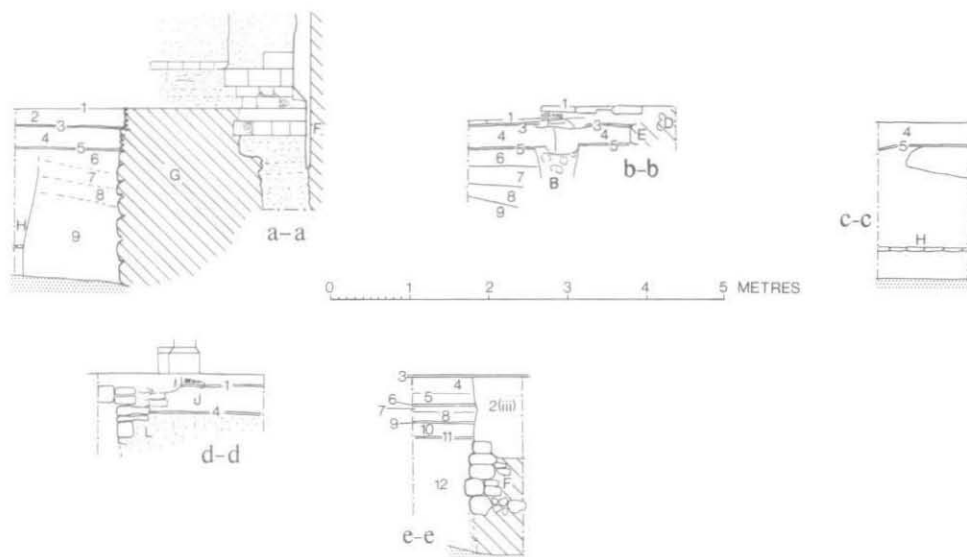


Fig. 38. Latin Chapel: sections. Letters correspond with section lines on Fig. 36, upper. (Re-drawn by John Blair.)

zone in the E. bay of the chapel. In the next bay, alongside the Montague monument, it was designated Cutting **2E** (below). In the third bay from the E., alongside the Sutton monument, the excavation was called Cutting **2W**; Dr. Fell's vault (which was not investigated) took up almost all the zone in the W. bay adjoining the N. transept, also reported on here. The 12th-century floor of the third bay was perhaps 38 cm. above the present floor (above, p. 76), so that no ground- or floor-levels relating to the standing architecture could be expected to survive.

- A. Square stone supporting-blocks inserted, presumably by Scott in the 1870s, below the bases of the wall-shafts.
- B. Barrel-vaulted brick burial-vault (1.07 m. wide, 2.50 m. long, its top at a depth of 80 cm.) constructed 10–12 July 1686 for the burial of Dr. John Fell, Dean 1660–1686,³ the barrel-vault no doubt being completed within a day or two of the funeral at 4 p.m. on Tuesday 13 July. The tile floor, Layer 1, had not been relaid over the vault, which lies beneath two blocks of the late-medieval stalls.
- C. The stone base for the stalls, remaining to be recorded only in part.
- 1. The main tiled floor of the chapel with mortar bedding. About 130 of the tiles remained in position, most of them badly worn (below, p. 98); careful work with a soft brush recovered the impressions of another 20 in the mortar bedding left exposed where the stalls had stood. East of the stone steps E, the floor covered the wall-bench F, but to the W. it abutted against the wall-bench F, which must have been raised when this floor was laid.
- 2. Loose gravelly loam and mortar with broken floor-tiles and 14th- to 15th-century pottery and glass.
- E. Two stone steps (1.15 m. wide) with a plaster-faced rubble blocking (60 cm. wide) on the E. side of the steps, which led down into the chapel to the floor at Layer 3 (Fig. 40). The lower step had no doubt been covered by the main tiled floor 1, which must have abutted on the upper step. Enthusiastic undergraduate diggers unfortunately removed the tiles or bedding here before the late-medieval date of the floor was appreciated. This entrance into the chapel succeeded an earlier one through the western bay (see J below).
- F. Plastered rubble wall-bench (41 cm. wide on either side of the western, 12th-century wall-shaft, where it curved out sinuously, but 65 cm. wide further E.) with an opening 1.80 m. wide later filled by the steps and blocking E. Though structurally later, the steps E were perhaps the same date as

³ *Wood's Life and Times*, ed. A. Clark, iii (O.H.S. xxvi, 1894), 192.



Fig. 39. Cutting 1, looking westwards along footing of N. wall of 'pre-Latin' chapel (1.G) towards E. face of original buttress at N.E. corner of N. transept.



Fig. 40. Steps down from Lady Chapel into Latin Chapel (2W.E), looking S.

the wall-bench F, the distinction marking a change of plan during construction. Dr. Fell's vault B lies immediately N. of the W. stretch of this bench, but did not impinge on it.

- G. Plastered rubble wall-bench across the W. end of the chapel, abutted on by the S. bench F and dug through for Fell's vault B, leaving only a stump of two stones in the extreme S.W. corner of the chapel.
 - H. Footing of rubble and re-used ashlar for screen across the W. end of the chapel.
 - 3. A few small sections of mortar-bedding abutting on the plaster facing H, no doubt largely removed, with all the tiles that the bedding had held, when the south bench F was constructed.
 - J. An almost vertical plaster facing at a depth of 23 to 50 cm. covered the footings exposed when the level was lowered for floor 4 (Fig. 41). This facing was stepped-out with canted sides round the base of the western, 12th-century, wall-shaft (II.4.F). The facing, which did not run far to the W. of this shaft, seemed to be the same date as a broad opening into the chapel beneath the Nowers monument. Further E. it had been cut through when the steps E were built and then turned sharply northward to curve round the 12th-century corner shaft and 13th-century wall-shaft of the central pier of the chapel's S. side (II.3.D and C). The upper finish of the facing had all been knocked away, by the workmen who fitted-in the stalls and their bases C in the 17th century or by the Victorian restorers who put in the supporting blocks A.
 - 4. Hard off-white mortar floor, the same date as the footing H, at depth of 50 cm. Layers 3 and 4 and structures G, H and J might all be of the mid 14th century.
 - K(i) The mortared-rubble foundations of the E. wall of the much smaller 12th-century precursor of the Latin Chapel (1.52 m. wide; depth not found, but presumably about 2.10 m. or more). A shaft at the S.E. corner of this chapel (II.3.D) still stands to full height, but without its capital; it is not supported by the foundation but overhangs, no doubt because of a re-alignment when the walls were set out. The E. face of this foundation is recorded under Cutting 2E, H.
 - K(ii) Rough rubble footing underlying the Sutton monument, interpreted here as the S. wall of the 12th-century chapel.
 - L. Rubble corner of a foundation (Fig. 41), exposed to a depth of five courses or 65 cm. below the floor 4, projecting 38 cm. N. of the footing K(ii) which abuts on it. The trench-built N. face of the footing remained for a length of 1.5 m. westwards from this corner. Exposed for a further 2.6 m. westwards was a rough footing of small rubble, interpreted here as the same structure but with its facing robbed away at some date before the construction of the wall-bench F, which ran above it. If K(ii) was indeed late 12th-century, L may be identified as the corner of the N.E. transeptal chapel of an earlier 12th-century church.
 - 5. Brown gravelly loam, not dug out to bottom.
- No attempt was made to find natural gravel.



Fig. 41. S. face of cutting 2W, showing base of shaft II.4.F above plastered face (2W.J) and corner of early footing (2W.L).

