

**Lady Chapels and the Manifestation of Devotion to Our Lady in  
Medieval England**

Thesis submitted in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Guy Sumpter

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**Guy Sumpter:**

## **Lady Chapels and the Manifestation of Devotion to Our Lady in Medieval England**

### **Abstract:**

The subject of Lady Chapels and devotion to Our Lady in medieval churches is vast. This thesis investigates whether liturgical Marian observances required a particular setting or not, and the forms it might take. This is achieved by a careful selection of material that highlights the evolutionary development of the most influential physical manifestations of the cult of the Virgin and some of the more humble ones. Accordingly, attention has been focussed on three main areas that form the principal components of this study,

Chapter one investigates the development and gradual inclusion of specifically Marian commemorations in the liturgical calendars that sustained the cult and fed its growth. Chapter two comprises case studies of Lady Chapels and other manifestations of the Marian cult in major churches. Each has been chosen to provide evidence of chronological and geographical diversity in terms of its respective contribution to the holistic picture, and /or because it has attracted little previous notice. In addition, the cumulative examination of the available material has permitted a degree of fresh and original insight.

The third chapter focuses on the county of Northamptonshire in order to examine Lady Chapels and the cult of Mary in the context of the parish, in order to establish as accurately as possible the incidences of specifically Marian chapels and the degree to which devotion and the manner of its observance was manifest. The justifications for such a study are firstly, that it was at parish level that most people would have experienced and participated in any such observance, and secondly, that no countywide survey has previously been attempted. The conclusion draws the evidence together and argues that the veneration of Our Lady could take place in a variety of settings that reflected the diversity of Her cult.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# Chapter I

## The Marian Liturgy

### Introduction

The liturgy of the medieval Church achieved a most impressive and complex form, in which ornament, architecture, music, language and ritual were all carefully choreographed into a synergy of worship and symbolism. The primary reason for the existence of the Church on Earth was to facilitate the salvation and ultimate union of mankind with God in Heaven, and the performance of the liturgy was the means to this end. Christ, the Son of God, had been sacrificed in order to redeem mankind from the disobedience and Fall of Adam and Eve, which was the inheritance of every mortal soul. God had been sinned against, and was to be feared. A holy life might reduce the pains of Purgatory, but ultimately no amount of exemplary living could be traded against this Original Sin. Salvation could only be obtained through the Church and its sacraments, the principal vehicle of which was the Mass - the continual renewal at the altar of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In addition, the saints were God's Elect; holy men and women, who for various reasons had already secured a place in heaven, but (unlike the angels) had experienced the tribulations and temptations of earthly life. This experience gave them an understanding and approachability that inclined them to sympathy, and therefore disposed them to intercede in heaven on behalf of their less fortunate brethren, whose ultimate salvation was not yet secured. The intercessory role of the saints became their primary function, and formed the basis of their cults, and no saint was more approachable, more sympathetic or more influential than the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the twelfth century St Bernard of Clairvaux explained the concept perfectly: 'If you fear the Father, there is Christ the Mediator. If you fear Him, there is His Mother. She will listen to thee, the Son will listen to Her, the Father to Him'.<sup>1</sup> Here, St Bernard has succinctly pinpointed a primary cause of Mary's rise from a supporting role in the New Testament (in which she is mentioned just twelve times), to her unassailable position as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> McCulloch, J. A., *Medieval Faith and Fable*, London, 1932, p. 107.

However, the role of the Virgin as primary intercessor could not be taken for granted. If her power was invoked, it was necessary to reciprocate by the accordance of due honour, and the Marian liturgy was the plenary engine by which both these objectives could be achieved. Persons of the Trinity were owed *latria* (adoration), and the saints awarded *dulia* (veneration), but for Mary, there was a unique category of honour – *hyperdulia* (special veneration). The ritual performance of this *hyperdulia* required a stage setting for its enactment, and this thesis examines where this took place; at the high altar, those parts of a church that were especially dedicated and furnished in Mary's honour, namely the Lady Chapels, or elsewhere. The terms 'performance' and 'stage setting' inevitably carry a connotation of drama about them and this is entirely appropriate. The Mass was the central act of the liturgy in accordance with Christ's explicit instructions during the Last Supper, at which he had not said 'this say', but 'this do'.<sup>2</sup> Here then was the first rubric of the Christian liturgy, in which words were united with ritual in a formula that was to influence all aspects of worship, including *hyperdulia*, and the development of church architecture during the Middle Ages.

Evidence of Lady Chapels is sparse from the fifth to the tenth centuries, but study of the liturgy and its observance provides important evidence of the growth of the Marian cult. Her feasts and doctrines were extensively developed during this period, and with them an appropriate hagiography and formula of liturgical practice that was to reach a zenith in the later Middle Ages.

When Augustine began his mission in England in 597, he found a hybrid native liturgy in use at the court of Ethelbert at St Martin's, Canterbury, that included elements of the old Romano-British rite, as well as the Gallican, Celtic and Roman liturgies, which themselves contained elements of Eastern origin. According to Bede, Augustine was charged by Pope Gregory to make a selection from the various rites, as he saw fit, 'and teach the Church of the English, which is still young in the Faith, whatever you have been able to learn with profit from the

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<sup>2</sup> Luke, 22:19.

various Churches'.<sup>3</sup> This direction of the pope was to have a deep and lasting effect on the liturgy of the English Church, which despite the general adoption of the Roman rite and calendar (most notably the Synod of Whitby decision in 664 to adopt the Roman date of Easter), always retained a degree of independence manifested in local use and custom; a feature England had in common with the rest of the Western Church.<sup>4</sup> The Anglo-Saxon rite became an amalgam of these various elements that was later redefined by the Normans, and which eventually formed the basis of the most influential rite of all, the Use of Sarum.

### **The Anglo-Saxon Period**

Any study of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical architecture and liturgical practice is necessarily compromised by the dearth of surviving evidence, both of buildings and of documents. Of the former, the 1087 *Domesday Book* records a total of 2,061 churches, a significant proportion of which must have been Anglo-Saxon, though due to the unsystematic nature of the survey there were undoubtedly many more. Today, only 267 churches in England are generally accepted as incorporating significant portions of Anglo-Saxon fabric,<sup>5</sup> and centuries of internal re-orderings for one reason or another have left structural evidence that is often difficult to interpret. It is rarely even possible to pinpoint the location of altars. Surviving documents can be incomplete, and / or contradictory and chiefly concern themselves with calendars and the language of the liturgy itself, but rarely provide any rubrics with regard to the ritual. Consequently, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive account of the ordering of churches or precise details as to how they were used. Nevertheless, the archaeological analysis of surviving fabric coupled with documentary evidence does permit general reconstructions to be made and conclusions to be drawn.

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<sup>3</sup> Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, 1, 27, trans. Sherley-Price, Harmondsworth, 1955, 1983 edition, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Uniformity of use was more fully imposed by the Council of Trent, 1545-63.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, H. M., and Taylor, J., *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, vols 1 & 2, Cambridge, 1965, and Taylor, H. M., *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, vol. 3, Cambridge, 1978.

Of fundamental importance to the development of the Marian liturgy was the permanent establishment of feasts in Her honour in the liturgical calendars that required appropriate ritual observance. The development of these feasts provides important evidence for the growth of the cult of Mary, since some of them were instituted solely on Her account, whilst others were effectively hijacked from non-Marian origins. Byzantium was the fount of commemorations of the Virgin and Mary Clayton has exhaustively and convincingly untangled the complex circumstances by which these feasts and their dates were arrived at.<sup>6</sup>

So far as England is concerned, the feasts of Mary were introduced gradually and at different times in different places. In particular, the dates of commemorations and the emphasis on Mary as the primary focus were initially confused, evidence of which may be found in *The Calendar of St Willibrord*, dated to the beginning of the eighth century (not later than 717).<sup>7</sup> This Calendar was apparently intended primarily for private devotional use, but its early date and the frequent inclusion of exclusively northern English saints qualify the document as an important indicator of liturgical customs in England. There are three festivals of the Virgin listed in the Calendar: January 18<sup>th</sup>, August 16<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup>. The January feast commemorates the Assumption (*Adsumptio Sanctae Mariae*), in conjunction with a feast of Peter (*Cathedra Petri in Roma*). The August feast is inscribed *Sanctae Mariae*, in front of which a word has been erased, but a later hand has added *natiui* above the point of erasure. Contemporary liturgical customs in Rome and other areas suggest that the erased word is likely to have been *nativitas*, a commemoration of the nativity of Mary, but the September 9<sup>th</sup> entry also commemorates *Nativitas S. Mariae*: therefore the nativity appears to be celebrated twice. Moreover, confusion is compounded because the death days of saints tended to be celebrated as birthdays – representing departure from the sorrows of Earth and the beginning of heavenly reward, but in Mary’s case the latter must have been celebrated as the January feast of *Adsumptio*. It seems most likely therefore that the September feast was meant to commemorate the birth of Mary, and the January

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<sup>6</sup> Clayton, M., *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge, 1990, chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, H. A., ed., *The Calendar of St Willibrord*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 55, London, 1918 and 1998.

one Her translation to Heaven. However, the Calendar still appeared to commemorate the nativity twice, which accounts for the partial erasure of the August feast once the error was discovered, leaving the August entry as a non-specific feast of the Virgin, which was later to become the feast of the Assumption (albeit a day earlier), instead commemorating it in January. The final choice of mid-August for the Assumption celebration was finally settled by the astrological confluence, *Sol in Virgo*.

Two important Marian commemorations are conspicuous by their absence in the Willibrord Calendar: the Purification and Annunciation. The former is present on the date it has held ever since (February 2<sup>nd</sup>), but appears as a feast of Simeon, not Mary. The testimony of Bede clearly indicates that England was aware of a Roman Purification procession in honour of Mary as Queen of Heaven *c.* 725, and attests to other processions in her honour on her feast days. It is therefore likely that in England the Purification became recognised as a feast of Mary between 700 and 725.

This [procession] of our Blessed Mother ever virgin is held on [Her] feast, not only with the quinquennial lustration of the Empire, but yearly, in memory of the Queen of Heaven'.<sup>8</sup> 'In the month [of February] on Holy Mary's day, all people, priests and ministers, singing hymns, march through the churches and the neighbouring parts of the city, carrying lighted candles given them by the pope, and it is a growing and good custom to do the same for the other feasts of the Blessed Mother ever virgin.'<sup>9</sup>

March 25<sup>th</sup> became generally accepted as the date of the Annunciation to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel once the date of Christmas had been fixed, but in the Willibrord Calendar this date is a joint commemoration of Christ's Crucifixion and the martyrdom of St James, with the later addition of a commemoration of Isaac. This can be explained by the contemporary belief that Christ's conception and death both took place on March 25<sup>th</sup>, despite the fact that the liturgical anniversary

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<sup>8</sup> Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, XII, in Migne, J. P., ed., *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 90, Paris, 1844-55, p. 351. Trans. Bailey, T., *The Processions of Sarum and The Western Church*, Toronto, 1971, p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> Bede, *De Temporum Ratione* in 'Stazione Liturgica', Trans. Bailey, *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

of the latter was dependent on the Paschal cycle. St James was believed to have been martyred on an anniversary of the Crucifixion, and the near sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham was thought to represent an Old Testament prefiguration of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>10</sup> In conclusion, The Calendar of Willibrord and testimony of Bede are therefore symptomatic of the confused state of the liturgical calendar during its formative years, and provide important evidence that the principal feasts of Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity were in a state of evolutionary flux at the beginning of the eighth century, despite their establishment in Rome as Marian feasts by the end of the seventh.

The earliest surviving document attesting to all four feasts in England is a 9<sup>th</sup> - century calendar which records *Ypapanti domini*, *Adnunciatio Sancte Marie*, *Adsumptio Sancte Marie*, and *Nativitas Sancte Marie* on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> August and 8<sup>th</sup> September respectively.<sup>11</sup> Two additional feasts of Mary were introduced into Anglo-Saxon England c. 1030. These were the feast of Her Conception, commemorated on 8<sup>th</sup> December, and Her own Presentation in the Temple, celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> November. These two additions to the annual liturgical cycle appear in three surviving calendars of the eleventh century, two from Winchester and one from Worcester.<sup>12</sup> There is no evidence for the celebration of either feast anywhere else in the western church at this time.<sup>13</sup> Both appear to have been imported directly from the east,<sup>14</sup> thus placing the development of the Anglo-Saxon Marian observances in the vanguard of western liturgical adoption and practice ahead of Rome.<sup>15</sup> The doctrine of the Conception of Our Lady had been controversial since at least the fourth century, when St Ambrose (d. 397), concluded that Jesus could not have been born free of Original Sin unless Mary

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 22: 9-10, and James 2: 21.

<sup>11</sup> Wormald, F., ed. *English Kalendars before A. D. 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 72, London, 1934, no. 1.

<sup>12</sup> BL. MS. Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, Cotton Titus D. xxvii and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 391.

<sup>13</sup> Clayton, M., *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Rites for the celebration of Mass in honour of Our Lady's Conception are to be found in *The New Minster Missal*, Le Havre 330 and in *The Leofric Missal*, Bodl. MS. Bodley 579, cited by Clayton, M., *ibid.*, pp. 82-87.

was without sin. Anselm of Canterbury and St Bernard were against the concept,<sup>16</sup> and the feast was suppressed after the Conquest, but reintroduced in 1087 or 1088, and its adoption in Benedictine houses by the 1120s attests to the growing acceptance of the doctrine, which attained official sanction at the Council of London in 1129. The feast reached France c. 1130-40, but did not receive its own Mass and Office (under Pope Sixtus IV) until as late as 1476.<sup>17</sup>

The surviving calendars may affirm the development of the cult of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England, but they do not provide evidence concerning the ritual of liturgical observance, which may however be found in surviving pontificals, benedictionals and missals that contain propers (collect, epistle and gospel) for the celebration of masses, episcopal blessings and assorted antiphons.<sup>18</sup> Alcuin (735-804) is credited with being the author of the votive mass of Mary, and instigator of Saturday as the day of its celebration.<sup>19</sup>

Lady Chapels only began to proliferate in the twelfth century as a manifestation of the growing cult of Mary, but their origins are firmly rooted in the preceding centuries. The primary function of Christian churches was to provide a setting for the liturgy, and it is in the liturgy that a growing need for Lady Chapels may be discerned, and to the liturgy that the number and elaboration of these chapels in the later Middle Ages may be largely accredited. In England this phenomenon began in the Anglo-Saxon period (though the nomenclature did not then exist), and appears to have developed from two types of liturgical layout. Firstly, the practice of building detached subsidiary chapels / churches on the same site as a principal church, and

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<sup>16</sup> The theological debate centred around the point that if Mary had been conceived without sin, the doctrine of the Redemption was thereby diminished.