Structures and Layers in Cutting 2E

1. Granite slab, with brass to Dr. Francis Barnes (1770–1859), set into main floor, Layer 2.
- A. Brick burial-vault of the Barnes family, with capping-slabs at a depth of 68 cm.
2. Main tiled floor with soft mortar-beddings of various dates. About 60 worn tiles remained in position, all square-set, in three rows at the centre of the cutting and seven-and-a-half at the W. end. Most of them were part of the belt of tiles along the S. side of the chapel. This belt was interrupted by a row of narrow border-tiles running N.–S. (below, p. 98), which may help to indicate where St. Frideswide's shrine stood from about 1350 until the 1530s (below, pp. 95–6). The floor lay over the wall-bench B in this cutting and in part of Cutting 2W, right up to the Montague monument C.
3. Two late- or post-medieval burials lay side-by-side at a depth of 1.05 m. (i) beneath an uninscribed or worn slab 1.78 m. long and (ii), between it and the Montague monument, beneath tiling (perhaps relaid) and a Purbeck slab with a recess or indent for a fixing or brass inscription, the slab being 51 cm. wide. This burial showed traces of a wooden coffin. There was also (iii) a large charnel deposit W. of (i), of very many disturbed bones including nine skulls, from 80 to 140 cm. down. Two stone slabs, roughly 50 cm. square, and relaid tiles were over these bones. They may have been Tudor or Stuart burials dug out and reburied when the Barnes vault was made, presumably in the 1840s or 1850s, or medieval burials disturbed in the 16th or 17th centuries. The stratigraphy, all in deposits of soft brown gravelly loam, absolutely dry for centuries, was not clear. If medieval, the bones may have been from graves just outside the small 12th-century chapel, which was extended across this area late in the 13th century (below, p. 95). Since the shrine may have stood just to the N. (below, p. 96), these bones could possibly include the intermixed remains of Frideswide and Katherine Martyr (below, p. 254).
- B. Plastered rubble wall-bench against the monument C, continued from 2W.D, just to the W. Although chopped back for the later burial 3ii, the small-rubble core of the bench continued along the Montague monument to within 48 cm. of its E. end, where the earlier, 14th-century, floor stepped up. The bench had been constructed over this floor and later flattened for the main tiled floor 2.
- C. Lady Montague's monument, probably not *in situ*, stands on (but is slightly shorter at the W. end than) a sub-base of two courses of ashlar, which have a thin plaster facing. This sub-base had been cut into the plaster facing D, and its plaster facing made up to match that. Both these facings were abutted and concealed by the wall-bench B. The sub-base may have been constructed for an altar-tomb for Thomas de Blewbury, who was buried next to the feretory in 1293 (below, p. 251). This monument must have been dismantled before 1633, when Lady Montague's monument was moved here from further S.
- D. An almost vertical plaster facing covered the foundations exposed or dug into when the chapel floor was lowered (above, p. 76) for the floors 4 and 5. The facing curved out round the base of the early 13th-century shaft F (=II.3.C). It had been cut into and at once patched-over for the foundation-courses of the monument C.
4. Fragments of a tiled floor and its mortar bedding remained in places under the wall-bench B and laid against the monument C and the facing D. The floor lay at a depth of 48–50 cm. as far E. as the end of the wall-bench B, where it stepped up to 30–34 cm. No stone of the step itself remained, but the end step against the monument C was probably 25 cm. wide, if the gap between the last stone of the badly-damaged bench and the closest stretch of mortar-bedding gave a true indication. The workmen who built the bench had lifted almost all the tiles along its length. One remained in position at the higher level, between the monument and the 'watching chamber', and altogether about 12 at the lower level. Later, when the level was raised and the floor 2 laid, all the tiles N. of the bench were also lifted.
5. Hard off-white mortar floor at a depth of 49–51 cm., presumably a working-level during the completion of the chapel before the tiled floor 4 just above it was laid. This floor continued at the same level beneath the step-up noted above.
- E. Two roughly-laid courses of very large rubble stones project about 15 cm. to the S. below the base of Dr. Barnes's burial-vault, Structure A. They may form a structure 2.30 m. or more long N.–S., whose width might be about 1.85 m. to judge from Cutting 3. At the time of excavation these stones, at a depth of 1.95–2.35 m. below the present floor, were taken to be the base of Dr. Barnes's burial-vault, Structure A. The likelihood that they are part of the foundations of Frideswide's shrine is discussed below (p. 95).
6. Brown gravelly loam and many disturbed human bones at a depth of 1.20–1.95 m. may represent burials disturbed during the construction of structures E or G.
- F. The 13th-century wall-shaft or vaulting-shaft (=II.3.C) at the centre of the S. side of the chapel

should be included here, although its stratigraphy was destroyed by the lowering of the general floor-level for layer 5. It is structurally later than the later 12th- and early 13th-century footings, H and G, and earlier than the present chapel and its concomitant works, Structures C and D and Layers 4 and 5. The walling on either side of this shaft, and in bond with it, is out of line both with the largely-destroyed 12th-century work and with the present chapel by some six degrees north-of-east.

- G. A coursed-rubble foundation, clearly of the N. wall of the present Lady Chapel, abuts on the 12th-century E. wall of the smaller, two-bay, precursor of the Latin Chapel and runs 2.30 m. eastward to a buttress some 60 cm. deep, which may have been reduced to build the crude rubble footing, Structure E. The Montague monument, Structure C, stands above the S. face of this foundation and the 'watching chamber', rather too close above the E. face of the buttress to permit safe investigation, so that the widths of the wall and of the buttress could not be found. The 'buttress' might alternatively be the E. wall of an early 13th-century eastward extension to the chapel.
 - H. The lower footings of the E. wall of the earlier chapel below the Latin Chapel were exposed (also as Structure K(i) of Cutting 2W). Cautious horizontal tunnelling beneath the N.W. corner of the Montague monument, Structure C, located this chapel's S.E. corner buttress.
 - 7. Brown gravelly loam.
- Natural gravel was exposed at a depth of 2.10–2.50 m.

Structures and Layers in Cutting 3

This cutting was laid out to expose the N.E. corner buttress of the small 12th-century chapel, whose N. and E. walls had already been revealed in Cuttings 1 and 2.

- 1. Two diamond-set marble slabs to Anne Smith (1782–1826) and Francis (1826–7) and Samuel Smith (1801–31), set in brick surrounds surrounded by small square red tiles, and the granite slab with brass to Charles Arthur Ogilvy (1793–1883), surrounded by square red tiles and bricks.
- A. The Ogilvy vault, of brick, capped with slabs at a depth of 86 cm., with its base at 2.10 m., had entirely destroyed much of the core and S. face of the N. foundation of the 12th-century chapel (F) for about 2.30 m. to the W.
- B. The Smith vault, presumably constructed in 1826 or 1827, of brick, capped with slabs at a depth of 90 cm., with its base at 2.75 m., had entirely destroyed the inner N.E. angle and the N. half of the E. wall of the 12th-century chapel (F).
- C. The 17th-century stone bases to the reset late-medieval stalls stood on the main tile floor, Layer 3, but had already been removed and could not be recorded in detail.
- 2. Three burials of the 16th or 17th century lay in *échelon* across the N.E. part of the cutting: (i), furthest to the E., at a depth of 1.45 m., its head cut deeply into the E. face of the 12th-century buttress; (ii), at 1.15 m., with its head and shoulders cut into the top of the buttress-footing; and (iii), to the S.W., at 1.20 m., had its whole head and trunk hacked down into the buttress-footing, leaving a single corner-stone at a depth of 1 m., within 3 cm. of Layer 11. These graves were all back-filled with loose brown gravelly loam with rubble, mortar and medieval pottery. The two northerly burials lay beneath the stalls; the tiles of the floor 3 had not been relaid over them, or had been removed. Over Burial (iii), which seems to be that of William Phillips, scholar of Christ Church (d.1647),⁴ the tiles had been poorly relaid square-on, though originally laid diagonally here to judge from nearby undisturbed tiles.
- 3. The main tiled floor of the chapel with its mortar bedding (2–5 cm. thick) had about 39 tiles still in position above this cutting (see p. 99). Along the N. side was a miscellaneous assemblage of square-set tiles, some small and 14th-century and others very large. Perhaps this most out-of-the-way part of the chapel was finished off with a belt of old tiles. They stretched over the wall-bench E right to the N. wall.
- 4. Loose brown gravelly loam with stones and mortar (19 cm. thick), with tile-fragments.
- 5. Rubble and mortar (15 cm. thick) with medieval pottery and broken tiles. Layers 3 to 5 all seem to date from about 1500.
- D. A plastered rubble wall-bench (33 cm. wide) along the N. wall. This bench was not removed, which left unresolved the relationship of the mortar floor 6 with the N. wall of the chapel and the character of the foundations of this wall.
- E. Along the S. edge of the cutting, the fairly narrow surviving tongue of deposits that provided the

⁴ Wood, *City*, ii, 550 and plan opposite.

- main exposure of Layers 6-11 had been cut through, perhaps for a burial, but perhaps by the robber-trench of a wall. The presence of Layer 6 this far S. demonstrates that the shrine could not have stood in the centre of the chapel here, but must have been somewhat to the S.
6. Hard off-white mortar floor, at depth of 52 cm., remaining in two patches, at the N.E. of the cutting and along the E. part of its S. face (3-4 cm. thick).
 7. Loose dark-brown loam with small rubble (7.5 cm. thick). Layers 6 and 7 are probably both mid 14th-century.
 8. Brown gravelly loam (12 cm. thick).
 9. Yellow-brown gravel (2.5 cm. thick).
 10. Hard-packed brown gravelly loam (19 cm. thick) with 12th-century pottery.
 11. Stone-slate fragments, stone-chippings and mortar (4 cm. thick), clearly the construction-level of the chapel standing above the foundation F.
 - F. The mortared-rubble foundation of the N.E. corner buttress of the 12th-century chapel. The foundation had been badly cut about at various times noted above. It was trench-built for the whole of its surviving depth, from 1 m. to 2.30 m.
 12. Brown gravelly loam (1.45 m. thick).
- Natural gravel was found at a depth of 2.30 m.

EXCAVATIONS AT THE EAST END OF OXFORD CATHEDRAL (Figs. 42-3)

Introduction

After the excavations within the Latin Chapel described above, some areas outside the Cathedral were investigated during the following summer. They lay in the close-packed medieval burial-ground, N. and E. of St. Frideswide's Priory church, which was used as a canon's garden⁵ from soon after the founding of Christ Church in 1546 until 1959. By 1961 it was sadly decayed and overgrown; the Friends of Oxford Cathedral, with the writer as Secretary of its Garden Committee, undertook to reclaim the jungle and replant it as a Cathedral Garden.