<sup>17</sup> Cross, F. L., ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, London, 1958, p. 681.

<sup>18</sup> Examples include a pontifical of the 11<sup>th</sup> century from Christ Church Canterbury, BL. MS. Harley 2892, an 11<sup>th</sup>-century Exeter pontifical, BL. MS. Add. 28188. *The Leofric Missal* of the 9<sup>th</sup> century with 10<sup>th</sup> - and 11<sup>th</sup> - century additions, Bodl. MS. Bodley 579.

<sup>19</sup> Rock, D., *Church of Our Fathers, As seen in St Osmund's Rite for the Cathedral of Salisbury*, 3 vols in 4, 1849-53, vol. 1, pp. 73-74, & vol. 3, p. 279- 281. Also, Clayton, M., *op. cit.*, p. 62.

secondly the development of *porticus* from burial chambers into chapels / oratories with altars.

The present study attempts objectively to present evidence in support of this assertion, but a note of caution should be sounded at the outset. Due to the extremely fragmentary nature of surviving or archaeologically attested buildings and relevant, reliable documents, it would clearly be unwise to be too dogmatic in the interpretation of what little evidence there is.

There is no evidence for multiple altars in churches before the fifth century.<sup>20</sup> Until that time the general rule was that each church contained just one altar, at which one daily Mass might be celebrated. This convention resulted in the practice of providing subsidiary churches or chapels on the same site as a principal church, in order to facilitate the celebration of multiple masses, liturgical processions between altars, and also to honour and invoke particular saints by dedicating buildings in their honour. Liturgical considerations were therefore fundamental to building practice. The best documented of these sites is at Saint-Riquier, in northeast France. Little survives of the original eighth-century buildings, but there are documentary sources, which together with the archaeological evidence provide valuable information that correlates with surviving buildings in England, and may therefore provide reliable evidence of Anglo-Saxon liturgical practice. The most important of these documentary sources is the *Chronicon Centulensae*, written at Saint-Riquier by the monk Hariulf, who left the abbey in 1105. Unfortunately, the *Chronicon* was destroyed by fire in 1719, but not before substantial portions had been published. We are left with a description of c. 1100, some seventeenth-century illustrations based on a now lost medieval original, and some surviving liturgical instructions. The latter are in a Vatican Library manuscript, an *ordo* purportedly written by Angilbert, lay abbot of Saint-Riquier and aide of Charlemagne. These instructions may have nothing to do with Angilbert and may date from as late as c. 1100, but they do match what is known of the site.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Bond, F., *The Chancel of English Churches*, Oxford, 1916, p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, H. M., 'Tenth-Century Building in England and on the Continent', in Parsons, D., ed., *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester*

The seventeenth-century engraving depicts a main church, the east end of which was dedicated to a local St Richard, the west end to St Saviour (fig. 1). The nave appears to have been relegated almost to the status of a corridor to link the two ends of the buildings, which might be termed semi-detached churches. In addition, the illustration shows two subsidiary churches, of St Mary and St Benedict, linked by cloister-like corridors. The *ordo* is incomplete, but surviving portions include the liturgy for Palm Sunday, which was among the most important and elaborate rituals of the medieval Church. After chapter, the monks are instructed to go to St Mary's, sing Tierce, and collect their palms, which were to be carried in procession *per viam monasterii* (monastery road), or in case of inclement weather, back through the covered walkway to the main church, where there was a station at the west door, followed by the celebration of Mass at the altar of St Saviour.

The use of St Mary's as the starting point of a procession may seem incidental, since it had to begin somewhere, but there is other evidence of liturgical processions with Marian associations, both in connection with her feasts in general, and with that of the Purification in particular. A procession had long been associated with the feast of 2<sup>nd</sup> February but it was Pope Sergius I (r. 687-701) who assimilated the symbol of light as a sign of purity with particular reference to Mary by instituting all-night candlelit processions through Rome from St Hadrian's to Vespers in Sta Maria Maggiore, then to Sta Maria Antiqua for Mass in the morning.<sup>22</sup> This liturgical observance was so popular that it was repeated on other feasts of the Virgin, the pope himself leading the August 15th procession.<sup>23</sup> Once established in Rome, the custom of candlelit processions quickly spread, and in the case of the Purification lasted through and beyond the Middle Ages. Once the distribution of candles from a Marian altar became customary, it is easy to envisage how the practice might have been applied to the other great occasion of distribution and procession, Palm Sunday, as related in Angilbert's *ordo* with

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*and Regularis Concordia*, London, 1975, p. 146, and Parsons, D., *Liturgy and Architecture in the Middle Ages: The 3rd Deerhurst Lecture*: 1986, Leicester, 1989, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Dendy, D. R., *The Use of Lights in Christian Worship*, Alcuin Club Collections, 41, London, 1959, pp. 176-181.

<sup>23</sup> Clayton, M., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

reference to Saint-Riquier. Although this latter point must remain a matter of conjecture, the firm establishment of Marian churches as important processional stations is likely to have influenced the later establishment of such stations in larger churches that had subsidiary altars dedicated to Mary.

It remains to establish if and how the practice at Saint-Riquier related to liturgical practice in Anglo-Saxon England. The evidence is rather tenuous, but exists none the less and should be considered. The examples cited are not intended to represent a comprehensive survey of surviving Anglo-Saxon church architecture, which is outside the scope of this study. Their purpose is to make the point that a thread of development may be discerned, from which a liturgical policy of one altar per church and one mass per day per altar, and the growing importance of the liturgical procession were in some instances a significant factor in the provision of several churches in close proximity, each with its own dedication. The linking of these structures, by which means they physically and psychologically became part of one church, may have influenced the great liturgical revolution of altar multiplication within one building in which the origins of subsidiary chapels, including Lady Chapels, may be found.

At Brixworth in Northamptonshire the Anglo-Saxon fabric of All Saints' Church survives relatively intact. In addition, two surviving medieval wills indicate the former presence of a chapel of St Mary in the churchyard of All Saints.<sup>24</sup> In the first of these, dated 1367, Walter de Brikelsworth requests burial in this chapel, and bequeathes twenty-two shillings to be divided equally between Walter the chaplain and lights for the chapel. The second will is dated 1474 and bequeathes 4/4d to the 'chantry situate and founded in the cemetery of the church of Brixworth'.<sup>25</sup> In addition, sixteenth-century chantry certificates attest to the chantry of Our Lady in a separate chapel in the churchyard.<sup>26</sup> No trace of this chapel

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<sup>24</sup> See also chapter 3, Brixworth.

<sup>25</sup> Serjeantson R. M., & Isham Longden, H., 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire: Their Dedications, Altars, Images and Lights', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 70, London, 1913, p. 288.

<sup>26</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., 'The Chantry Certificates of Northamptonshire', *AASRP*, vol. 31, Lincoln, 1911-12, pp. 87-178, Brixworth pp. 117 & 149.

survives above ground, but evidence has been found of the remains of a substantial building lying to the south and parallel with All Saints. The details of this discovery have been kindly provided by Dr David Parsons, and a synopsis of his work is the basis of this paragraph.<sup>27</sup> Conventional geophysical surveys of the area have proved unproductive because the ‘underlying ferruginous sandstone (Northampton Sand) prevents any coherent magnetometer work and the heavily buried churchyard offers little scope for resistivity surveying’.<sup>28</sup> However, a dowsed survey has revealed several structures, including walls on the south side and at right angles to the church, and further south and parallel with the church a more substantial structure with an eastern apse. Approximate external dimensions of the latter are 20 x 10.5 metres (66’ x 35’), but these almost certainly represent foundation dimensions, not those of the standing building (fig. 2). In the light of the evidence of the wills and chantry certificates, the interpretation of these remains as the chapel of St Mary is distinctly possible. The site was monastic in the Anglo-Saxon Period and the evidence of small structures between the ‘chapel’ and the main church invites the hypothesis of monastic buildings linking church and chapel in the manner of Saint-Riquier, with all the attendant liturgical implications cited previously. If it can be proved that the ‘chapel’ remains and the documentary chapel of St Mary are one and the same, the parallel with Saint-Riquier is all the closer. ‘Its potential importance makes it imperative to verify the findings by alternative means, and ultimately the opportunity to excavate part or all of the area concerned would be the only sure way to prove the building’s existence and to establish details such as its building materials, its surviving floor levels and its internal fittings. If nothing else, it should contain the grave of William de Brikelsworth, if the interpretation of it as the old chapel of St Mary is to be substantiated’.<sup>29</sup>

At Wearmouth (now Monkwearmouth), Benedict Biscop founded the monastery of St Peter in 673, and its twin, the monastery of St Paul at Jarrow in 681. By the early eighth century the pair had in excess of 600 monks, twice the number of

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<sup>27</sup> Parsons, D., forthcoming, ‘An Apsidal building in Brixworth Churchyard, Northamptonshire’.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

Saint-Riquier. Clearly, in terms of Western monasticism this was an important double foundation, a fact sometimes overlooked in the shadow of its most famous son, St Bede. The surviving church of St Peter is largely of the late seventh and early eighth centuries, to which was joined an eastern church, thought to have been dedicated to Mary, though the latter has not been located.<sup>30</sup> This is another manifestation of the practice of physically linking separate buildings, and may represent a significant phase in prototypical chapel development. Excavation has revealed more buildings to the south, including a walkway that extends for over 30.5 metres (100 ft), the southern end of which has not been determined. This walkway was a construction of high quality. Masonry walls were plastered and painted, windows glazed, the roof tiled and flashed with lead. This was clearly more than a covered way with a primary purpose of affording protection from the weather. The quality of the building was consistent with that of the church itself, which indicates the possibility of a liturgical (processional) function. The parallel with the arrangements at Saint-Riquier and possibly Brixworth is irresistible.

At Jarrow from c. 700, there were two churches on the same axis, of which the smaller eastern one survives as the chancel of the present church. The western building was demolished in the eighteenth century. In this case, the smaller, eastern building was separated from the western one by several feet. It used to be popularly believed that the two churches were joined by Aldwine after the Conquest, but Taylor cites the opinion of Gilbert that there is sufficient evidence in the fabric to support a joining soon after the churches were built in the eighth century.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, the dedication of the eastern church is not known, but the Anglo-Saxon practice of building separate churches on one site, sometimes on the same axis, is well attested; perhaps most famously at Glastonbury and St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury. At Glastonbury the so-called *vetusta ecclesia* was dedicated to the Virgin and was the earliest in a line of axial churches, though its original date is unknown. Legend links it with Joseph of Arimathea in the first century, but the late seventh or eighth centuries are accepted by most

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<sup>30</sup> Cramp, R., 'Jarrow Church and Monkwearmouth Church' *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 133, London, 1976, pp. 220-237.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor, H. M., *English Architecture in the time of Bede*, Jarrow Lecture, 1961, Jarrow, 1971, p. 10.

commentators.<sup>32</sup> At St Augustine's Canterbury, the church of Ss Peter and Paul was consecrated c. 615, to the east of which the church of St Mary was added c. 620.<sup>33</sup> In the mid-eleventh century Abbot Wulfric attempted to link these two churches by means of an octagon, dedicated to the Virgin. A contemporary account by the monk Gocelin confirms this intention, which is not therefore based solely on the archaeological remains.<sup>34</sup> Wulfric's immediate source of inspiration may have been the church of Ottmarsheim, Alsace, at the dedication of which he was possibly present in 1049, and / or the Palatine Chapel at Aachen, but the ultimate derivation is likely to have been the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

At Hexham c. 700, Abbot Wilfrid initiated various buildings within his monastery including three axial churches; St Andrew's, St Peter's and to the east, St Mary's.<sup>35</sup> During the tenth century a church / chapel dedicated to the Virgin was built immediately east of St Andrew's at Wells,<sup>36</sup> and it is probable that a similar arrangement was initiated by Oswald at Worcester, where the dedication of the western church was to St Peter.<sup>37</sup> Between 1061 and 1088 (the episcopacy of Giso), St Andrew's and St Mary's at Wells were joined together. Despite the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence, it may be tentatively concluded that these Anglo-Saxon arrangements represent, in embryonic form, the layout of churches with an eastern axial Lady Chapel that became ubiquitous, though by no means universal, during the Gothic Period.

A further factor that influenced the development of the additive church was that during the course of the seventh century, growth of the cults of saints, their relics, and the expanding number of feasts requiring liturgical observance, particularly the celebration of masses, led to the multiplication of altars, with a consequent requirement for their provision in the size and ordering of church buildings. Porticus and oratories previously utilized for a variety of functions could now

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<sup>32</sup> Rahtz, P., *Glastonbury*, London, 1993, p. 72.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor H. M., & Taylor, J., *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor, H. M., Jarrow Lecture, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor H. M., & Taylor, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 297, 298, 306 & 307.

<sup>36</sup> Rodwell, W., *Wells Cathedral, Excavations and Discoveries*, Wells 1979, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Pevsner, N., & Metcalf, P., *The Cathedrals of England*, vol. 1, London 1989, p. 316.

contain altars with various dedications additional to the principal dedication of the church itself.<sup>38</sup> By the late eighth century, the church of *Alma Sophia*, York, had thirty altars. What is less clear is whether or not *porticus* held dedications in their own right when no altar was present. In the case of Ss Peter and Paul, Canterbury, the north *porticus* is the attested burial place of the archbishops and is assumed to have been dedicated to St Gregory, but Bede states that the altar of St Gregory was in ‘the centre of the church’,<sup>39</sup> making the traditional attribution of the Gregorian dedication of the *porticus* questionable. However, Bede also mentions a *porticus* dedicated to Gregory at St Peter’s, York,<sup>40</sup> but does not mention whether or not there was an altar in it, thus creating an obvious difficulty in establishing whether or not the dedication of part of a church otherwise than the principal dedication was reliant on the presence of an altar. These two examples attest to the problems inherent in the interpretation of fragmentary evidence, concerning the origins of Lady Chapels.

### **The Possible Significance of the Later Anglo-Saxon Apse**

The subject of round buildings dedicated to St Mary falls largely outside the scope of this study in that most such structures were not Lady Chapels in the sense of being either joined to or adjacent to other church buildings. However, the circular shape of the church of Mary at Saint-Riquier has previously been alluded to and Eddius informs us that in the seventh century Wilfrid built three churches at Hexham;<sup>41</sup> St Andrew’s, St Peter’s (possibly the apse of St Andrew’s), and St Mary’s. The latter was described in the twelfth century by Aelred of Rievaulx as

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<sup>38</sup> The practice of building separate churches in close proximity continued; for example at Christ Church, Canterbury, a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist was built to the east of the cathedral during the episcopacy of Cuthbert, 740-758.

<sup>39</sup> Sherley- Price, L., Trans., Bede, *op. cit.*, Book II, chap. 3, p. 105.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, chap. 20, pp. 138-139.

<sup>41</sup> Colgrave, B., ed., *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius*, Cambridge, 1927, cap. 22.

round and tower-like, with four attached porticus.<sup>42</sup> Aelred's testimony is corroborated by a description by Richard of Hexham who described the work 'in the form of a tower and nearly round, having on four sides as many porticus, and dedicated in honour of Holy Mary, ever Virgin'.<sup>43</sup> As previously noted, this last example was eventually joined to its western neighbour and must therefore have effectively been transformed into an apsidal termination. The subject of round churches dedicated to Mary has been extensively investigated by Krautheimer,<sup>44</sup> but the possibility of a Marian link with apsidal terminations in England requires more thorough investigation and the following discussion attempts to address this.

Writing in 1877, Chambers asserted that 'beyond the principal altar, to the east, was, in and from Anglo-Saxon times, an oratory and altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary'.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately he provides no evidence to substantiate this claim, and Clayton points out that we have no way of knowing the dedications of the majority of churches, and that it 'would be an impossible task' to identify these.<sup>46</sup> Clearly then, we cannot hope to discover the dedications of individual altars or chapels in all except a few cases, but the third of Aldhelm's *Carmina Ecclesiastica* contains a poem '*In Ecclesia Mariae a Bugge Exstructa*', in which can be found the following extract, datable to c. 690.

*Quo regnante nouum praecelsa mole sacellum  
Bugga construxit, supplex uernacula Christi,  
Qua fulgent area bis seno nomine sacrae;  
Insuper absidam consecrat Virginis arae.*<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> 'Construxerat quondam beatus Wilfidus in eodem vico ecclesiam in honore beatissimae virginis Mariae opere rotundo quam quatuor porticus,' Raine, J, ed, *The Priory of Hexham: Its Chroniclers, Endowments and Annals*, 1, Surtees Society, vol. 44, 1864, p. 183.

<sup>43</sup> 'et fere rotunda, a quatuor partibus totidem porticus habens, in honorem Sanctae Mariae semper Virginis dedicata.', Raine, J, *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>44</sup> Krautheimer, R., 'Sancta Maria Rotunda': *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance Art*, London, 1971, pp. 107-114.

<sup>45</sup> Chambers, J. D., *Divine Worship in England in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth & Nineteenth Centuries*, London, 1877, p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Clayton, M., *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup> Ehwald, R., ed., *Aldelmi Opera*, Berlin, 1919, p. 16. Clayton, M., *Cult, op. cit.*, p. 34.

This translates, 'During his [i.e., Ine's] reign Bugga, a humble servant of Christ, built (this) new church with its lofty structure, in which holy altars gleam in twelve-fold dedication; moreover, she dedicates the apse to the Virgin'.<sup>48</sup>

The last line of this extract is deeply significant. It mentions the dedication of part of a church to Mary. Moreover, the 'part' is not the usual non-specific reference to a porticus, but refers to the apse itself, which was the principal seating area of the clergy. Also, the poem's reference to multiple altars that gleamed 'in twelve-fold dedication' in addition to the explicit reference to the Marian apse establishes what might be termed a proto typical axial Lady Chapel in Anglo-Saxon England.

Clearly, the change from a, one church, one altar, policy needs to be accounted for, and the obvious conclusion to draw is that liturgical requirements were the primary influence of the architectural and art historical development of churches, including the dedication of significant areas to the Virgin. These therefore require further examination and clarification.

### **The Council of Winchester and the *Regularis Concordia***

The Anglo-Saxon Church was devastated during successive Norse invasions, both materially and psychologically. Glastonbury and St Augustine's, Canterbury, alone managed to maintain the discipline of monastic life in the fullest sense. At Glastonbury c. 940, Dunstan became Abbot, but was forced into exile in 955. He took refuge in the monastery of St Peter, Ghent, a house that was being reformed to comply with a new monastic observance that was taking hold across Lotharingia. He was recalled to England by King Edgar, and appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. Dunstan and his allies, Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and Oswald, Bishop of Worcester (later Archbishop of York), formed a triumvirate committed to a Benedictine monastic reform, the chief engine of which was the Council of Winchester, held in Old Minster c. 973. The agenda of reform was based on the

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<sup>48</sup> Translation, Lapidge, M., & Rosier, J. L., eds, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 48. Clayton, M., *Cult. op. cit.*, pp. 34-5.

Aachen Council of 817, which encouraged uniformity in monastic life, and the result of the Winchester Council was the *Regularis Concordia*. This document gives specific instructions regarding the order of the liturgy, but the rubrics concerning the ritual are loosely defined, no doubt in order that the *Concordia* should be relevant and usable in a variety of church layouts. Three liturgical areas are prescribed within the document, each with an altar and *ipso facto* a dedication. These are *chorus*, *ecclesia* and *oratorium* – choir, nave and western chapel. As far as Marian liturgy is concerned, perhaps the most significant direction in the document is the instruction that the principal Mass on Fridays should be of the Cross, and on Saturdays, it should be ‘*De Sancta Maria*’.<sup>49</sup> It is also directed that the antiphon of Our Lady should be sung twice each day, after Matins and Vespers. ‘. . . they shall sing the antiphons of the Cross, of St Mary and of the saint whose name is honoured in that church’.<sup>50</sup>

The daily recitation of the Divine Office made enormous use of the psalter, but the *Concordia* also gives instructions for the use of hymns, including the practical direction that short hymns should be used on the shorter days of winter and longer ones in summer. Some hymns were for ferial days, but others were especially for important feasts, including those of Mary, and their content can be most telling of the degree of veneration in which She was held. The *Concordia* itself contains no hymns, but other documents do. The *Virgin* is often mentioned in general hymns of the period, but those in Her honour are of the greatest interest to this study and are contained in a manuscript in Durham Cathedral library.<sup>51</sup> One example is for the Purification. The apparent discrepancy between the name of this feast (*In Purificatione Sanctae Mariae*) and the events it actually commemorates (Simeon’s

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<sup>49</sup> BL. MS. Tiberius A 3. Symons, T., ed., *Regularis Concordia*, London, 1953, p. 20. Symons cites Alcuin (*Lib. Sacr. PL ci. 445*) in support of this custom already being traditional in the Anglo-Saxon Church, p. 20 (also, this study, p. 7), and Symons, T., ‘*Regularis Concordia: History and Derivation*’ in Parsons, D., ed., *Tenth-Century Studies, op. cit.*, London, 1975, p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Symons, T., *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Durham Cathedral Chapter Library MS. B III 32. Stevenson, J., ed., *The Latin Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church, with an Interlinear Anglo-Saxon Gloss*, Surtees Society, vol. 23, London, 1851. The preface, p. viii, makes it clear that there is no evidence of a northern origin for this document, but that the writing style and general execution of the work suggest a Winchester attribution and a date shortly after the Conquest.

recognition of Christ) have been previously noted and explained as attesting 'to the fervency of the Marian cult'.<sup>52</sup> The development of a hymn with a highly Marian emphasis not only supported her cult, but must also have fed it.

*YMNUS IN PURIFICATIONE SANCTAE MARIAE VIRGINIS*

*Quod chorus vatium venerandus olim  
Spiritu Sancto cecinit repletus  
In Dei factum Genetrice constat  
Esse Maria.*

*Haec Deum celi Dominumque terrae  
Virgo concepit peperitque Virgo  
Atque post partum meruit manere  
Inviolata*

*Quem senex justus Symeon in ulnis  
In domo sumpsit Domini gavisus  
Ob quod optatum proprio videret  
Lumine Christum*

*Tu libens votes petimus precantum  
Regis aeterni genitrix faveto  
Claraque celsi renitens olympi  
Regna petisti*

*Sit deo nostro decus et potestas  
Sit salus perpes sit honor perennis  
Qui poli summa residet in arce  
Trinus et unus.*<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Bradford Bedingfield, M., *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England*, Woodbridge, 2002, p. 60.

Interestingly, this hymn has survived into modern use<sup>54</sup> and the ninth-century music attributed to Archbishop Rabanus has survived too. It is therefore possible with reasonable accuracy to recreate this part of the Anglo-Saxon Purification liturgy of Mary. The words are the most striking thing about this hymn. They manage to include the principal elements of Marian theology in a deferential, but dignified manner. There is none of the over-elaborate, sycophantic praise of the Virgin that became ubiquitous in later centuries. The Old Testament prophets who foretold the Incarnation by the Holy Ghost is the theme of the first verse. Mary's perpetual and inviolate virginity *post partum* is extolled in the second. The third concerns the Purification itself, when Simeon recognises the Christ. Our Lady's royal and exalted position and the Trinity are the themes of the penultimate and last verses respectively.

Other Anglo-Saxon hymns include the *Ave Maris Stella*, '*Ymnus In Assumptione Sanctae Mariae Virginis*' and '*Ymnus De Virginibus Ad Vesperam*'.<sup>55</sup> Another extols Mary as '*Maria Coeli Regina*', evidence of Her title 'Queen of Heaven'.<sup>56</sup> Her role as Second Eve, Honoured Mother, and intercessor whose prayers are sought are all mentioned in the hymns. Most are written in the vernacular as well as Latin; indicating that the hymns were not just the province of educated clerics, but represented the expression of popular piety among the laity too.

The foregoing evidence clearly suggests that Marian devotion in Anglo-Saxon England was developed to a degree of sophistication that surpassed even Rome. The reasons for this are a clear indication of a love of Our Lady that facilitated the absorption of a wide range of influences and sources that included building practices and liturgical observance. So advanced was Marian devotion that the Normans in the wake of the Conquest found it necessary to back-pedal slightly (albeit temporarily), as will be seen in the following section.

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<sup>53</sup> Stevenson, J., *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>54</sup> *English Hymnal*, London, 1933, No. 208, pp. 298-9.

<sup>55</sup> Stevenson, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 108, 139.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110-111.

## The Anglo-Norman Period

It has become increasingly accepted among scholars that the Anglo-Saxon period ended not in 1066, but around 1100. The reasons for this are that the Conquest could never have been consolidated without recourse to the existing Anglo-Saxon bureaucratic machinery, in addition to which, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle continued until early in the twelfth century. Nevertheless, there were significant ecclesiastical changes, particularly in personnel and locations, which in turn influenced liturgical changes of general and particular significance. Almost the entire episcopate was replaced,<sup>57</sup> including the substitution of Archbishop Stigand by Lanfranc. Many sees were translated from rural areas to towns and this prompted a shift away from monastic foundations as the core of the English Church to secular ones with a higher political profile than hitherto. However, the Norman conquerors were not averse to adopting anything that suited their purposes and one manifestation of this policy with reference to the development of Lady Chapels was the architectural development of the crypt, a feature that had not been much built by the Normans in Normandy.<sup>58</sup>

Anglo-Saxon crypts were generally small affairs accessed by narrow passages, and it seems unlikely that they provided much inspiration to the Norman builders, whose major crypts are stylistically much closer to Rhineland examples, particularly Speyer, c. 1030, both in terms of size and in the use of the cushion capital.<sup>59</sup> Anglo-Norman crypts tended to be large, usually commensurate with the choir above and the last quarter of the eleventh century saw significant examples built for example at Canterbury (Christ Church), Winchester, Rochester, Worcester, London (St Paul's) and Gloucester. These crypts could be accessed from outside the choir and were therefore probably available to everyone, yet access could easily be controlled and the contents guarded. Moreover, all of them seem to have been dedicated to St Mary.<sup>60</sup> The reason for the Marian dedications

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<sup>57</sup> Wulfstan of Worcester was the only English prelate to survive the purge.

<sup>58</sup> The crypt at Rouen is a notable exception.

<sup>59</sup> Hearn, M., 'The Rectangular Ambulatory in English Medieval Architecture', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 30, No. 3, London, 1971, p. 199.

<sup>60</sup> The dedication at Gloucester is unknown.

remains conjectural, but is logical in the context of a known use of crypts as repositories for relics that clearly linked them to the veneration of saints. As the first of all the saints, Mary could be honoured in a place particularly associated with their cult, in an area to which the laity could have had access.