In March 1963 the Oxford University Archaeological Society, helped by stalwarts from the College Boat Club, dug Cutting 4 a little to the E. of the Lady Chapel. Between late June and early August, student-volunteers, maintained by a grant of £120 from Christ Church and housed in the Cathedral Choir School by kind permission of the Revd. D.R. Dendy, Headmaster, excavated three more areas: Cutting 5 against the N. choir aisle; Cutting 6 against the choir; and Cutting 7, not reported on here, on the medieval roadway and earlier occupation-deposits beneath it just outside the burial-ground, in the N.E. corner of the garden, whose N. boundary wall marked the frontage line on the N. side of the road. The University Chest administered the joint finances of these operations.

Layers in Cutting 4

This cutting, 4.50 m. E. to W. by 1.80 m., and sited 5.90 m. E. of the Lady Chapel, was excavated under the supervision of J.R. Maddicott. No structures were encountered (apart from an old gas-pipe), and the following layers were found:

1. Dark-brown loamy topsoil (50-60 cm. thick) with much 17th-century pottery.
2. Mortar (at the W. end of the Cutting, 4-6 cm. thick).

⁵ Bodl. MS Wood F28, f.207, and N. Denholm-Young, *Cartulary of the Medieval Archives of Christ Church* (O.H.S. xcii, 1931), 197, Lease MM 54.

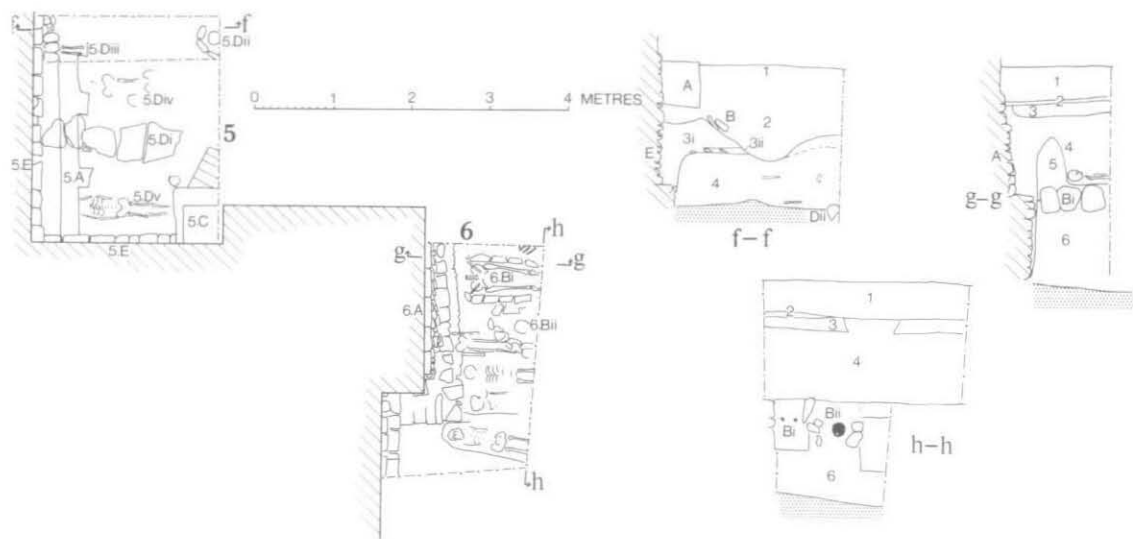


Fig. 42. Trenches outside E. end of Cathedral: plan and sections. (Re-drawn by John Blair.)

3. Brown gravelly loam (up to 95 cm. thick) with medieval pottery including abraded 12th-century sherds.
 4. Dark-brown gravelly loam (1.30–1.40 m. thick) with burials, very large numbers of disarticulated human bones and some medieval pottery.
- Natural gravel was encountered at a fairly uniform depth of 2.75 m.

Discussion of Cutting 4

The natural loamy topsoil and the top of the gravel had been entirely dug away for burials and charnel-pits to a depth of a metre or more between the 12th and the early 16th centuries. All earlier surfaces and features had been completely removed, as was to be expected here from the findings of the 1961 section⁶ on the N. side of the medieval burial-ground. Despite this we can be fairly confident that there was no deep earlier ditch, like those found in Cutting 6 and in Cuttings 1–3, in the area of this cutting. The final late-medieval surface of the burial-ground, Layer 4, seemed to be at a depth of 1.35–1.45 m., though there was another turf-line 30 cm. higher at the E. end of the cutting. Layer 3 was probably dumping from some nearby part of the college during 16th-century foundation-digging, Layer 2 the debris of a minor work such as the 17th-century rebuilding of the old precinct wall a little to the E. Loggan's view of the college in 1673 showing this as a very orchard-like garden,⁷ and Williams's engraved plan of 1733⁸ with a stiffly formal layout here, confirm the clear evidence of Layer 1 of more than four centuries of garden use.

Structures and Layers in Cutting 5

This cutting, 2.40 m. E. to W. by 2.90 m., in the angle between the E. wall of the N. choir aisle and the N. wall of the choir's projecting bay, was limited by the drains (Structure C) installed at one of the Victorian restorations. It was sited above the southern, and least unconvincing, of three supposed apses revealed by J.P. Harrison in 1887.⁹ The aisle wall, palpably of 12th-century date, has a later builders' opening cut through it, as

⁶ D. Sturdy, 'Recent Excavations in Christ Church and Nearby', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi-xxvii (1961–2), 30 and Fig. 8.

⁷ David Loggan, *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675), Pl. xxvii.

⁸ William Williams, *Oxonia Depicta* (1733), [unpaginated] plan of Christ Church.

⁹ Harrison's excavations, and his debate with J. Parker, are reported in *Proc. Oxford Archit. and Hist. Soc.* n.s. v (1886–93), 89–108; J.P. Harrison, 'Recent Discoveries in Oxford Cathedral', *Archaeol. Jnl.* xlv (1888), 271–83.

does the 13th-century Lady Chapel wall just to the N. Harrison asserted that these were Anglo-Saxon arches and that another, larger, one lurked behind the 12th-century corner-buttress of the aisle between them.

The structures found were:

- A. A shallow brick retaining-wall 34 cm. E. of the aisle wall.
- B. Two stones of the outer face of Harrison's alleged apse, stratigraphically part of the late 19th-century Layer 2.
- C. Part of a brick-bedded drain and two drainage-points, at the S.E. and N.W. corners of the cutting.
- Di. A stone-capped burial (1.20 m. N. of the choir wall) containing a 14th-century sherd, dug into the modified natural topsoil (Layer 4).
- Dii. The head end of a stone-lined burial dug into the top of the natural gravel (2.45 m. N. of the choir wall).
- Diii. A burial, all but its legs cut away by the choir aisle footing.
- Div and Dv. Two burials; their stratigraphical relationship with the church could not be defined.
- E. The foundations of the aisle and choir walls, very well bonded together and clearly contemporary. The upper footings had a similar slight batter and their alignments had been slightly changed during construction by the same amount, about 5 degrees clockwise. At the N. end of the cutting the aisle wall is bedded on natural gravel at a depth of 1.70 m., the lowest 25 cm. being offset by 25 cm. The much taller choir wall has a bad internal crack above the S. end of the cutting and we left its lower footings quite undisturbed.

The layers found were:

- 1. Dark-brown loamy topsoil (about 23 cm. thick, but much confused with Layer 2) with medieval to 19th-century pottery.
 - 2. Dark-brown gravelly loam with stones, with a layer of small stones at 60 cm. and of dark-yellow gravel at 80 cm. (60–100 cm. thick). The excavations of 1887 and 1936 could not be clearly defined.
 - 3i. Light-brown very gravelly loam and stones, cut into by the lower part of Layer 2 and filling the construction-trench of the aisle wall.
 - 3ii. Stone chips and pieces in light red-brown loam (up to 10 cm. thick).
 - 4. Red-brown gravelly loam (65–73 cm. thick) with some bone-fragments and a smudge of mortar.
- Natural gravel was revealed at a depth of 1.70–1.75 m.

Discussion of Cutting 5

The natural loamy topsoil in the cutting was actually present (layer 4). It was also revealed in the 1961 excavation¹⁰ and in Cutting 7, both 40 m. to the N., but had been removed in the other cuttings reported on here. The topsoil was much thicker in these three exposures than usual on central Oxford sites. In this cutting it had been considerably disturbed, perhaps in prehistoric times, but no early pits or postholes were found here. No apse or any other part of an Anglo-Saxon church had been built within the cutting. The natural topsoil had been cut through by the foundation-trench for the somewhat broader offset foundation of the aisle wall. The same must be true of the choir wall, which was plainly constructed at the same time as the aisle wall as the first substantial building here, since their upper foundations, plinths, walls and stringcourses match and bond. The construction-level of these walls could be recognised as Layer 3ii, with its stone-fragments. As construction of the upper walls proceeded, the foundation-trench was backfilled and the general level raised by 40 cm. or more with Layer 3i, which was simply the disturbed natural topsoil from foundation-digging nearby, left lying about in spoilheaps and then shovelled back against the newly-built church walls. Layer 2 represented five or six conflated deposits which could not be separated: the late-medieval churchyard surface, the Tudor to Victorian garden topsoil, the drainage-laying of the 1850s or 1870s, Harrison's dig of 1887, the digging-out along the aisle wall to install the retaining-wall, and an inconclusive excavation here in 1936.¹¹ Part of Harrison's best 'apse' was however still to be found (Fig. 42, section f-f). It was simply a couple of stones packed together, clearly within this late and much-disturbed Layer 2. The kindest solution is to conclude that Harrison's labourers, knowing that he wanted to discover some parts of a Saxon church such as, possibly, apses, determined to provide them for him, to please him and thus to get a more satisfactory reward for their labours. The stone-capped burial, Structure Di, looked as though it had been met with twice, in the centre by Harrison's men and at the head by the later Victorian or Edwardian builders of the retaining-wall, but left largely undisturbed.