### **Norman Reforms: The *Decreta* of Archbishop Lanfranc**

The influence of the *Regularis Concordia* survived in some monasteries, but in the *Decreta Lanfranci*<sup>61</sup> of c. 1070, the new archbishop detailed primarily for his cathedral of Christ Church, Canterbury, a monastic usage that aimed to establish closer conformity between England and the rest of Western Christendom in accordance with the reform movement of Pope Gregory VII. The non-Marian minutiae of Lanfranc's *Decreta* need not concern us except to point out that the archbishop set out to simplify the elaborate liturgy of the *Regularis Concordia*. One manifestation of this agenda was his decision to abolish many of the local Anglo-Saxon saints from the calendar. At Evesham, Lanfranc's former chaplain, Abbot Walter subjected all the Anglo-Saxon relics to trial by fire. Those that survived the flames remained in the calendar; all others were expunged. Naturally the Virgin was largely exempt from this Norman purge and on the whole Her liturgy survived intact, but with two exceptions; Her Office was omitted from the statutes for Canterbury Cathedral,<sup>62</sup> and as before mentioned, the feast of the Conception was temporarily suppressed.<sup>63</sup> However, in other respects the cult of the Virgin continued to grow. Lanfranc himself wrote a treatise c. 1070, *De Sacramento Corporis et Sanguinis Christi* that rejected Berengar's assertion that the Eucharist was merely a symbol, claiming instead that the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood, identical with the Body born of the Virgin was present in

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<sup>61</sup> Durham Cathedral Chapter Library, MS. B IV 24. Also, Knowles, D., ed., *Decreta Lanfranci: The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, London, 1951.

<sup>62</sup> Bishop, E., 'On the Origins of the Prymer', *Liturgica Historica*, Oxford, 1918, p. 227.

<sup>63</sup> Southern, R. W., 'The English Origins of the Miracles of the Virgin', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4, Chapel Hill, 1958, pp. 194-5.

the eucharistic species.<sup>64</sup> This assertion stresses the importance of Mary from whom Christ inherited his humanity, distinct from his Godhead that came from the Holy Ghost; therefore the omission of the Office and deletion of the Conception from the calendar cannot be interpreted as evidence of a desire on Lanfranc's part to play down the role of the Virgin, but is rather a reflection of the doctrinal problems expressed by St Bernard *et al.* If anything, churches built in accordance with the *Decreta* attest in some instances to more explicit architectural references to Lady altars / chapels. For example, at Christ Church, Canterbury, a Lady altar was positioned at the east end of the north aisle of the nave. This was screened at its east end, and also from the monks' choir to the south, thus forming an impressive space of three bays in length.

The influence of the *Decreta* was important, but limited. At Winchester, the new cathedral begun in 1079 reflects the usage of the *Regularis Concordia* rather than the *Decreta*. The reason for this may be political. Winchester was an important symbol of monarchy, the venue of Easter crown-wearing ceremonies, and King William was anxious to emphasize the continuity of monarchy, presenting himself as the rightful successor to Edward the Confessor. The Anglo-Saxon St Swithun, far from being deleted from the calendar was enshrined in the new church and added to the dedication with Ss Peter and Paul, and the Anglo-Saxon kings buried in the Old Minster were translated into the new cathedral, which at ground level provided an axial narthex with flanking chapels dedicated to Ss Swithun and Mary; two important chapels situated in locations of easy public access, and in accordance with a similar arrangement in Old Minster. A further point of interest of the Winchester layout is that the matutinal altar was located in the eastern apse, the dedication of which is unknown and controversial. Biddle favours a Marian dedication on grounds of the precedent of the Old Minster,<sup>65</sup> but Klukas suggests the use of the apse as a second choir to facilitate the Offices of All Saints and All

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<sup>64</sup> Cross, F. L., *op. cit.*, p. 784. This eucharistic link was to be defined in Cistercian monastic tradition, which 'associated Mary with the sacrament through a superimposition of the moment of consecration and the Annunciation', Gilchrist, R., ed, *Women in Medieval English Society*, Stroud, 1997, p. 218.

<sup>65</sup> Biddle, M., *Excavations Near Winchester Cathedral, 1961-68*, Winchester, 1969, p. 70.

Souls prescribed by the *Concordia*, with an altar dedication to All Saints.<sup>66</sup> It is worth adding to the argument that once daily masses of the Virgin were established they were often celebrated as the morrow mass at the matutinal altar, and this raises the conjectural idea that the constant use of this altar for this purpose led to a reinforcement of the existing association of the eastern axial position with Mary that was later to influence the siting of many Lady Chapels in this position.

In contrast to Winchester, St Albans was clearly influenced by Lanfranc's *Decreta*. Here, as at Christ Church, Canterbury, the Lady altar is believed to have been located at the eastern end of a nave aisle, flanking the altar of the Holy Cross, but this time on the south side. Similarly, at Tynemouth, the Lady altar occupied a position in the south aisle, flanking the Holy Cross altar that occupied the usual position west of the rood screen. At Binham, Wymondham and possibly Rochester the pattern is exactly the same, and although the dedications of the south aisle altars are uncertain, the general trend emerging from churches built to accord with the *Decreta* suggests that these were also Marian altars. At Durham, the Lady altar originally stood at the eastern end of the south aisle before moving to the western Galilee in 1189, and Lindesfarne, conceived as a miniature Durham also had a south aisle altar. In all examples of churches built in accordance with the *Decreta* with sufficient surviving evidence, there was an altar terminating one or other of the nave aisles, and there are enough cases where the dedication of this altar is known to have been to the Virgin to suggest that the remainder are likely to have been similarly dedicated. All these Lady Chapels appear to have been located close to the cloister on the south side, except Christ Church, Canterbury, where the northern position of the Lady altar correlates with a northern cloister. The chief reason for this location was initially liturgical. The *Decreta* explicitly indicates that on Christmas night Lauds took place before the Lady altar in the form of a processional station. After Matins in the choir, 'the cantor shall begin the antiphon *O beata infantia*. While they sing this they shall proceed to the Lady altar, and

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<sup>66</sup> Klukas, A. W., 'The Continuity of Anglo-Saxon Liturgical Tradition in post-Conquest England in the Architecture of Winchester, Ely and Canterbury Cathedrals', *Actes du Colloque Anselmienne*, Bec, 1982, Paris, 1984, p. 15, cited in Draper, P., 'Seeing that it was Done in All the Noble Churches in England', in Fernie, E., & Crossley, P., eds., *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context: Studies in Honour of Peter Kidson*, London, 1990, p. 139.

having said Lauds of All Saints there they go to the dormitory'.<sup>67</sup> This rubric could not be more explicit with regard to Christmas, but it does not indicate whether or not the direction indicates regular practice or an annual event. On balance the latter seems most unlikely. Christmas was one important feast among many and there is no theological or liturgical reason why it alone should be singled out for the particular distinction of Lauds in the Lady Chapel. Also, the *Decreta* avoids too much repetition by providing instructions that were clearly meant for use on occasions other than those specified, including this one.<sup>68</sup> Further, it does not seem likely that Lady altars would be situated to comply with rubrics that merely amounted to one procession and one minor office annually. Therefore, the conclusions to be drawn from this are that it was desirable to locate the Lady Chapel where it might serve as a convenient processional station on route to the cloister and dormitory, to which consideration it might be added that a position outside the monks' choir facilitated easy access for the laity as well as perpetuating the processional links with Lady altars noted previously.

Nevertheless, The Lauds / Lady Chapel correlation poses some interesting problems. Is this a chicken and egg situation? Did Lanfranc specify the Lady altar because it was conveniently situated on route to the dormitory, and was the dedication of this chapel therefore coincidental? Did his rubric influence the replication of Lady Chapels in proximity to the cloister in churches built to comply with the *Decreta* rubric without regard to the relevance or otherwise of the

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<sup>67</sup> 'Dicta oratione incipiat cantor antiphonam *O beata infantia. Quam canentes eant ad altare sanctae Mariae, et ibi dictus matutinis de omnibus sanctis uadant in dormitorium*', Knowles, D., *The Monastic Constitutions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>68</sup> 'Dehinc matutinas de omnibus sanctis, reliqua omnia sicut ante natiuitatem Domini'. Trans., 'After this the versicle *Exultabunt Domino*; then Lauds of All Saints and the rest as before Christmas', *ibid.*, p. 17. Lanfranc also stipulates that 'There are five principal festivals, that is, Christmas; Easter; Pentecost; the Assumption of Mary, holy Mother of God; and the feast of the house. All shall be done as noted on Holy Saturday; on the vigil of these feasts the whole church shall be decorated, together with all the altars, as richly as possible . . .'. '*Quinque sunt praecipuae festiuitates, id est, natale Domini, resurrectio eius, pentecostes, assumptio sanctae dei genetricis Mariae, festiuitas loci; seruatis omnibus, quae de sabbato sancto dicta sunt, in harum [sic] festiuitatum uigiliis ornetur totum monasterium, et omnia altaria, secundum facultatem loci, sicut honesties fieri potest*', *ibid.*, p. 55.

dedication? Does the document bear witness to a growing practice of Marian inclusion, whereby certain Offices were performed in the choir and duplicated in the Lady Chapel? These are tantalizing questions, for which there is insufficient evidence to provide answers, except that with regard to the last, Lanfranc's, instructions for novices stipulate that 'after Vespers of Our Lady and Vespers of the day they are to kneel'.<sup>69</sup> Elsewhere, the text makes it clear that this direction refers to a feria day, not a Sunday or a feast, thus attesting to the routine duplication of offices in Mary's honour. Unfortunately we are not told whether Vespers of Our Lady was recited in choir or chapel, but logic suggests the latter.

On the vigils of principal festivals, Lanfranc directed that the church and all its altars should be decorated and at Vespers all the lights in the church should be kindled, including one before each altar outside the presbytery; that the antiphon at the *Magnificat* should be sung thrice while the abbot and prior incensed the two presbytery altars in unison, after which the hebdomadary priests of the morrow and high masses should incense the altars outside the presbytery.<sup>70</sup> Other altars within the presbytery are not mentioned. On other feasts, including the Marian ones of Purification, Annunciation and the Nativity of Our Lady, 'two priests in copes shall bear thuribles as on the principal feasts'.<sup>71</sup> The Lady altar was therefore always among those decorated and incensed on principal festivals.

Other Marian references in the *Decreta* include the direction that all participants at Mass should wear albs on account of the candles,<sup>72</sup> that if the Annunciation falls on a Sunday it should be deferred till Monday,<sup>73</sup> and that 'On Our Lady's Birthday the psalms at Vespers shall be *Dixit Dominus; Laetatus sum; Nisi Dominus; and Memento Domine*,<sup>74</sup> with the antiphon *De fructu ventris tui*; and this psalm and antiphon shall be sung in the fourth place on all festivals of Saint Mary'.<sup>75</sup> The

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-6.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>74</sup> Psalms 110, 122, 127 and 132 respectively in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>75</sup> Knowles, D., *op. cit.*, p. 63.

octave of the Assumption is also mentioned as a third rank-feast with slightly more moderate rubrics than those pertaining to the feast itself. In common with Sundays and other feast days, the *credo* was specified for use at High Mass on all feasts of Mary.<sup>76</sup> In his instructions for novices, Lanfranc stipulates that genuflexions should be made at commemorations of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Cross, The Blessed Virgin, St Thomas, St Alphege and St Dunstan; and that 'on Sundays and feasts of twelve lessons or when the office is of the Blessed Virgin or the Relics he never prays bowing or inclining over the desks'.<sup>77</sup> The latter point clearly indicates that offices performed to honour Mary were never to be penitential, but always celebratory of her rank and achievements.

Citing Canterbury and Winchester as examples, Klukas has noted that a significant difference between Anglo-Saxon and Norman liturgical practice was the degree of physical movement between liturgical areas, the former requiring more than the latter.<sup>78</sup> In other words, more of the liturgy was ritually observed in the choir under the *Decreta Lanfranci* than was the case with the *Regularis Concordia*.

Furthermore the fragmentary survival of the rubrics of the latter in the post-Conquest liturgy may at least partially explain the high incidence of Lady Chapels in England, particularly from the thirteenth century, and the relative dearth of such chapels on the continent. However, such a significant assertion requires substantive evidence to support it and I believe that the further development of the liturgy in England holds the key to this, in that certainly in major churches, much of the Marian liturgy came to be celebrated either in specially designated areas or purpose-built chapels in contradistinction to the prevalent continental practice of celebrating almost all the liturgy in the main choir. Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman traditions were gradually assimilated and refined by the addition of local custom and continental influence. Such development occurred simultaneously in major centres, but nowhere more so than at Sarum, where a liturgy was developed to such a degree of refinement that its fame and influence reached as far as Rome itself, and which was so widely adopted and emulated in England that by the end

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142-3.

<sup>78</sup> Klukas, A. W., 'The Architectural Implications of the *Decreta Lanfranci*', in Brown, R. A., ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies 6: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1983*, Woodbridge, 1984, p. 153.

of the Middle Ages the Sarum rite was used by the whole of the Southern Province, and in modified form elsewhere. The purpose of the following discussion is therefore to examine the development of the Marian liturgy in the later Middle Ages with particular reference to its expression within the use of Sarum.

### **The Later Middle Ages**

Whilst some establishments remained faithful to *Regularis Concordia* and others to the *Decreta Lanfranci*, a third category gradually developed, that was to have an almost incalculable significance, not least with regard to the liturgy of Mary. Under Bishop Herman in 1058, the Anglo-Saxon bishoprics of Ramsbury and Sherborne were united. In 1075 the see was translated to Sarum,<sup>79</sup> where in 1092 Bishop Osmund consecrated a new cathedral. The 1090's marked a significant shift away from monastic to secular institutions in some English cathedrals; that is, a constitution of secular canons under a dean. In some ways this was a surprising trend, given the monastic background of Archbishop Lanfranc, and may reflect a conflict between the increased political involvement of the Norman ecclesiastical hierarchy and the seclusion of the monastic cloister. Osmund himself was a distinguished statesman, a Norman count, Earl of Dorset and Chancellor of England. At Sarum he constituted a system whereby the cathedral was to be governed by four principal dignitaries comprising a dean, precentor, chancellor and treasurer.<sup>80</sup> The provision of secular canons instead of resident monks led to the creation of vicars choral – deputies in choir for canons whose duties necessitated prolonged absences from the cathedral. The musical ability of vicars choral could be a determining factor in their appointment; a qualification not without importance in the subsequent development of the Sarum Use; a rite of such significance that 'In ancient tymes the Catholicke Bishops of Salisbury obtained the Titles of the Pope's Maister of Cerimonayes, and had their places always assigned them in the Pope's Chappell and other solemnities at Rome, according to

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<sup>79</sup> Sarum became 'Old Sarum' on the founding of New Sarum / Salisbury in 1220.

<sup>80</sup> Frere, W. H., ed., '*Carta Osmundi*', in *The Use of Sarum*, Cambridge, 1898, pp.257-263.

that dignity'.<sup>81</sup> At home, Sarum bishops were by tradition precentors in the Archbishop of Canterbury's College of Bishops,<sup>82</sup> and Popes Gregory IX and Calixtus III affirmed and prescribed the Sarum Use in England, Scotland and Ireland in 1228 and 1456 respectively.<sup>83</sup> In the vanguard of liturgical development the Sarum *Consuetudinary* legislates for the octaves of the Assumption and Nativity. The latter acquired papal recognition in 1243; I therefore propose the possibility that in this instance (and as noted previously with reference to the Conception) English use spread to Rome in an interesting reversal of influence.<sup>84</sup>

The origins of the Sarum rite were traditionally attributed to Osmund, though in fact no liturgical documents survive that are definitely attributable to him. However, early in the thirteenth century Bishop Richard Poore drew up an *Ordinale* and *Consuetudinary* that survive within 'The Register of S. Osmund', in which he credited his predecessor as the instigator of the Sarum Use.<sup>85</sup> This assertion cannot be taken at face value for two reasons. Firstly, Poore may have cited the liturgical precedent of Osmund in order to legitimise and lend greater authority to his own work, and secondly he was actively canvassing for the formal canonisation of Osmund and credit for an increasingly respected and widely imitated liturgy could only serve to promote this cause. It is moreover incontrovertible that Poore was motivated to dovetail the design of his new cathedral at New Sarum / Salisbury with the liturgy, but the widespread adoption of that liturgy through the southern province in church buildings of every type and level at once precludes any reductionist theory regarding the necessity for architectural uniformity. Sarum Use was incredibly sophisticated; it offered a complete and cohesive cycle of worship, and it was promoted by men with the necessary influence, but its wide dissemination could never have occurred unless it was adaptable in terms of ritual observance according to prevailing circumstances

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<sup>81</sup> Wilson, J., *The English Martyrologe*, 1608, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, St-Omer, 1672, p. 194.

<sup>82</sup> Baxter, P., *Sarum Use*, Salisbury, 1994.

<sup>83</sup> Wordsworth, C., & Littlehales, H., *The Old Service-Books of the English Church*, London, 1904, pp. 6-7.

<sup>84</sup> The commemoration of this octave was problematic because it clashed with the feast of relics.

<sup>85</sup> Rich Jones, W. H., ed., *Vetus Registrum Sarisberiense: Alias Dictum Registrum S. Osmundi Episcopi*, 2 vols, Rolls Series, London, 1883 & 1884.

at different times and in different places. This explains its success in addition to that which is attributable to liturgical sophistication, and is a significant factor in accounting for the diversity in types and locations of Lady Chapels.

When Osmund became Bishop of Sarum in 1078 there were, despite the *Regularis Concordia* and *Decreta Lanfranci*, considerable variations in the liturgy and ritual of the church from diocese to diocese, as prescribed by each bishop. Osmund gathered around himself churchmen skilled in learning generally, and in music in particular. His work on liturgy and ritual represented a selection of the best of existing practices to which Sarum innovations were added. In 1086 the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that King William held his *witan* at Sarum, at which all the major landowners of England had to appear and swear fealty to him, and this event is likely to have assisted in the early dissemination of Osmund's liturgical practices, the influence of which gradually spread, and eventually formed the basis of other 'Uses'. Lincoln's statutes were based on those of Sarum, and when Wells regained its cathedral status in 1135 the secular system and liturgy of Sarum were adopted in the charter of 1136-7, *De ordinacione prebendarum et institucione commune*.<sup>86</sup> At Lichfield Hugh de Nonant (bishop, 1188-98), directed that the Osmund ordinances be written into the statutes of his cathedral, and the Use of Sarum was introduced into Ireland by the Synod of Cashel, 1172. Less than a century after Osmund's death (1099), John Brompton, the Cistercian abbot of Jervaulx, Yorkshire wrote '*Osmundus composuit librum ordinalem ecclesiastici officii quem "Consuetudinarium" vocant, quo fere nunc tota Anglia, Wallia, utitur, et Hibernia*'.<sup>87</sup> Osmund's constitutional and liturgical reputation appears therefore to have been widely established before Bishop Poore consolidated and augmented the Sarum liturgy in the early thirteenth century, and the absence of authenticated liturgical documents attributed to Osmund does not preclude the likelihood of their former existence.

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<sup>86</sup> A later transcription survives at Wells in *Liber Albus I*. The text appears in Church, C. M., *Chapters in the Early History of the Church at Wells, A.D. 1136-1333*, London, 1894, pp. 73-76, and a discussion of the document appears in Frere, W. H., *op. cit.*, pp. xxx-xxxii.

<sup>87</sup> Twysden, R., *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores X, Decem Scriptores*, London, 1652, p. 977.

The so-called 'Register of S Osmund' is among the oldest surviving muniments of the bishops of Sarum. It is a small folio, written on vellum in several parts, datable to 1215 with substantial additions up to 1230. In its present form then, the Register could not have been compiled by Osmund, but is a collection of the customs, rules, statutes, and some of the ceremonial enjoined by him for use in the cathedral and diocese of Sarum. The manuscript is labelled '*Vetus Registrum*' – Old Register, an apt title for the miscellaneous collection of documents arranged without regard to chronological order. In the nineteenth century, W. H. Rich Jones comprehensively edited these documents, from which it is possible to extract important evidence concerning the Marian liturgy.<sup>88</sup>

It is well documented that the east end of the new cathedral at Salisbury was begun in 1220 with due ceremony, involving the laying of several foundation stones by various dignitaries. By 1225, the eastern chapels were sufficiently advanced to require the presence of the canons and the commencement of divine service. 36 canons apparently answered the summons. Of greater interest is the dedication of the three eastern altars, which took place on the day (Sunday) previous to the consecration of the chapels within which they stood. Bishop Poore, accompanied by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Henry de Loundres, Archbishop of Dublin, entered the new cathedral in solemn procession and consecrated the three eastern altars beginning with the dedication of the central one to the Holy Trinity and All Saints, the northern one to St Peter and the Apostles, and the southern one to St Stephen and the martyrs.<sup>89</sup> The dedication of the central altar might raise questions of doubt regarding the original intention of utilizing this area as a Lady Chapel, but the same manuscript<sup>90</sup> that records the dedication also mentions the institution of a daily mass of the Virgin; 'There, henceforth, the mass of the Blessed Virgin was appointed to be sung day by day',<sup>91</sup> so clearly this area

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<sup>88</sup> Rich Jones, W. H., *op. cit.*, note 85.

<sup>89</sup> The dedication of an altar to the Trinity in a building dedicated to Mary may be interpreted as a conscious invocation of the four most powerful personalities of the Christian religion. By definition there was no place for Mary in the Trinity, but liturgically and iconographically she is always closely linked to it.

<sup>90</sup> Rich Jones, W. H., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. cxx.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

was intended to function as a Lady Chapel from the outset. The reason for the Trinity and All Saints dedication of the altar is probably that the entire cathedral was consecrated in honour of the Virgin, the high altar itself dedicated to the Assumption. A similar arrangement appears to have existed at Old Sarum where (so far as is known), the only altar dedicated to the Virgin was the high altar.<sup>92</sup> A link between All Saints and Our Lady as first of saints has already been noted with reference to the use and dedication of Anglo-Norman crypts and the speculative dedication of the easternmost altar at Winchester Cathedral in the eleventh century.

A footnote in the *Registrum* records that at Salisbury ‘there are some four distinct charters by which provision was made for the maintenance for ever afterwards of this daily service in honour of the Blessed Virgin’, at which no fewer than *thirteen* vicars were required to be present, one of whom had to be the *succentor* of Sarum.<sup>93</sup> The eastern axial chapel was commonly styled the “*Salve*” chapel (*capella de salve*) from the daily chanting of the hymn “*Salve regina misericordiae*”,<sup>94</sup> and - if further evidence were needed that this chapel was the Lady Chapel - a fifteenth-century *processionale* refers to the Trinity altar ‘in *capella beate Virginis*’.<sup>95</sup> Also, there is the story of John Bemyster, the violence of whose mental illness necessitated his being kept chained. His head and hands were placed in one of the apertures of Osmund’s shrine in the Lady Chapel during the celebration of the Lady Mass, whereat he was miraculously cured.<sup>96</sup> It is incontrovertibly proven therefore that liturgical observance was sufficiently flexible to permit that part of a church might function as a Lady Chapel regardless of the dedication of the altar within it.

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<sup>92</sup> St John-Hope, W. H., ‘The Sarum Consuetudinary and its Relation to the Cathedral Church of Old Sarum’, *Archaeologia, or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, Society of Antiquaries of London, vol. 68, London, 1917, pp. 111-126.

<sup>93</sup> Rich Jones, W. H., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. cxx.

<sup>94</sup> Henderson, W. G., ed., *Processionale ad usum insignis ac præclaræ ecclesiæ Sarum*, Leeds, 1882, pp. 17 & 170.

<sup>95</sup> Cited by Draper, P., ‘Seeing that it was Done’, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>96</sup> Malden, A. R., ed., *The Canonisation of St Osmund*, Wilts. Record Society, 1901, p. 57-8.

The ceremonies of altar dedication were followed the next day by the public consecration ceremony on the feast of St Michael and All Angels, which began with a sermon, preached in the open. Then a procession entered the building for the main ceremonial service, of which no account survives. It is fascinating to note however, that the choice of that particular feast day for the consecration must have been deliberately chosen in order to include the attention and participation of the whole company of heaven, bearing in mind the three altar dedications and Marian association with the structure. In addition, the service was attended by the cathedral dignitaries, the archbishop of Dublin (the archbishop of Canterbury is not mentioned), and the bishops of Durham, Wells, Rochester and Evreux in Normandy, as well as many knights and barons. Four days later, King Henry III visited the new cathedral and heard the Mass of the Blessed Virgin. He offered a costly piece of silk, ten marks of silver, and granted an eight day fair annually from the vigil of the feast of the Assumption. Within three years of this consecration, the services of the Blessed Virgin were regulated at Saint David's according to the '*Ordinale Ecclesie Sarum*'. The aforementioned daily celebration of the Lady Mass appears to have been instigated during the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. It is not known whether this was a Sarum innovation, but the practice is recorded at St Albans during the abbacy of John de Cella (1195-1214).<sup>97</sup>

Evidence of compliance with the Sarum Ordinal has been found at Dublin, Moray, Elgin, Aberdeen and Durham,<sup>98</sup> whilst documentation of 1259 records a request from Glasgow for a copy of the Sarum Ordinal. At Exeter, Bishop Grandisson sent for a Sarum Pontifical in 1327 and wrote the *Exon Ordinale*, based on Sarum, but with local customs.<sup>99</sup> By 1505 Exeter conformed fully to Sarum Use, as did St Paul's in London from 1415. Lincoln and Hereford had their own Uses, but borrowed heavily from Sarum, though York remained independent. Clearly, there was a high degree of uniformity in the liturgical practice of England, particularly in the southern province. Once a mother church had adopted and adapted Sarum Use, the parishes, chapels and colleges followed suit as far as their means allowed, and

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<sup>97</sup> Walsingham, T., ed., *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 3 vols, Rolls Series, London, vol. 1, p. 234.

<sup>98</sup> Richard Poore was translated to Durham in 1228.

<sup>99</sup> Baxter, P., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

since Marian devotion was a dominant factor of Sarum liturgy, the wide dissemination of the latter was clearly a substantive factor in the growth and maintenance of the Virgin's cult.

The *Registrum* also contains incidental references to rubrics, some of which are specific and some incidental to Marian devotion. These are important indicators of the degree of liturgical use to which Lady Chapels were put and how Marian feasts were ranked in the context of other commemorations and observances.

Particularly relevant references contained in the *Registrum* include the following:

Which are double, and which are simple feasts.

It is to be understood that certain feasts are double and certain simple. In the church of Sarum the double feasts are as follows; Christmas day and the four following days, the day of the Circumcision, the day of the Epiphany, and Purification of St Mary, and the Annunciation, and the first day of Easter with the three following days, and the Invention of the Holy Cross, the day of the Ascension, the day of Pentecost with the three following days, and the feast of the Holy Trinity, and of St John the Baptist, and of the apostles Peter and Paul, and of the Assumption and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the feast of relics, and of St Michael, and of All Saints, and of St Andrew the Apostle.<sup>100</sup>

There are thus five double feasts of Our Lord, and four of Our Lady. The latter are Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity, but in addition, Mary was associated with many of the others.

Of the manner of executing the Office in the First Vespers on the First Sunday in Advent.

. . . in the last verse but one of the hymn, the priest shall go out to put on a silken cope. The hymn having been said, one boy on the choir-side shall say the versicle, turned to the altar, changing neither his place nor his habit. The

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<sup>100</sup> Rich Jones, W. H., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 39.

same use is followed by any boy who says the versicle alone, or  
“*Benedicamus*”.