¹⁰ Loc. cit. note 6.

¹¹ *R.C.H.M. Oxford*, 35.

Structures and Layers in Cutting 6

This cutting, only 1.40 m. E. to W. at the N. end by 2.80 m., was laid out to investigate the E. end of the cathedral with minimal disturbance, in view of the long cracks above the lower N. and S. windows of the projecting E. bay of the choir, which show that the E. wall of the choir is inclining outwards. The structures found were:

- A. The foundations of the choir E. wall and N.E. buttress, standing in a large ditch or depression and based probably at a depth of 2.75–2.85 m., trench-built below 1.30 m. and face-built above, with one offset at that point and another at 75 cm. As in Cutting 5, the foundations lie at a slight angle to the walls above, the alignment having been corrected or adjusted during construction and at the offsets by about 5 degrees, clockwise. Just below the present surface, the buttress has a second chamfered plinth 10 cm. wide (omitted for its southernmost 20 cm.) on the short return and on the E. wall itself.
- Bi. The hips and thighs of a burial in a stone-lined grave, lying on very dark-brown loam or charcoal with a little gravel, cut through at the waist by the buttress-foundations (Fig. 43). Its lower legs remain E. of the cutting. The bones are those of an adult woman with no signs of extreme age (ex inf. Mary Harman).
- Bii. The head of a burial in a stone-lined grave, just below Bi and sealed by it. The rest of the skeleton remains E. of the cutting.

The layers found were:

1. Brown loamy topsoil (40–45 cm. thick).
2. Mortar (up to 6 cm. thick).
3. Hard-packed yellow gravel (15–20 cm. thick) with 19th-century pottery.
4. Dark-brown gravelly loam (90 cm. thick) with medieval pottery, glass and tile. Four burials in this layer post-dated the buttress footing, and had their heads laid over or up against it.
5. Light-brown gravelly loam (60 cm. thick) cut by the buttress foundation-trench and by burials of Layer 4.
6. Light yellow-brown gravel with some bone fragments (excavated to a thickness of 70 cm., probed to a further 45 cm.).

Natural gravel was found at a depth of 2.75–2.85 m.



Fig. 43. Cutting 6, showing stone-lined burial (6.B.i) truncated by N.E. corner buttress of choir.

Discussion of Cutting 6

The E. wall of the choir stands above a hollow dug nearly 2 m. into the natural topsoil and gravel, and filled with less compact material. This explains the very evident cracks above the windows either side of the high altar. The hollow may be a prehistoric ditch running, at this point, N.-S. (as the cracks are opposite each other), perhaps part of a Neolithic causewayed camp. The filling of the ditch, Layer 6, was gravel without much extra material. Layer 5 represented a redeposited loam, bringing the area up, perhaps still in prehistoric times, to a fairly even level, being very similar to Layer 4 in Cutting 5, which had not, however, been removed and brought back, as this must have been. The main medieval churchyard-deposit, Layer 4, was very like its continuation, as Layer 4, in Cutting 4. A Regency or early-Victorian carriage-drive, Layer 3, was covered with mortar, Layer 2, doubtless of George Gilbert Scott's works while reconstructing the E. windows of the choir above, while the late-Victorian and modern flower-bed topsoil, Layer 1, has brought the ground-level up to cover the lower plinth of the buttress, always, for some reason, left incomplete.

CONCLUSIONS

Geology

The natural red-brown loamy topsoil, familiar from many exposures throughout central and north Oxford, was found, very much thicker than usual, in one area (5.4). It had been found in 1961 only 20 m. to the N.¹² and a large area of it was exposed in 1963 in Cutting 7, not reported on here, 25 m. to the N.E. A similar red-brown soil, redeposited or reformed, was found a short distance to the S.E. (6.5) over what is almost certainly a prehistoric ditch. The usual bright-yellow natural gravel was found wherever excavations were carried down far enough to reach it.

Prehistory

Large cracks on either side of the high altar of the cathedral are best explained by the E. wall having been built in an old N.-S. ditch. A deep cutting against the E. wall revealed deposits (6.6) which could well be the filling of a prehistoric ditch, a Neolithic causewayed camp or perhaps a river-fort of the Iron Age. Alternatively, they could represent a gravel-pit similar to that found in the cloister (above, pp. 62-5).

The Anglo-Saxons

Natural gravel did not turn up at the expected depth beneath the Latin Chapel. Here, as under the E. end of the choir (above, *Prehistory*) there seems to have been a deep ditch, not as old, since natural topsoil, or something very like it (above, *Geology*), had *not* been redeposited above the filling of this ditch. This deposit or filling (1.6-9; 2W.5; 2E.7; 3.12), of brown or dark-brown gravelly loam, contained no finds, and is stratigraphically earlier than the mid 12th century. One stone-lined burial (1.H) had been dug into it (below, *Burials*). The large ditch implied by these widely-spread findings must have run E.-W. and is best interpreted as the S. defences of Saxon Oxford, perhaps laid out at the end of the 9th century, despite the violence this view does to the long-accepted tradition

¹² Loc. cit. note 6.

that St. Frideswide founded a nunnery here in the 8th century. Such a nunnery or a remaining church is not likely to have been left just outside the defences.

No material remains of an early nunnery or of an Anglo-Saxon church, in the sense of walls, sculpture, pits, pottery, metalwork or postholes, have ever been found at the cathedral. In 1869 G.G. Scott dismissed notions that part of the cathedral was Saxon with some vigour: 'I need hardly say there is not a shadow of foundation for such a supposition'.¹³ This absence of good evidence, 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 (below, p. 226). Material evidence suggests as possible both the present parish church of St. Aldate's (below, pp. 233–5) and the former St. Martin's at Carfax.¹⁴

Burials

Five relatively early burials capped or lined with stones were found in the excavations. Others, W. of the cathedral, have been dated to the 9th century,¹⁵ while others from the cloister have become 'Middle Saxons' with 'high precision' dates of around the 9th century (above, pp. 60–2; below, p. 233). The burials reported on here do not demand such dramatically early dates. One found within the Latin Chapel (1.H) had been dug into the filling of a possible town- or fortress-ditch (above, *Anglo-Saxons*) and could thus be of the late 11th or early 12th century. Another (6.Bi) had been chopped through by the choir E. wall of the 1160s or thereabouts. A third (6.Bii), close beside this, seemed to be a little earlier. Not far off a fourth (5.Diii) was cut by the E. wall of the N. choir aisle; a stone-lined burial to its E. (5.D.ii) lacked clear evidence of date. These burials could all be later than 1100. The writer believes that the other burials in the cloister and west of the Cathedral are probably also of this early 12th-century date, much later than that assigned to them from the scientific results. He has always thought it rash to accept such results as historical and unwise to base elaborate chronologies on 'dates' that are no more than probabilities resulting from the mathematical working-out of complex scientific processes.

Early-Norman Church

The chapter-house range, with its doorway of about 1130–50 (below, pp. 160–7), must have been planned and built with or up against a church earlier than the present cathedral. The central triforium opening on the W. side of the S. transept has, all re-used, two monolithic window-heads and three shafts, whose base-mouldings are best paralleled in churches of 1070–1120. The opposite triforium opening has, re-used as a sill, a slab decorated with diagonal rows of dots, which must be of much the same date. The excavations revealed what may be part of a smaller and older church (2W.L): the E. corner of its N. transept, or rather of its N. transeptal chapel, exactly matching the point where the S. transept (rebuilt in the late 12th century) and its chapel (rebuilt again in the 14th century) meet the slype. This evidence suggests that the S. transept, of two

¹³ G.G. Scott, *Report . . . on the Cathedral Church of Christ Church* (1869).

¹⁴ For finds from the latter see E.M. Jope, 'Late Saxon Pits under Oxford Castle Mound', *Oxoniensia*, xvii–xviii (1952–3), 108, No. 6 in index of sites.

¹⁵ T.G. Hassall, 'Excavations at Oxford, 1972', *Oxoniensia*, xxxviii (1973), 270–4.