Meanwhile the taper-bearers shall enter, and having taken their candlesticks, come to meet the priest at the step of the presbytery. Then the priest shall bless and put incense into the thurible and proceed to the altar: and having made genuflexion before the altar, shall incense the altar, first in the middle, then on the right side, afterwards on the left; and then the image of the Blessed Virgin; afterwards the chest in which are contained the relics: then in incensing he shall go right round the altar. This completed, the priest, at the lowest step before the altar, shall bow to the altar; and the taper-bearers and thurible preceding him, shall betake himself to the stall set apart for this office.<sup>101</sup>

The Sarum rubrics therefore provide evidence of ritual incensings of the Virgin’s image at her own feasts and commemorations, and also at services other than those held in her particular honour.

The ceremony of blessing the Candlemas candles is depicted in a woodcut that appeared in the 1508 and subsequent editions of the *Processionale* (fig. 3).<sup>102</sup> Of interest is the placing of the candles and book on the altar steps in the manner described in Lanfranc’s *Decreta* and therefore a good example of the syncretism involved in liturgical development. Once again, we are not told which altar is being used, but the rubrics clearly indicate that a procession to an altar for the blessing of candles took place after Tierce. The latter was a choir office, so a subsidiary altar outside the choir must be envisaged. Moreover, the woodcut indicates an altar against a wall and the high altar is known to have been freestanding, otherwise the aforementioned rubric directing the censing priest to go right around the altar would not have been possible. Sufficient space for the dignity of the ritual would be required by the officiant and at least ten attendants, and given the traditional association of the Purification procession with churches, chapels or altars dedicated to Mary, the Trinity and All Saints (Lady Chapel) altar is the most likely venue for the ceremony depicted.

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-53.

<sup>102</sup> Bailey, T., *op. cit.*, p. 191.

In addition, the *Registrum* contains references to Marian liturgical furnishings (among others) that had been in use at Old Sarum, thus providing evidence of their translation to the new cathedral.<sup>103</sup> This inventory of the ‘*Ornamenta Ecclesiae Cathedralis Sarum*’ includes ‘*item textus unus parvus cum ymagine beatæ Mariæ cum lapidibus xix.*’,<sup>104</sup> ‘*Item pixis una eburnea cum ymagine beatæ Mariæ et reliquiis*’,<sup>105</sup> and ‘*item, pannus unus de serico albo diaspero, cum pannis ii. Super-altaribus ejusdem generis in festivitate beatæ Mariæ*’.<sup>106</sup> The first item ‘*textus*’ refers to a gospel book with a jewelled image of Mary, the second reference strongly suggests a Marian image and relic, and the third may be translated as a ‘a white silk cloth diapered’, an altar cloth for use on feasts of Mary. In addition, the *Registrum* refers to the provision of two candlesticks at the daily Lady Mass.<sup>107</sup>

The Use of Sarum did not remain constant, but developed up to and beyond the Reformation when it enjoyed a brief revival under Mary I. A full discussion of every aspect of the Marian liturgy contained in the surviving documents from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries is beyond the scope of this study. However, there are some significant practices that must be included, because like the *Registrum* they provide important evidence of the degree of practice of Marian devotion within the liturgy of Sarum and its influence on observances elsewhere; these include some general rubrics, collects, the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, and the Lady Mass in the Lady Chapel. These observances appear in their final and most fully developed form in the late Sarum missals, which have been edited and correlated by A. H. Pearson.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Rich Jones, W. H., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 125, citing years 1214-1222.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>108</sup> Pearson, A. H., *The Sarum Missal in English*, London, 1884, pp. 284-5. This text follows those printed in the sixteenth century, which the editor asserts are closest to earlier missals, but he omits fifteen supplementary masses that did not appear in all editions, including masses of the compassion of the Blessed Virgin and her own Presentation pp. xx-xxi.

The general rubrics of the Sarum Missal specify the various grades of the feasts, of which the Marian ones rank as follows. The Assumption is designated a Principal Double, as is the dedication of the church. At Salisbury these feasts were one and the same, but it is quite possible that other churches that conformed to Sarum Use, but had Marian dedications other than the Assumption or non-Marian dedications kept two separate Principal Double feasts when one was intended; a clear indication of how the dissemination of the Sarum Use may have fed and increased instances of Marian liturgical observance almost by default. The Purification, Visitation and Nativity of Mary were only slightly less splendid, being designated as Greater Doubles. The Annunciation and Conception of Mary were Lesser Doubles. The rank of the former as a lesser feast than Christmas is somewhat surprising, given the theological belief that the Incarnation occurred at the moment Mary accepted the archangel's salutation and annunciation, but is possibly explained by its falling in Lent, a time of simpler ritual observance that reflected the penitential nature of the season. The rubrics prescribe white as the colour of the vestments for all feasts, octaves and commemorations of Our Lady, and direct the appropriate number of candles to burn around the altar and the image of the Virgin.

On Christmas Day, Easter day and Whitsun Eves, and on Principal and Greater Doubles, eight candles about the altar,<sup>109</sup> of a pound weight each – six on the ledge with the Crucifix and Relics, *i.e.*, on the Beam above; two before Our Lady's image; and five of half pound weight in the corona before the step of the Altar; also five on the wall over the pulpits where the Lessons are read. From Whitsun Day to and on Our Lady's Nativity, seven candles are placed in the bronze corona; on all other Lesser and Inferior Doubles there are four Candles about the Altar, ten before Our Lady's image, three in the corona, and three in the pulpit.<sup>110</sup>

The missal prescribes daily collects of the Blessed Virgin Mary 'from Advent to Christmas, excepting the Conception of B.V.M.', and 'from Christmas to the

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<sup>109</sup> This means the pavement rather than the *mensa* itself.

<sup>110</sup> Pearson, A. H., *op. cit.*, pp. xlii-xliii.

Purification’, and ‘ from the Purification to Advent.’<sup>111</sup> In other words, collects invoking and in honour of the Virgin are provided for year round use, partly attesting to the strength of Her cult, but also probably reflecting the dedication of the cathedral to Her by frequent invocation.

Included in the ordinary of the mass the missal contains a manifestation of honour to the Virgin that is nothing short of extraordinary, even when the immense significance of her cult and the dedication of the cathedral are accounted for. This is the inclusion in the missal of a Marian version of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, a fourth-century hymn in praise of the Trinity, the use of which has been almost as constant in Christian liturgy as the *Credo* and the *Paternoster*. The rubric directs the use of this *Gloria*, and includes Marian additions called tropes ‘In Commemorations of Our Lady . . . In the quire in the last service of Our Lady before Advent . . . on the Octave of the Assumption and Nativity of Our Lady. In the Chapel of Our Lady on every Saturday’.<sup>112</sup> The full significance of the adapted *Gloria* can only be gauged by quoting it in full. The Marian tropes are italicised.

Glory be to God on high  
And in earth peace, good will towards men.  
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee,  
We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory,  
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ; *O Spirit, and kind  
Comforter of orphans*, God, Lamb of the Father, *First-born of the  
Virgin-Mother Mary*, Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
Receive our prayer, *to the glory of Mary*.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,  
Have mercy upon us.  
For Thou only art holy, *sanctifying Mary*;

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 284-5.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-5.

Thou only art the Lord, *ruling Mary*;  
Thou only *crowning Mary*.  
O Jesu Christ, with the Holy Ghost,  
Art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.<sup>113</sup>

During this hymn of praise the celebrant stood before the altar, an indication that his attendants took up their own respective positions, attesting to the centrality of the *Gloria* in the context of important masses. The honour rendered to Mary could hardly be more explicit. The concept of *hyperdulia* is stretched to its utmost; the Queen of Heaven is very nearly on a par with the Trinity itself, into which she was absorbed through the Son who took her flesh. Furthermore, as the most solemn part of the Mass approached, sandwiched between the *Sursum Corda* and the *Sanctus* comes the preface appropriate to the occasion. One preface encompassed all Marian commemorations and feasts except the Purification.

Everlasting God, and Thee on the Conception

Annunciation

Assumption

Nativity

Visitation

Veneration<sup>114</sup>

Of the Blessed and glorious Ever Virgin Mary ought we with exulting souls to praise, to bless, and to proclaim.

Who by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost did both conceive Thy Only Begotten and in glory of perpetual Virginitv did pour upon this world the Eternal Light Jesus Christ our Lord, By Whom angels praise Thy Majesty, Dominions adore Thee, Powers tremble, The Heavens and the Heavenly Hosts and the Blessed Seraphim join with one glad voice in extolling Thee. Together with whom we pray Thee suffer our voices to have entrance, humbly confessing Thee, and saying.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> The single appropriate invocation of these six was made.

<sup>115</sup> Pearson, A. H., *op. cit.*, pp. 307-8.

The *Sanctus* was followed by the *Benedictus*, to which a Marian reference was added at the last Lady Mass before Advent and Septuagesima, and on the Octaves of the Visitation, Assumption, and Nativity. On these occasions ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord’, etc, was substituted with ‘Blessed is *the Son of Mary* that cometh, etc. The actual consecration of the elements of bread and wine, which thereafter became wholly the Body and Blood of Christ followed immediately.<sup>116</sup>

The missal contains masses and other rubrics specific to the vigils, feasts and octaves of the Conception, Purification, Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption and Nativity of Mary, which were observed at the high altar, but precluded from inclusion here for reasons of space.<sup>117</sup> However, there are also some rubrics pertaining to Mass in the Lady Chapel itself, which provide primary evidence for the use of such chapels. There are specific instructions that encompass the entire liturgical year and duplications in the Lady Chapel and choir are explicitly mentioned. For example it is stipulated that the second collect ‘at the daily Mass in Our Lady’s Chapel is always of the saint to whom the altar or church is dedicated’,<sup>118</sup> and also that ‘the same Mass is to be said in all feasts of S. Mary through the year in her chapel that is said in the quire, except through octaves . . .<sup>119</sup> In addition, from Purification to Advent (the greater part of the year),

The bell being rung for Mass, let the clergy assemble who shall first have said the Hours of Our Lady,<sup>120</sup> genuflecting at the *Ave Maria*, which they shall say at the beginning of each. At the daily Mass the *alleluia* is said by two of the upper grade in surplices on all doubles, octaves, and octave days with rulers,

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<sup>116</sup> Transubstantiation had been formally defined by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521, *ff.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

<sup>120</sup> The ‘Hours of Our Lady’ and Marian additions to the Offices existed in many similar forms and were popular with clergy and laity as private devotions. They are too extensive for inclusion here, but a good typical example may be found in Wordsworth, C., ed., *Horae Eboracenses: The Prymer or Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary According to the Use of the Illustrious Church of York. . . in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, Surtees Society. vol. 132, Durham, 1920.

Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts with triple invitatories; on other days by the inferior clergy.<sup>121</sup>

The full implications of the duplication of choir services in the Lady Chapel are perhaps most clearly illustrated by reference to the liturgical practice at Exeter Cathedral in the fourteenth century. Bishop Grandisson had been appointed to the see in 1327 and two of his first acts had been to send for a Sarum *Pontificale* and to overhaul the *Ordinale Exon*.<sup>122</sup> The Exeter Use was Sarum based and the strong Marian emphasis may be discerned from the order of services on a typical Sunday when the liturgy was more elaborate than on ferial days, but fell short of that of the greater festivals.

The night choir Offices of Matins and Lauds were followed by a Memorial of the Virgin, followed by Matins & Lauds of the Virgin, recited without music. From dawn, chantry masses started and continued to around mid-morning. At about 7.00 a.m., the duty choir & clergy went to the Lady Chapel for Matins, Lauds and Little Hours of the Virgin, followed by the Lady Mass. These services were sung. Around 8.00 a.m., the whole community assembled in choir for Prime, followed by the chapter meeting and sometimes an additional Mass.

Next came the rite of *asperges*, followed by the Sunday procession, after which, Terce & Sext were sung in choir while the duty clergy and attendants went to vest for the principal Mass, which was celebrated immediately after Sext. Mass was followed by None, then came the *De Profundis* and prayers for the dead. In mid-afternoon, all returned to choir for five services; the Office of the Dead, Vespers, a Memorial of the Virgin, Vespers of the Virgin *sine nota*, and Compline. These were followed by *De Profundis* and prayers for dead clergy. Then the hebdomadary team went to the Lady Chapel for sung Vespers and Compline of the Virgin. Simultaneously, the boys went to the altar of St Paul and sang a votive antiphon and other praises in honour of the Virgin.

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<sup>121</sup> Pearson, A. H., *op. cit.*, p. 526.

<sup>122</sup> The existing Exeter *Consuetudinary* and *Ordinal* were already close to Sarum Use according to Frere, W. H., *The Use of Sarum*, *op. cit.*, p. xxxiii.

Lastly, each cleric said Compline of the Virgin privately to himself.<sup>123</sup>

‘A cleric who attended every quire service – and this would only be one of the vicars, secondaries or annuellers – would probably spend at least five hours of the day in worship, plus another two or more if he were also on duty in the Lady Chapel’.<sup>124</sup>

The chief points of interest from this itinerary are twofold. Firstly, the degree of duplication strongly suggests that devotion to Our Lady had reached the point whereby it had almost become a religion within a religion; it was no longer sufficient to offer Mass and the Divine Office in the choir; the veneration due to the Virgin required that the Holy Sacrifice be offered in Her honour in Her own palace / chapel. The second point of interest is that Offices of Mary performed in the choir were all *sine nota* – without music, but the Lady Mass and Offices in the Lady Chapel were polyphonic – that is harmonised part music, known as ‘pricksong’, which contrasted with normal plainsong in its richness and variety. The statutes of the Exeter Lady Chapel are explicit in their requirement that boys and secondaries had to be taught to play and sing polyphonic music.<sup>125</sup> The implication is that polyphony formed a regular and important constituent of Lady Chapel liturgy, in contrast to services in the choir where the degree of polyphony permitted was qualified by the rank of the day. At the end of the Middle Ages Cardinal Wolsey’s ordinances for houses of regular canons forbade pricksong altogether *except* at Lady Masses sung in Her chapel.<sup>126</sup> The development of this trend appears to owe its origins to one of the Old Testament types of Mary, Miriam the prophetess, who ‘took a timbrel in her hand’ and urged the children of Israel to ‘Sing ye to the Lord,’<sup>127</sup> and identified in the words of the psalmist, ‘The singers go

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<sup>123</sup> Sandon, N., ‘Medieval Services and Their Music’, in Swanton, M, ed., *Exeter Cathedral: A Celebration*, Exeter, 1991, p. 133.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>125</sup> Tudor-Craig, P., ‘Bishop Grandisson’s Provision for Music and Ceremony’, in Swanton, M, ed., *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>126</sup> Rock, D., *The Church of Our Fathers*, Hart, G. W., and Frere, W. H., eds, 4 vols, London, 1903-5, vol. 3, pp. 214-5.

<sup>127</sup> Exodus 15: 20-1.

before, the minstrels follow after: in the midst are the damsels playing with the timbrels'.<sup>128</sup>

Many documents attest to the widespread celebration of a sung Lady Mass, a practice that remained popular until the end of the Middle Ages as for example recorded in the injunctions of the Bishop of Rochester to his cathedral in 1543.<sup>129</sup> The bishop legislates that all the clergy 'shall endeuour theryself as myche as they can to do euerything within the Church, wich is appointed by the ordinal of Sarum to be done'. He orders that the master of choristers must attend Matins, Mass and Evensong on all double feasts and attend to the organs, and that an anthem in 'prycksong' must be sung after Compline on every holy day. These injunctions suggest the principal sung services in the choir, and make interesting comparison with those of the Lady Mass.

Item yt ys ordered that on woorkedays the Choristers shall syng the lady masse in pryckesong with the orgaynes, And on euery holyday the prests, clarks & Maystre of the queristers and choristers to syng the Lady masse in pryckesonge with the orgaines. Excepte principall ffeasts & ffeasts of *Maius duplex*. And excepte when highe Masse is of our Lady: then the Lady masse to be said: And to th'intente that our Ladie masse shal be songe in pricke songe, prime & houres to be omytted.<sup>130</sup>

The bishop's instructions are explicit enough to be accepted as an accurate record of the elaborate nature of the Marian liturgy on almost every day of the year. Only the liturgy of the great feast days was permitted a greater splendour than the Virgin's, and even then the High Mass on Marian feasts was of Our Lady anyway.

Clearly, the manner of celebrating the Lady Mass according to Sarum Use could have a significant impact on the size and layout of the Lady Chapels of major churches, which had to be sufficiently spacious and equipped to suit a liturgy that

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<sup>128</sup> Psalm 68: 25.

<sup>129</sup> Injunctions of Nicholas Heath, Bishop of Rochester, to his cathedral at his visitation, 1543, cit. Frere, W, H., *The Use of Sarum*, *op. cit.*, pp.234-5.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

required the accommodation of choir and organ on an almost daily basis. The *Rites of Durham* provides similar evidence:

Wherefore the chappell dedicated in honor of Saint Mary was named and cauled the Galleley . . . where our Ladies masse was sung dailie, by the master of the Song Schole . . . with certaine decons, and quiristers, the master playing upon a paire of faire orgaines.<sup>131</sup>

The *Rites* also informs us that ‘On the north side of the saide Galleley was an Alter called the Lady of Pitties Alter . . . ordeyned for a Chantry Prieste to saie masse every holy daie,’<sup>132</sup> and at St Albans, the daily Lady Mass (instituted c. 1200), was ordered by Abbot William of Trumpington to become a sung celebration ‘seeing that it was done in all the noble churches in England,’ a clear indication of a common practice within major churches.<sup>133</sup> The cult of Mary had reached its liturgical zenith, in response to which there was a great movement of building activity as major churches were adapted or extended.<sup>134</sup>

The *Sarum Consuetudinary* makes it abundantly clear that Saturday retained the status it had held for centuries as a day especially associated with Mary.<sup>135</sup> This may have been partially in recognition that where churches could not provide the means for a daily Lady Mass, a weekly celebration was held in her honour, usually on Saturday, appropriately sandwiched between the masses of Jesus on Friday and The Trinity on Sunday. In addition to this obvious symbolism, Pearson cites a fivefold justification from the evidence of the Sarum missals for the association of Mary with Saturday, as follows.

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<sup>131</sup> Fowler, J. T., ed., *Rites of Durham; Being a Description or Brief Declaration of all the Ancient Monuments, Rites, & Customs Belonging or Being Within the Monastical Church of Durham Before the Suppression. Written in 1593*, Surtees Society, vol. 107, Durham, 1903, pp. 42-43.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>133</sup> Walsingham T., *op. cit.*, p. 284.

<sup>134</sup> For example, in the nine altars chapel at Fountains Abbey, the two altars flanking the axial Lady altar were dispensed with, because the existing space was inadequate for the Marian liturgy.

<sup>135</sup> Frere, W. H., *The Use of Sarum, op. cit.*, p. xiv.

The reasons assigned at the beginning of this Mass for the origin of the Saturday in commemoration of our Lady, are-1<sup>st</sup>. That at Constantinople the veil before her image was drawn aside every Friday evening at Vespers, and replaced at the same hour the following night; 2<sup>nd</sup>. That when all the disciples forsook our Lord and fled, she only who had borne him without pain, and knew that He was God, remained; 3<sup>rdly</sup>. Because the Sabbath is a day of rest, and she is the door of Heaven; 4<sup>thly</sup>. Because the Feast of the Mother should follow that of the Son [Friday]; 5<sup>thly</sup>. For that on the day our Lord rested from labour the Service should be more joyous.<sup>136</sup>

### **Processions**

The processions of the later Middle Ages represented a continuity with the tradition of earlier times previously alluded to. They were an inherent part of the liturgy and appear to have originated firstly from pre-Christian customs, and secondly from the practical necessity of transporting Christian clergy and their attendants from one liturgical venue to another in a dignified manner. A form of worship in their own right, processions might be celebratory or penitential. The former type ideally followed the course of the sun; the latter went against it, symbolic of acting in accordance with God's laws or against them. In greater churches the main processions were those of every Sunday, every feast day, and octave days. Minor processions took place after Vespers on the eve of feast days of saints, especially those honoured with altars in the church, and after all memorials. The degree of ceremonial was dependent on the rank of the occasion.

At Salisbury the Sunday and festal processions ended in the choir before the high altar, which was dedicated to Mary as patron, and by tradition the concluding antiphon of these processions was in her honour and coincided with the incensings of her high altar and image (detailed earlier). Consistently, the Vespers and memorial processions were from the choir to the appropriate chapel of the saint being honoured, where the altar and image of the saint were incensed. The documents are silent on the destination of the less important processions in honour

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<sup>136</sup> Pearson, A. H., *op. cit.*, appendix E, p. 614.

of Mary, but significantly they did not terminate with a Marian antiphon, but an antiphon of All Saints. This seemingly inappropriate conclusion would make perfect sense if the procession terminated at the altar of All Saints, which at Salisbury was located in the eastern Trinity (Salve) Chapel. This is the only conclusion that reconciles the ending of a Marian procession with an All Saints antiphon, which would clearly be more appropriate at the incensings of the All Saints altar than would a Marian one and provides important additional evidence of the use of this chapel as the Lady Chapel and the liturgical uses to which it was put.

However, the Sarum liturgy was not always so consistently and logically applied in places other than Salisbury Cathedral. The Use was of fundamental importance to the liturgical history of the Western Church in the late Middle Ages for all manner of legitimate reasons, but in some instances it promoted the cult of the Virgin almost by default (as previously noted with reference to Assumption and dedication feasts). This occurred because Salisbury Cathedral was dedicated to Mary, to whom as patron a greater prominence was accorded in the liturgy than would have been the case if the church had been dedicated otherwise, and the wide dissemination of the Rite to other areas did not necessarily result in the adaptation of the liturgy to conform with local cults and dedications. Surviving *processionales* provide a good example of this phenomenon by making it clear that the concluding antiphon of many processions was not substituted with a more appropriate one in churches with patrons other than Mary.<sup>137</sup>

### **The Image of the Virgin in the Liturgy**

The use of images of the Virgin in the Middle Ages is a vast subject in its own right, and is restricted here to the use of such images in the official liturgy.<sup>138</sup> The very word '*imago*' in medieval documents is an ambiguous one, in that it is not always clear whether the point of reference is a three-dimensional sculpture, a

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<sup>137</sup> Bailey, T., *op. cit.*, p. xii.

<sup>138</sup> Discussion of the cult image of Our Lady of Walsingham follows in chapter II.

relief, or a painting. However, the survival of image brackets and tabernacles in many churches - and documentary evidence of materials make it clear that representations of Mary carved in the round were the preferred medium for liturgical use. With reference to a wooden sculpture of Mary at Chartres, Henderson has felt able to assert that 'in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Notre-Dame de Chartres was not primarily a building or an institution but a personality'.<sup>139</sup> If this was the case, the significance of these images in the Middle Ages was profound, and at Chartres was even more remarkable in the church that enshrined the *sancta camisia*, the fabulous relic of the tunic worn by Mary at the Virgin Birth, translated to Chartres from Aix-la-Chapelle c. 876 by Charles the Bald and credited with delivering the city from siege in 911.<sup>140</sup>

Incensations of, and the burning of lights before images of Mary have been previously noted. Important representations might be carried in procession, but otherwise stand on or occupy prominent positions close to altars. The mode of incensing the image in commemorations of Mary makes explicit reference to '*imaginem beate marie hoc est in medio altaris*'.<sup>141</sup> Clearly then, their primary function was not decorative (though they might be that too), but liturgical. An example of the latter may be found in a reference to Christmas Matins found in Bishop Grandisson's fourteenth-century *Ordinale*.

On this day and no other in the year, towards the end of the first lesson, let a boy in an alb with an amice round his neck and his head bare, having a good and resonant voice, emerging from behind the high altar with a lighted torch in his left hand, come before the step nearest the altar; and after the first lesson has been read let him begin the responsory thus, facing the choir to sing the first eight words: *Today for us heaven's king a virgin birth accepted*. On the words *heaven's king* let him raise his right hand high towards heaven, and at the words *a virgin birth* let him, turning to the altar, stretch out a hand towards

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<sup>139</sup> Henderson, G., *Chartres*, 1968, p. 76.

<sup>140</sup> Prache, A., *Chartres Cathedral: Image of the Heavenly Jerusalem*, Paris, 1993, p. 16.

<sup>141</sup> Frere, W. H., *The Use of Sarum*, *op. cit.*, p.183.

the image of the blessed Mary, and at the word *accepted* let him kneel.<sup>142</sup> Then let the choir continue the responsory with *So that he might recall lost man to the heavenly kingdom*. Meanwhile, while the responsory is being sung, let three other boys from the south and three others from the north, all dressed alike, come at once to the quire-step. And let the first boy go down to them, and there let them all, facing the choir, sing together the verse *Glory to God in the highest*. After that, let them go out slowly, making their way through the middle of the quire, by the west quire door'.<sup>143</sup>

These directions indicate a liturgical use of Mary's image on a feast that was not specifically her own, but with which she was closely associated. Another of these attested occasions was the Epiphany celebration of mass, during which appropriately costumed (as opposed to vested) clergy offered the traditional gifts of the Magi to the image of the Virgin and Child.<sup>144</sup> There was considerable variation in the observance and manner of this type of liturgical drama, but the practice attests to belief in images as physical representatives of their prototypes. When the image of Mary was used liturgically, she herself was participating in person. The same applies to processions.<sup>145</sup>

The tradition of carrying images of the Virgin in procession probably had its origins in the custom of perambulating with relics. Statues for liturgical use often themselves contained appropriate primary or secondary relics and the inclusion of the image in the procession implied the full, physical participation of the saint in the liturgy. One example of this ritual is documented at St Mary's Abbey, York, where the image of the Virgin was solemnly carried on feast days,<sup>146</sup> and another at York Minster, where the celebrant carried a silver-gilt figure of Mary to the altar,

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<sup>142</sup> Further evidence that St Mary was connected with feasts that were not specifically her own, such as Christmas, Epiphany and the liturgy of the *Triduum Sacrum*.

<sup>143</sup> Sandon, N., *op. cit.*, p. 133 ff.

<sup>144</sup> Forsyth, I. H., *The Throne of Wisdom*, Princeton, 1972, pp. 49-60.

<sup>145</sup> This belief and practice has a parallel with the Eastern Church in its doctrine regarding two-dimensional icons.

<sup>146</sup> Bailey, T., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

whereon he placed it.<sup>147</sup> In addition to this practice was another that explicitly directed that worship should be offered before the image. In 1365 John Barnet, Bishop of Bath and Wells gave land to St Paul's, London, on condition 'that after mattens [sic] celebrated in the quire every day, and those present thereat gone out, an anthem of Our Lady . . . should be sung before the image',<sup>148</sup> and also with reference to St Paul's, 'Sir John Pulteney, knight, left the yearly sum of xs. for the choristers . . ., on condition that they should every day, after compline ended in the choir, go into the chapel of his building there, and sing an anthem of the Blessed Virgin, before her image there, solemnly with note'.<sup>149</sup>

The foregoing evidence indicates that the image was fundamentally important, because it guaranteed Our Lady's personal presence and favour. Votive gifts to the Virgin through her image were commonplace in the Middle Ages and included adornments; for example an eleventh-century Countess of Malmesbury hung a necklace on a statue at Coventry,<sup>150</sup> and other accoutrements are frequent items in surviving inventories such as a 1488 example that refers to jewels, a crown, and a coat belonging to 'oure lady of the bryge' in Derby.<sup>151</sup>

## Conclusions

In the Middle Ages the position the Virgin held in the heavenly hierarchy and Her principal active role as primary intercessor account for the gradual definition and celebration of her position and influence, which together were the fulcrum of the development of a Marian liturgy; the adequate performance of which was the single most influential motive and reason for the provision and development of Lady Chapels.