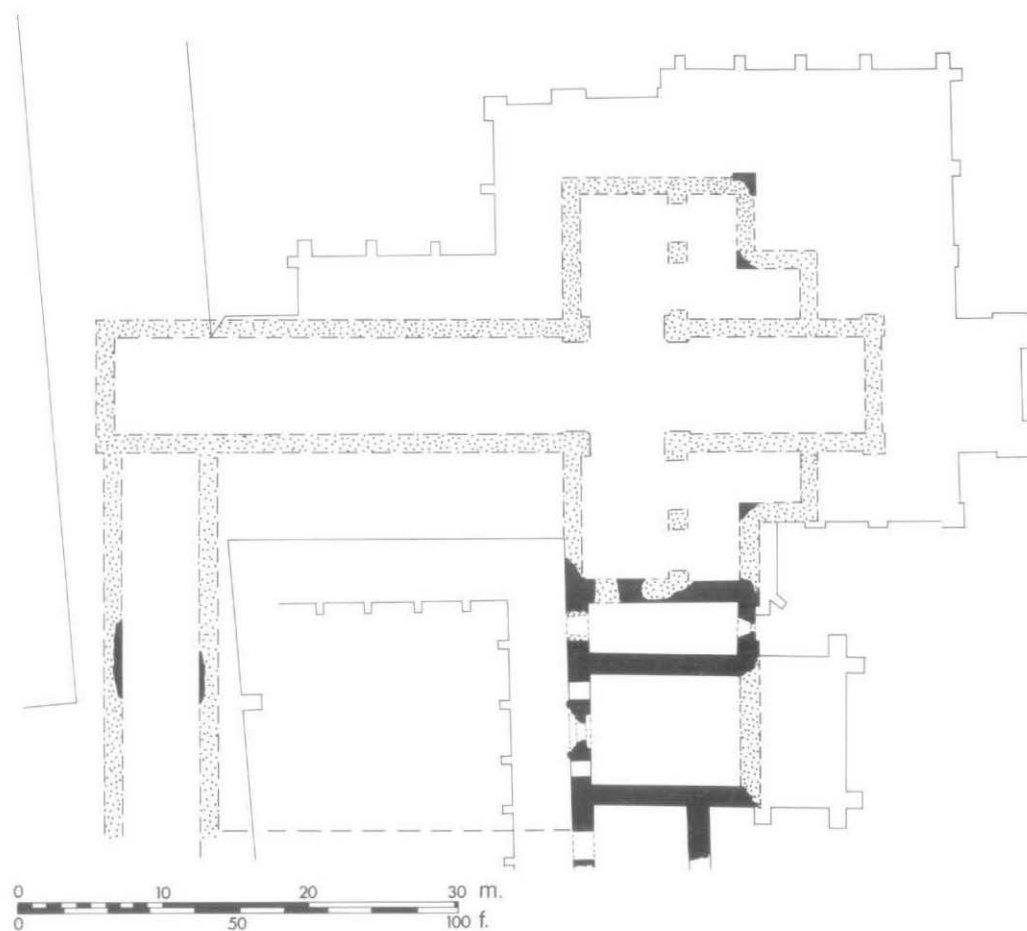


Fig. 43A. Ground-plan of the early 12th-century Augustinian church: Sturdy hypothesis.

bays at ground-level, was once balanced by a two-bay N. transept. Each had an outer chapel of one bay and probably, to judge by other Augustinian monastic houses such as Lilleshall, an inner two-bay chapel giving a 'stepped' plan (Fig. 43A). After the N. transept was rebuilt, perhaps in the 1170s (p. 94), with three bays and chapels or aisles on both sides, the S. transept was, in about the 1190s, rebuilt in its turn. A third bay was contrived, at upper levels only, above the slype; the W. aisle, which could not be built because it would have impinged on the cloister alley, had to remain as an illusion marked by a blind arcade. In the restoration of the 1870s, it was at first assumed that the W. aisle of the S. transept had once existed, but had been demolished in the 15th century when the present cloister was built. Consequently Gilbert Scott proposed pulling down that corner of the cloister and rebuilding the now missing aisle, but eventually realised, as we can see from his notes,¹⁶ that it had never existed. J.C. Buckler

¹⁶ G.G. Scott notebook, 1869–70 (Christ Church archives D.P.vii.a.8), f.18^v. [However, cf. the opposite conclusion reached by Halsey, pp. 149–52 below.]

tried to persuade himself,¹⁷ in an exercise that combined wonderful powers of observation and recording with the most determined stupidity in interpretation, that the slype had been inserted into an originally open third bay of the transept.

The first Romanesque church may have been a cell of Abingdon Abbey (cf. below, p. 226), a parochial or collegiate foundation of Bishop Roger of Salisbury, or an Augustinian colony that had not yet acquired Frideswide's relics. The plan of the central tower, wider from N. to S., may be one of the elements remaining from this earlier church as a 'fossil', although no part of its present fabric seems to be earlier than the 1170s-90s. If so, it could hint that Roger of Salisbury established the church, since St. Mary's, Devizes, generally viewed as his work, has this uncommon feature. J.P. Harrison's assertion of the 1890s that much of the choir is Saxon¹⁸ is a fantasy of the same nature as his 'Saxon apses' (above, p. 88) or James Ingram's claim in the 1830s¹⁹ that the tower is Saxon.

Late-Norman Church, East End

The earliest major part of the present church is probably its E. end, begun perhaps in the 1150s or 1160s. There were already burials (6.Bi and Bii) in the area and the E. wall of the main body was, no doubt quite accidentally, laid out above a deep ancient ditch (6.6) long ago filled in and covered by a loam (6.5) almost indistinguishable from natural. The side walls of the aisles and their E. walls were built with the projecting bay of the main body. From the start all these outer walls were planned to be pretty well as they are today, and there is no indication that any apses were ever intended, inside or out.

Before analysing the foundations, we can briefly consider the function or intended function of the building-works. There must already have been a choir (above, *Early-Norman Church*), perhaps half the length of the present one. The present E. end may well have been begun neither as a rebuilding nor as an extension. Rather, we should see it as a grand annexe, either as a Lady Chapel or as a shrine-chapel, or perhaps both at once. The internal elevations of the projecting bay are a bad match for the main elevations of the present choir, their string-courses and arch-heights clashing discordantly (Fig. 56). A most elegant solution to this is provided by assuming that the projecting bay was planned for an entirely different interior arcade and elevation, which was changed in execution. The reason for this change may have been a decision to rebuild the choir while completing an annexe to it. The very richly-carved capitals half-way along the present choir suggest that the high altar was at first located here against a screen, with a separate eastern chapel approached from the aisles. This arrangement might have remained until the 13th or 14th centuries. The foundations, of local corallian rubble with cream to brown mortar, are firmly bedded on the natural gravel, the lower parts from 45 to 75 cm. below the original ground-surface being trench-built in foundation-trenches up to about 40 cm. wider than the wall on the outer face. There is an offset up to 23 cm. wide at the top of the trench-built lower footings, where the overall layout must have been checked and corrected. The alignment of the whole E. end was here corrected by about five degrees clockwise, probably to line up with an existing earlier

¹⁷ B.L. MS Add. 27765 E, ff. 54-78.

¹⁸ [J.P. Harrison], *Archaeologia Oxoniensis* (1892-5), 286-7.

¹⁹ J. Ingram, *Memorials of Oxford*, i (1837), Christ Church section, 11-12 and 17.

choir (above, *Early Norman Church*). Above this correction-level, the upper footings are face-built with a slight batter for 130–165 cm. up to the plinths. The upper footings and lower walls of the E. wall of the N. choir aisle and the N. wall of the choir (6.4) bond and match in every detail, as do those of the E. wall of the choir and its N.E. buttress (5.E), all of them being clearly part of the same few seasons' work. The eastern bay or two of the S. choir aisle must also have been built at this time, but the foundations were not investigated by these excavations.

The choir E. wall seems to be 2 m. thick, with corner-buttresses 2.45 m. E. to W. by 2.60 m. The side walls are 1.65–1.70 m. thick, the E. walls of the aisles only 1.0–1.05 m. thick with corner-buttresses 1.37 m. each way.

Late-Norman Church, North Wing

The N. transept with aisles on both sides, a remarkable feature for such a small church, and an extra chapel E. of the N. bay, was built perhaps in the 1170s. On various grounds (above, *Early-Norman Church*) the earlier church can be assumed to have had two-bay transepts and no W. aisle. The new outer W. and N. walls were probably constructed to a good height before any demolition of the old took place. Unlike the E. wing of the church, which seems to have been built in stages with a final appearance very different from the first intentions, the transept simply followed the internal elevation of the E. wing, as it was finally worked out. Nothing remained of the old transept, except perhaps the core of the tower-piers and possibly the E. wall of the central bay, which might have been apsed.

The small extra chapel is best explained as a new shrine-house, removing pilgrims from beyond the high altar, and the large transept itself as circulation-space for large numbers of pilgrims, flocking to venerate or seek the help of Frideswide (below, pp. 248–9). The relics themselves may have been kept in a niche in the S. wall of the projecting chapel, where Prior Sutton's monument now stands (between piers II.4 and II.3). The secondary place of veneration in the late 12th century, the supposed 'grave' (below, p. 247), may have been in the centre or on the N. side of the present choir, close to the former high altar, or perhaps in a chapel or apse of the earlier N. transept.

The N. bay and projecting chapel of the new transept were built into the filling of a possible ditch (above, *Anglo-Saxons*), which the earlier two-bay transept may largely have avoided. The foundations here were unlike those of the E. end, in that they lacked a broad off-set base. The E. wall of the chapel (3.F) was trench-built; its upper part had been robbed in Cutting 3 and no evidence remained of alignment-correction. The N. wall-footings were trench-built below 85 to 115 cm. There are (p. 78) slight offsets, at 45 cm. below the original floor, of barely 7 cm. on the inner face and up to 19 cm. on the outside, where enough remained of the upper footings above the offset to show that the layout was corrected at this level by about five degrees anticlockwise. Above the plinth, the chapel walls were probably 1.37 m. wide.

The North-East Chapels, 1200–1340

Early in the 13th century, perhaps about 1220, the N. wall of the N. choir aisle was pierced with three new arches and the present Lady Chapel was added, its three bays continuing the central aisle bay on the E. of the transept. Only one bay of the vault now remains, the other two having been rebuilt in the mid 14th century. The E. wall still

stands largely intact; the foundations of the N. wall **2E.G** were partly found in the excavation.

This fairly small addition may have been built as a Lady Chapel, the high altar being moved E. from the centre of the present choir at that time. Or perhaps it was planned to serve as an extra link between the small transept-chapel, if this held the shrine and relics, and the centre or N. side of the present choir, perhaps still viewed as the 'grave' of the saint.

Late in the 13th century, probably in the 1280s, a two-bay extension was built where the two eastern bays of the Latin Chapel now stand. All that now remains is two shafts (II.2 and II.1), one, concealed within the 'watching chamber' at the S.E. corner of the Latin Chapel, the other (**2E.F**) half-way along the S. side. All the rest of this chapel was rebuilt in the mid 14th century. The walling on either side of the mid-way shaft II.3.C slants markedly N. of E. Through an oversight we did not locate the N. wall of the late 13th-century chapel: presumably it either lies beneath the E. half of the existing N. wall, or is represented by the possible robber-trench **3.E** (above, pp. 85-6), which would give a chapel considerably narrower than the present one. The purpose of this lost chapel may well have been to provide a home for the fine shrine-base associated with the translation of 1289 (below, p. 251).

The Shrine, 1289-1537

The supposed remains of St. Frideswide, probably housed from 1180 in the projecting small N.E. chapel whose foundations were found beneath the third bay from the E. of the Latin Chapel, were no doubt moved eastward in 1289, into the two-bay late 13th-century extension. In the E. bay of the extension, 9 m. from the old chapel, the shrine could have been sited on the centre-line, but if it was in the W. bay, 4.50 m. from the old chapel, it must have been S. of the centre to be on the line of sight for pilgrims coming from the W., since the new chapel was some 2.30 m. wider than the old. Although there is no evidence for either location at this period, the W. bay, now the second from the E. of the present Latin Chapel, is to be preferred in that it reduces the number of Frideswide's moves and simplifies the sequence.

There is slight and inconclusive material evidence, a few degrees better than pure fantasy, that the shrine stood, from about the 14th century until its destruction in the 1530s, in the second bay of the Latin Chapel, just S. of the centre-line. It can thus be argued that the shrine was put up in this position in 1289 and that it remained standing, boxed-in for safety and the actual reliquary moved elsewhere, when the chapel was rebuilt around it in about the 1330s. The evidence, such as it is, consists of:

(i) The proximity of Lady Montague's tomb, in or near the adjoining bay of the Lady Chapel (below, pp. 251-2).

(ii) Two very rough courses of large limestone rubble, **2E.E**, protruding over a length of 2.30 m. from beneath the bottom of the brickwork of Dr. Barnes's vault at a depth of 2.10 m. to 2.50 m., the deepest point reached inside the church by the excavations. No dating evidence was found, and this stonework might be anything from a defensive bastion built out in the 11th century across the large ditch here to a base for the mid-Victorian vault.

(iii) The very precise layout of the late-medieval tiled floor (below, pp. 97-100) strongly suggests that, in about 1500, the centre-line of the chapel was not obstructed by any large obstacle, like the shrine, when the floor was set out. The cumulative error of alignment was less than 3 cm. in over 13 m., or less than a quarter of one per cent, even

after so much digging up and relaying that no original tiles, or perhaps only two, remained in position on the centre-line, which had nonetheless been followed by four 19th-century masons laying grave-slabs. The early-Tudor tiler must have stretched a cord right down the centre of the chapel, perhaps sighting it along the N. side of a plinth or step on which the shrine-base stood.

(iv) In Cutting 3 we cleared the mid 14th-century mortar working-floor 6 back to a disturbance, trench or grave-edge, 3.E, 37 cm. N. of the central line. The presence of this floor here alone makes it clear that the shrine could not have been sited in the centre of this bay, since no room for it remained.

This evidence admits of two versions of the shrine's precise position: (a) as far W. as possible, directly over the recorded length of rough foundation, and (b) up to 70 cm. further E., allowing room for a stone altar to stand against the W. end of the shrine above the W. end of the foundation. The westerly position (a) leaves the sub-base on which Lady Montague's tomb now stands more level with the shrine, while the easterly position (b) fits more satisfactorily between the two residual N.-S. bands of narrow border-tiles in the tiled floor of about 1500 which was presumably laid around the standing shrine.

Evidence which might resolve this question of the shrine's precise location, and confirm its position in the Latin Chapel, lies under many tons of loose mortar-flashing and other debris in the roof-space over the vaulting above the likely site of the shrine. It is now, even at the ridge, well over 5 cm. deep in this debris, which is piled against and over the timbers wherever, as with the wall-plates, they come low enough. Investigation here should benefit the roof-timbers, by removing a certain source of damp and decay, and might also reveal the backs of iron hooks for pulleys to hoist the shrine-canopy on specially sacred occasions.

The Present Latin Chapel

In the 1340s or 1350s, the odd-looking mixture, mentioned above, of a narrow old chapel with short bays and a later extension with longer bays was torn down and replaced by the present chapel. The master-mason ingeniously spaced out the bays of the new construction, so that each is longer than the one to its W., although he, or perhaps a more ham-fisted successor, did not manage the vaulting at all well. Perhaps even before the chapel was finished, the floor was lowered to well below the designed level and a hard mortar working-floor laid down, recognised (1.5; 2W.4; 2E.5; 3.6) in all the excavated areas. A screen-wall (1.D) and wall-bench (1.E) were built at the same time across the W. end of the chapel. For the next two or three centuries access was from the S., first through the third and later through the fourth bay from the E. As soon as the working floor was down, the various exposed footings along the S. side were plastered over (2W.J; 2E.D) in a rather casual way which may betray the hand of the 'ham-fisted' mason.

This plastering was cut through, probably fairly soon after it was completed, to insert a footing of ashlar blocks for a sepulchral monument, now the sub-base of Lady Montague's tomb. A number of screens must have separated the chapels and chantries, but no fixing marks have yet been identified on any of the piers or columns.

The new chapel was finished off with a tile floor (2E.4) laid a few cm. above the working floor (2E.5), which stepped up by the foot of the Montague monument. The characteristic hard-fired tiles of the mid 14th-century floor are published and discussed below (pp. 103-14).

The Chapel, 1360-1490

There were various minor alterations to the chapel during the following century and more. Wall-benches were installed along the N. wall, (1.C; 3.D) as far as the central shaft, and along the S. wall (2W.F; 2E.B) with an opening 1.80 m. wide for access-steps under the third arch from the E. These changes cannot be closely dated. Later, the opening was reduced to 1.15 m. wide, with two steps (2W.E) coming forward between the sections of wall-bench. Around 1500, the 'watching-loft' and its accompanying tomb were inserted between piers II.2 and II.1, and the floor destroyed in 1963 was laid.

To summarise, the excavations produced no evidence for a Saxon church, apart from a fake 'apse' concocted by Victorian labourers in 1887. We can suggest, from this and other data, anything up to eight successive settings for Frideswide's relics:

1. From the 10th century to the 1150s, in another church somewhere else.
2. From the 1150s to the 1160s, above or beside the high altar of a shorter choir on the cathedral site.
3. From the 1160s to 1180, halfway along the present choir, in roughly the same place as (2), but now backing against a screen for the high altar.
4. From 1180 to 1289 in the small N.E. chapel, excavated in 1963 beneath the third bay of the Latin Chapel, perhaps in a niche in the S. wall (but cf. below, pp. 139-46, 242, for an alternative interpretation of this chapel). For some time (3) continued to be venerated as the 'grave' of the saint.
5. From 1289 until the 1340s in the W. bay of a new shrine-house added to the E. of the older N.E. chapel. The shrine stood S. of the centre-line on the splendid shrine-base whose pieces were discovered in 1875 and 1985.
6. From the 1340s to about 1500 in the same place and on the same shrine-base, both chapels, noted in 4 and 5, having been rebuilt as what is now called the Latin Chapel, with the shrine in its second bay. At a late stage in the works, the floor was lowered and laid with tiles at a level 50 cm. below the intended floor (planned at first to be at the same level as that of the nave and transepts). A wall-bench was built to the W.
7. At two occasions in the late 14th or 15th centuries minor alterations were made to the shrine's immediate surroundings. First, wall-benches were constructed along the N. and S. walls as far as, or some way along, the shrine. Second, the wide entrance from the S. was narrowed and steps moved S.
8. From about 1500 until the shrine's destruction in the 1530s, it remained in the same place and on the same base. The floor-level was raised to 15 cm. below the nave and transepts and new tiles were laid, some over the eastern lengths of the benches.

When the shrine was torn down, its site must have been patched over with tiles more-or-less uniform with the latest floor, which remained worn, but substantially complete, well into the 19th century. It was recognised as ancient only during its destruction in 1963.

THE LATE MEDIEVAL TILED FLOOR (Fig. 37)

In about 1500, no doubt following the repaving of the major part of St. Frideswide's priory church during the 1490s by Robert Shirburn, Dean of Chichester,²⁰ who also

²⁰ M.E.C. Walcott, 'Bishops of Chichester . . . to Sherborne', *Sussex Archaeol. Colls.* xxix (1879), 25.

rebuilt the cloister (above, p. 66 and below, pp. 188–91) and refectory,²¹ the floor of the Latin Chapel was relaid in tiles. The tiles of an older, 14th-century, floor which lay 42–43 cm. below the general level of the church floor (above, p. 76) were lifted, none of them being found in position, apart from a few (p. 84), which had been buried long before beneath the S. wall-bench of the chapel. Some late 13th- and 14th-century tiles were evidently used in the new floor (below, p. 109). To bring the new floor-level up to only 15 cm. below the general level, gravelly loam, mortar and rubble were brought in, perhaps from a simultaneous *lowering* of the floor-levels of the present Lady Chapel just to the S. The new floor was laid over this dumped material, which also contained broken tiles from the old floor and some casualties smashed during delivery. In 1963 well over 300 tiles still remained in position, or survived as impressions in the mortar-bedding. The new floor must have comprised more than 2000 tiles, so that enough remained to make a fairly certain reconstruction of the original design (Fig. 37), discussed section by section below.

In the first days of the excavation, we dug through two areas of flooring without recording the existing tiles and without noticing the mortar-bedding, which accounts for the gaps over Cuttings 1 and 2W. But the sharp eyes of two 10-year-old helpers, set to sweep up the dust and mess from beneath the old stalls, soon put us to shame, as they found and pointed out the mortar-impressions and made us realise that the floor was not a Georgian or early-Victorian brick one with odd patches of re-set tiling round the edges, but a medieval tiled floor with a network of patches across the centre, including several of fairly recent brickwork.

When this floor was laid, the W. wall-bench of the mid 14th century, and the western 4.40 m. length of the rather later S. bench, were left in position and no doubt raised to suit the new level. The N. wall-bench, also later, was probably raised for a length of 6.90 m. between the W. end and the centre wall-shaft. The E. sections of the N. and S. benches were levelled and the floor extended over them. The remaining S. bench was shorter because access to the chapel from the S. remained through the third bay from the E. Here what is now the Lady Chapel was divided, its second bay from the E. being the Montague chantry, the two W. queuing-space for pilgrims, if large numbers still flocked to be cured by Frideswide's relics. The reduction of the extent of wall-benches could reflect a reduction in pilgrim-numbers, a change in arrangement of the area round the shrine, or an attempt by the canons to extract more cash from visitors, by putting in an extra barrier to go through.

The design of the floor fitted into the bays of the chapel, although its complex structural history meant that they were all of different lengths, the longest to the E., while the widths were fairly irregular. Along parts of either side were rows of square-set tiles, three tiles wide on the N. and from four to seven on the S. Right down the centre of at least the eastern half of the chapel, as a base-line for the whole design, there seems to have been a line of narrow border-tiles, possibly once glazed black or very dark greeny-brown; two remained in position against the altar-steps at the E. end. The exact line continued westward as the S. edge of the slab to Dr. Clarke (d. 1877), the N. edge of Dr. Barnes's slab of 1859 and the centre-line of the diamond-laid slabs of 1826 and 1827–31 to members of the Smith family. All this suggests that the main outlines of the design survived far into the 19th century; such an analysis depends on a survey accurate to the nearest twenty-fifth of one per cent.

²¹ D. Sturdy et al., 'The Painted Roof of the Old Library, Christ Church', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi-xxvii (1961–2), 215–17.

The S. half of the W. bay was of diamond-set tiles. Of about 200, many cut to fit around the edges, some 40 were still in position, three of them, close under the stalls on the S. side, with visible patterns. Two more tiles of this section and seven more of the adjacent square-set belt still retained their patterns (Figs. 46-7), protected as they were in the 17th century by the stalls. The designs are discussed further below (p. 109). The N. half of this bay had square-set tiles, 52 of which were in position and 18 possibly in position, with the impressions of another 8 recovered from their mortar bedding. Originally there were about 200 tiles in this section, and eight of those in position ran precisely one row N. of the presumed centre-line mentioned above. This bay of the floor had received the most wear and had a large brick patch by the entrance. But it was least disturbed by burials in the 16th to 19th centuries and consequently retained the highest proportion of tiles in position. We can therefore be most confident in restoring the original design here.

The next bay, the third from the E., was effectively the centre of the chapel, into which pilgrims stepped down from the entrance (above, p. 81) on the S. side. The floor pattern in this bay was separated from the bay to its W. by a single row of square tiles, only one of which remained, and from the bay to its E. by a triple row of square, narrow and square tiles, ten of which remained. The S. half of the bay was divided into two squares; each of these squares had a 'Union Jack' pattern formed by a straight and a diagonal cross of narrow border-tiles, the remainder of the field being filled with square tiles laid square. Although only 40 of these tiles remained, in a narrow strip along the S. edge, they were enough to permit a reliable reconstruction of this spectacular feature. The design of the northern half of this bay is less certain, but two square-set tiles remaining in its N.E. corner suggest that the 'Union Jack' pattern was not repeated here. The large slab to Dr. Ogilvy (d.1883) took up most of the space and a careful study of old photographs might reveal something more of the original design here.

In the next bay, the second from the E., the N. half was laid with diamond-set tiles, like the S. half of the W. bay and probably also of the E. bay, as we shall see. Only seven tiles remained in position out of more than 250, but two patches, one at each end of Dorothea Upton's slab of 1654, show that the reconstruction is valid, even if they have been relaid. To judge from a single tile, the N. belt of square-set tiles stopped just past the central wall-shaft and the diamond-set tiles ran up to the N. wall.

The S. part of the bay had square-set tiles. Most of these were re-laid, but a belt four tiles wide on the N. side of Lady Montague's tomb, incorporating a small stone bearing the indent of a brass inscription, could have been *in situ* if the graves below it (2E.3 i-ii) were in fact pre-Reformation. Slightly W. of the centre of the bay, the S. belt of tiles was interrupted by a line of three narrow border-tiles running N.-S. This line, if it extended northwards, might mark the position of a shrine-altar or the W. side of steps leading up to the shrine. The shrine itself (above, p. 95) could well have stood S. of the centre-line, in the middle of this half-bay, to be seen better from the N. transept. On this interpretation, the two 'Union Jack' squares in the bay to the W. would have emphasised the liturgically important space in front of the shrine.

In the E. bay of the chapel all the tiles were, in 1963, square-set. However, in its S. half there were six diamond-set marble slabs of 1636 to 1857, indicating that the tiles here were originally diamond-set also. As already noted (above, p. 98), the S. edge of the slab to Dr. Clarke (d.1877) marks a very satisfactory central design-line that is perpetuated along the full length of the chapel, although without a single original tile in position except for two here by the altar steps. The slab and all the tiles near it were square-set and presumably the tiles always had been. While almost every tile in this bay appeared to have been relaid at one time or another, a line of five narrow border-tiles ran

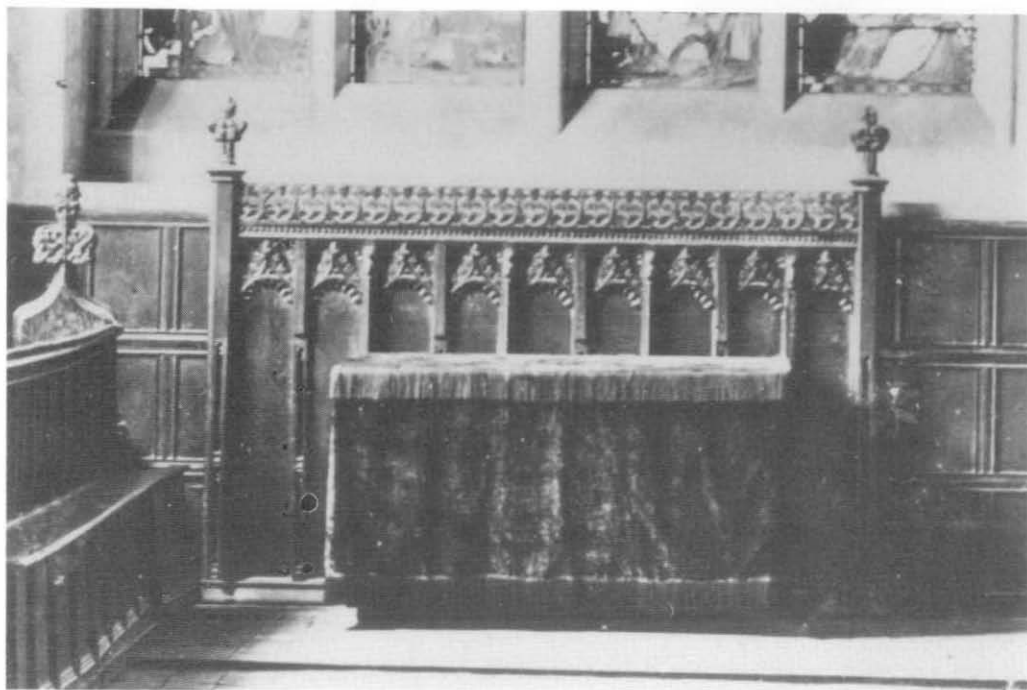


Fig. 44. Stalls against E. end wall of Latin Chapel, photographed c.1865 (enlargement of Fig. 76).

N.-S. just below the foot of the slab, exactly at the centre of the bay. They may have been in position or relaid to follow an old division-line that was later lost elsewhere.

It is unclear from the remaining architecture and fittings quite how the easternmost bay, which would have been behind the shrine and its altar, was used liturgically. Presumably the canons kept this bay screened off, perhaps housing cope-chests and safe-boxes for valuable items used in worship at the shrine, possibly also a cash-box for instant safekeeping of offerings at the shrine. A lithograph of about 1850 (Fig. 101), imaginative in that it portrays a cavalier and his family but exact in architectural detail, shows the E. end of the Latin Chapel with a row of late-medieval stalls against it. The view is towards the E., to include a good deal of the 'watching chamber', and only six out of perhaps ten stalls appear. They appear again in a photograph of the 1860s (Figs. 44, 76), now cut down to eight in number and converted into a makeshift reredos by the removal of their arm-rests and seats and the addition of an oversize cresting and over-tall end-posts by some enthusiastic gothiciser. These stalls may have been in that place in the chapel from about 1500, and must have been discarded during an ill-documented restoration in 1890. The canons perhaps used them for resting during long services at the shrine.

MEDIEVAL WINDOW GLASS FROM THE LATIN CHAPEL (Fig. 45). By NIAL DONALD

Three of the four windows in the N. wall of the Latin Chapel contain original glass from the 14th century. The main lights are largely intact, although not necessarily in their

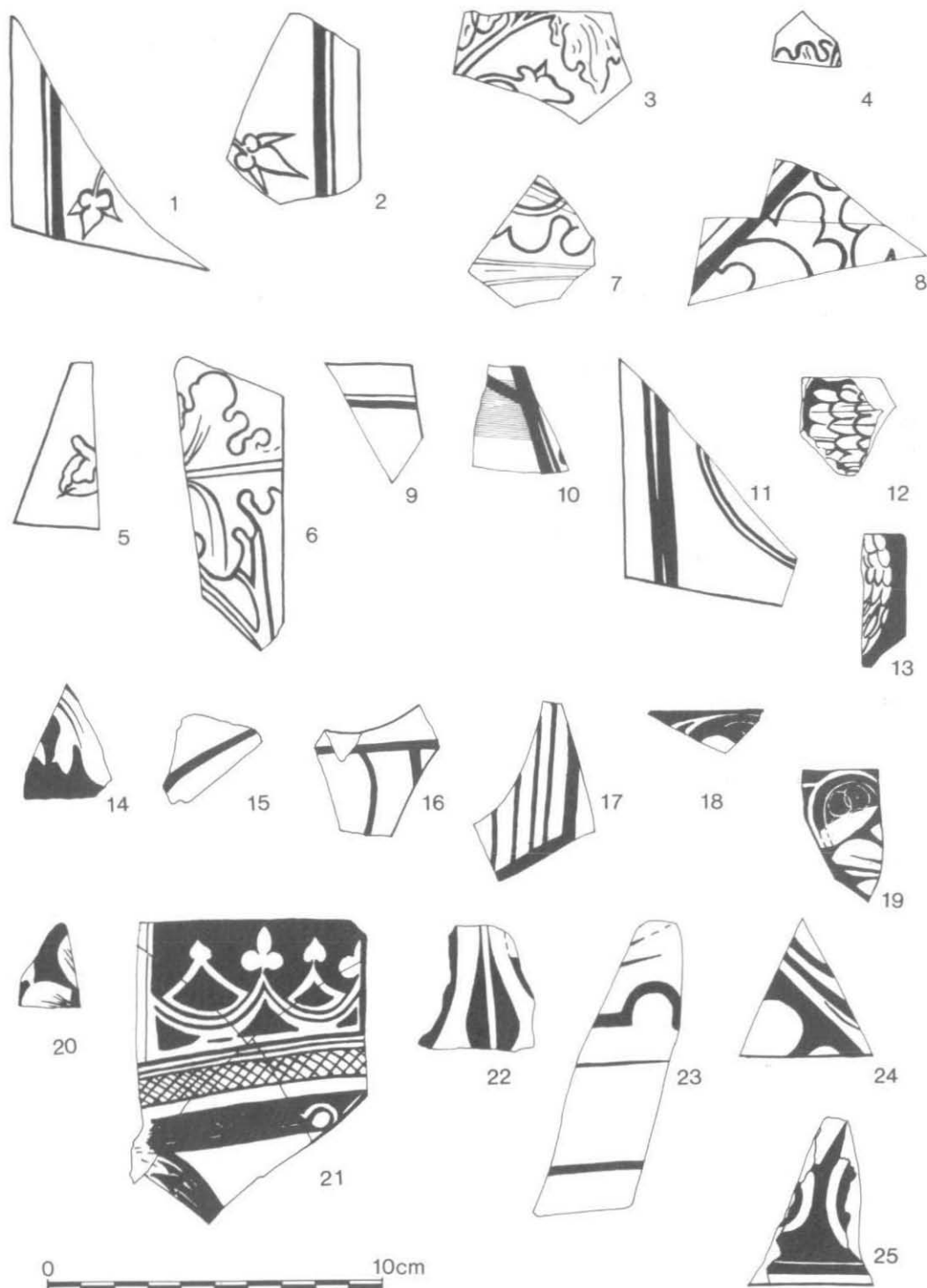


Fig. 45. Latin Chapel: excavated glass fragments. Scale 1:2.

original positions; but the tracery, the borders and the trellises of white grisaille have mostly been restored. It has proved possible to match up much of the glass recovered during the 1963 excavations with the original and restored designs. This is especially the case with the grisaille. From the E., the three windows will be referred to as the St. Frideswide, the archbishop saint and the Virgin and Child windows, after the figures depicted in the central lights. For the glass which cannot be attributed to these windows, the original source can only be surmised. It may well come from either or both of the other windows in the chapel. One possibility that can be discounted is that it comes from earlier glazing, since all the glass in the assemblage is 14th-century in character.

In total 40 fragments of window glass were recovered from the 1963 excavations. Of these, 31 were painted. One complete clear and unpainted rectangular glass quarry was recovered.

Fig. 45 Nos. 1-11 depict the glass from the grisaille trellises of the three windows. Nos. 5-6 can be attributed to the archbishop saint window and 1-2 to the Virgin and Child window. Nos. 3-4 can also be attributed to the last, but with less certainty. However, the slight variations in patterning may only be apparent due to the restoration work. Each quarry in the trellis of each window has a narrow border of yellow stain delineated on the inner side by two parallel painted lines, one thick and one thin. The St. Frideswide window has trails of roses, the archbishop saint trails of daisies and the Virgin and Child oak-leaves and acorns as the grisaille design.

Fig. 45 Nos. 12-13 show fragments of bird wings, which probably originated in the border to the main lights of the archbishop window with its array of grotesque beasts, monkeys and birds.

The remaining 12 fragments cannot be attributed to any of the three surviving windows. No. 14 is a fragment of drapery, or possibly of background. Nos. 15-17 are fragments of architectural designs painted on clear glass. Nos. 18-20 are background designs: 18 is picked out of a matt wash on yellow. Nos. 21-25 are border pieces with either simple geometric designs (23-25) or something more complex (21-22).

The recovery of this glass suggests that the chapel was the original location of the windows. Alternatively, the lack of any figural fragments or drapery in the assemblage may suggest that the fragments result from the refitting of the old windows into a new position. If the glass was cut to a new shape, a concentration of waste border and grisaille fragments might be expected if the work was carried out in the chapel.

Provenances:

Cutting 1: Fig. 45 Nos. 1, 5-7, 10-14, 19-21, 23-5.

Cutting 2: Fig. 45 Nos. 2-4, 8-9, 15-18, 22.

Cutting 3: one fragment, not illustrated.