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<sup>147</sup> Rock, D., *Church of our Fathers*, Hart, G. W., & Frere, W. H., eds, vol. 3, 230.

<sup>148</sup> Dugdale, W., *The History of St. Paul's Cathedral in London*, London, 1658, p. 14.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Lehmann-Brockhaus, O., *Schriftquellen in England*, vol. 1, no. 1131, Munich 1955.

<sup>151</sup> Cox, J. C., & St John Hope, W. L., *The Chronicles of the Collegiate Church or Free Chapel of All Saints, Derby*, London, 1881, p. 85.

The liturgy of the long Anglo-Saxon period is highly indicative of the process of development of the Mary cult, evidenced by such examples as the evolution of Her feasts and the institution of Saturday as a day particularly associated with Her veneration. Liturgical considerations may also be regarded as a cause and effect of the provision of multiple churches on one site, of which those dedicated to Mary might be regarded as first-phase or proto-Lady Chapels. The great sea change in liturgical practice that permitted multiple altar provision in a single church might be regarded as a second phase in this development, the surviving evidence of which appears to indicate (and incidentally validate the unsubstantiated claims of nineteenth-century antiquarians), that the deep veneration in which Mary was held by the Anglo-Saxons resulted in the provision of altars dedicated in her honour in prime locations within significant numbers of pre-Conquest churches.

The documentary evidence indicates that liturgical considerations influenced the provision of Lady Chapels in major post-Conquest buildings, particularly with regard to access for the laity and the requirements of processional ritual, but also suggests that the period was one in which the brakes were gently but temporarily applied to Anglo-Saxon enthusiasm pending reappraisal of the theological minutiae of the Conception.

The later Middle Ages saw further layers added to the existing framework of Marian devotion in the form of daily masses in Her honour and increasing duplication of choir Offices in the Virgin's own chapel, all of which had to be offered with the degree of solemnity and splendour that *hyperdulia* required; the result of centuries of liturgical evolution. The liturgy was therefore at the heart of the development of the Lady Chapels in the most basic premise of architectural design in which form is dictated by function, and together the buildings and the liturgy that was enacted within them were the chief artistic expression of medieval devotion to the Virgin. However, they represented a great deal more than piety expressed through art and ritual; they were the earthly palaces of the Queen of Heaven, within which she was physically and potently present in the *praesentia* and *potencia* of her image and / or relics.

The cult of Mary was the progenitor of the Marian liturgy, but development of the latter became a prime force on which the former fed, particularly as a result of the wide dissemination and influence of the Sarum Use. A circle of cause and effect was thereby enjoined that spun ever faster and that showed no signs of abating until the end of the Middle Ages. In England, the Reformation effectively ended the cult of Mary and silenced much of her liturgy, but the surviving documents and fabric of many Lady Chapels eloquently attest to both.

## **Chapter II**

### **Lady Chapels in Major Churches**

#### **Introduction**

During the later Middle Ages, the practice of integrating grand Lady Chapels into the fabrics of major churches became almost mandatory in England, and the foregoing discussions indicate that this phenomenon represented the zenith of an evolutionary process that was already centuries old and was not solely an innovatory outbreak of architectural, theological or liturgical fashion. The evidence clearly indicates that whatever else they might have been, Lady Chapels became a major contributor to the compartmentalisation of church interiors that were a ubiquitous feature of the later Middle Ages, in a manner reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon additive church.

No major church (of whatever kind) could function as such without adequate provision for Our Lady in all the various facets of devotion that fed, nourished and sustained the veneration due to the Mother of God. The sheer scale of the subject, the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence and the great diversity of size, shape and location of the major Lady Chapels precludes a comprehensive survey. This chapter challenges and overcomes these problems with analysis of a number of the most celebrated types and examples, focussing on case studies; looking at different geographical regions and assessing the common and separate features within the diversity, from which range some particular and general points are drawn.

#### **Eastern Axial Lady Chapels**

Lady Chapels located on the eastern axis of the church form by far the largest group in major churches, indicative of a preference for this location unless particular local circumstances dictated otherwise. The reasons for this preference are not difficult to hypothesize. A central axial location was appropriate for what

was usually the largest and most important chapel in the church, physically aligned with other principal altars and often a saint's shrine too. In addition, the symbolism of light reaching the Virgin's chapel before other parts of the church may not in itself have been a reason for locating her chapel eastward, but might be regarded as an additional benefit of such a location, symbolic of her existence preceding the incarnation of the *logos*, the eternal Word in the person of her divine son, who was most fully represented within the main body of the church.

Most eastern axial chapels were linked to the choir of the church by a retrochoir / ambulatory, which facilitated general access, liturgical processions and the location of a saint's shrine (where such a feature either existed or was anticipated). Two important exceptions emphasize the importance of the latter feature. At Gloucester, an eastern Lady Chapel built in the first quarter of the thirteenth century was rebuilt in the mid-fifteenth century, and at Norwich a twelfth-century Lady Chapel was replaced *c.* 1240, but in both places the old Romanesque ambulatory was retained, possibly because in neither place was an eastern axial saint's shrine envisaged.

Given the standard medieval practice of almost always building in the contemporary style of the time, it is not surprising that each and every Lady Chapel was architecturally unique and eastern axial examples are no exception. While some had a lower elevation than the main body of the church,<sup>152</sup> most were built with projecting eastern bays and most had square east ends.<sup>153</sup> The principal reason for the lower elevation was probably a practical one. Those chapels with projecting eastern bays, that is to say those instances where the chapel was not flanked by side aisles / chapels clearly had no requirement for lighting by means of

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<sup>152</sup> Major examples include the cathedrals of Chester, Chichester, Exeter, Hereford, Salisbury, St Albans and Wells.

<sup>153</sup> There are some notable exceptions, e.g., Lichfield (*c.* 1320), Wells (*c.* 1310) and Westminster Abbey (*c.* 1220 and 1502), where Lady Chapels with polygonal east ends were favoured, and also occasionally in lesser churches such as St John's, Chester and Patrington, Yorks (south transept). The English preference for square eastern terminations during the later Middle Ages has been much remarked upon by commentators, perhaps most notably by Hearn, M. F., *op. cit.*, pp. 187-209.

a clerestorey. Once again notable exceptions appear to endorse the hypothesis. At for example, Lincoln,<sup>154</sup> Old St Paul's, London, and York, the Lady Chapels were conceived as eastern continuations of the choir, that is to say, with aisles, arcades, galleries / triforia, clerestories and vaults that rose the full height of the choir. Other eastern chapels combine the aforementioned features by having vaults the same height as the choir and at least one projecting bay. Examples include the cathedral churches of Bristol, Hereford, Lichfield, Southwell and Worcester. Clearly there were no 'rules', but each Lady Chapel was built in response to prevailing local preferences and conditions.

Examples of late medieval eastern projecting Lady Chapels in major churches include the following, and the dates indicate the approximate commencement of each building campaign.

Bristol Cathedral, 1280

Canterbury, St Augustine's Abbey, C16

Chester Cathedral, 1265

Chichester Cathedral, 1288

Dore, 1270

Exeter Cathedral, 1275

Evesham Abbey, 1275

Gloucester Cathedral, 1224, replaced 1457

Great Malvern Priory, C14

Hereford Cathedral, 1220

Lichfield Cathedral, 1320

Lincoln Cathedral, 1256

London, Old St Paul's, 1251

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<sup>154</sup> At Lincoln the eastern axial altar was dedicated to St John the Baptist, but the Marian liturgy was celebrated here, a parallel practice to that at Salisbury where the eastern chapel altar was not dedicated specifically to Our Lady, but which was nevertheless utilized as a Lady Chapel. However, there is also some evidence that a Lincoln Lady Chapel existed east of the north-east transept. See Draper, P., *The Formation of English Gothic: Architecture and Identity*, London, 2006, p. 142 & p. 212. Also, Wordsworth, C., *Notes on Mediaeval Services in England, with an Index of Lincoln ceremonies*, London, 1898, pp. 218-221.

London, St Bartholomew's Priory, 1335  
Malmesbury Abbey, C13  
Milton, C14  
Norton, 1280  
Norwich Cathedral, 1240  
Osney, C13?  
Pershore, C13  
Reading, C14  
Romsey Abbey, 1275  
Salisbury Cathedral, 1220  
Sherborne Abbey, C13  
Shrewsbury, C13 / 14  
Southwark Cathedral, C14  
Southwell Cathedral, 1220  
St Albans Cathedral, 1308  
Tewkesbury Abbey, 1390  
Thornton Abbey, 1250  
Wells Cathedral, 1310  
Westminster Abbey, 1220, replaced 1502  
Winchester Cathedral, 1202, remodelled 1490  
Worcester Cathedral, 1224  
York Minster, 1360

### **Other Locations in Major Churches**

The surviving archaeological, documentary and extant evidence testifies to a strong preference for the eastern axial location for the Lady Chapels of major churches, but there are a significant number of important examples in a variety of other layouts too. For example, at Durham and Glastonbury the Lady Chapels occupy western locations and Glastonbury is therefore the subject of one of the following case studies. At Rochester and Ripon the Lady Chapels occur in the south transept and over the chapter house respectively, but the second largest group are those located on the north side, as for example at Canterbury, Christ Church, where the

eastern corona effectively formed a giant reliquary for the scalp of St Thomas Becket, which precluded the eastern extremity of the cathedral as the site of a Lady Chapel.<sup>155</sup> The provision of liturgical areas for Marian devotion within the metropolitan church of the southern province is a particularly complex one and is also the subject of a following case study.

North side locations were popular in churches of every status, but the most famous of this type occur in East Anglia, most notably at Bury St Edmunds, Ely, Peterborough and Walsingham, but also at the less well-known Leiston. Walsingham was of such fame that it certainly fed the cult of Our Lady and may well have influenced the location of Lady Chapels in other places. It too is therefore the subject of a following case study, as is Peterborough, on the grounds that this demolished example is little researched and has never been excavated, in contradistinction to Ely, which is extant and has already been thoroughly studied. In some cases the Lady Chapels in this location were virtually detached from the main bodies of their respective churches, including Ely, Peterborough, Leiston, Lilleshall and Ramsey.

Important examples of Lady Chapels in north side locations within major churches include the following and the dates indicate the approximate commencement of each building campaign.

Bristol Cathedral (the so-called Elder Lady Chapel), 1220

Bury St Edmunds Abbey, 1270

Canterbury Cathedral, C11 and 1448

Castle Acre Priory, 1450

Cockersand, conjectural and date unknown

Ely Cathedral, 1321

Haughmond Abbey, C15

Llanthony Priory, C13

Leiston Abbey, C13 (fragmentary remains)

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<sup>155</sup> The east end is discussed in Binski, P., *Becket's Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England 1170-1300*, New Haven & London, 2004, pp. 3- 27.

Lilleshall Abbey, C13 (fragmentary remains)

Lincoln? C13

Oxford Cathedral, 1220

Peterborough Abbey, 1272

Ramsey Abbey, C13

Thetford Priory, C13

Tynemouth Priory, C14

Wymondham Priory, 1260

Examples occurring on the south side of major churches include the following.

Ely Cathedral, prior to completion of the north side Lady Chapel

Lacock Abbey, 1315

Lesnes, 1370

Ripon Cathedral, C14

Rochester Cathedral, C14

Shaftesbury, C14

Waltham Priory, 1316

Worksop Priory, C13

It must be emphasised that the foregoing lists are not comprehensive. The losses incurred (particularly to monastic foundations, chiefly at the Dissolution and Commonwealth interregnum, and subsequently as the authorities often preferred to demolish redundant parts of churches as they became dilapidated rather than expend funds on their repair) preclude any such possibility, but nevertheless, a sufficient number of general plans have been recovered to make it clear that there were once many more important large-scale chapels attached to major churches. Evidence of the dedications of individual chapels has often been lost, as for example at Muchelney Abbey, which had a very large eastern axial chapel (date unknown, but square east end) and Chertsey, which had a very large south-eastern chapel (date unknown, but square east end). The size and locations of such chapels and the evidence of similar chapels elsewhere with known dedications suggest the probability that a significant proportion of these 'lost chapels' were Lady Chapels.

The subject of the Lady Chapels of major churches is too vast to permit an in-depth discussion of all except a few, which follow hereafter. These studies include Canterbury Christ Church, Glastonbury Abbey, Peterborough Abbey / Cathedral, St Albans Abbey / Cathedral, Walsingham Priory / shrine, and Winchester Cathedral. The choice is not an arbitrary one, but has been made because these Lady Chapels are particularly important, and it has been possible to fill significant gaps in existing knowledge and interpretation. This does not however imply that those chapels that have been omitted are necessarily less significant or that they would not benefit from further study.

## **Case Study: Glastonbury Abbey**

### **Introduction**

On 15<sup>th</sup> November 1539, Richard Whiting, the elderly and frail Abbot of Glastonbury, was taken across the moors from Wells to Glastonbury together with John Thorne, the abbey treasurer and a young monk called Roger Wilfrid. At the abbey gates the three men were attached to hurdles and dragged to the summit of Glastonbury Tor, where they suffered death by hanging, drawing and quartering, a brutal punishment meted out ostensibly for theft, but really in vitriolic retribution for refusing to compromise their faith and in Whiting's case to surrender his abbey at the Dissolution.<sup>156</sup> This shameful episode marked the end of medieval monasticism in England and signalled the despoliation and destruction of the largest and the richest church in the country. David Knowles has written of the episode thus.

The old man's eyes, as he stood beneath the gallows, would have travelled for the last time along the slopes of the clouded hills to Brent Knoll and Steep Holm; . . . to the north once hallowed, so the story ran, by the footsteps of the beauteous Lamb of God. No other landscape in all England carried so great a weight of legend. To the island valley at his feet the dying Arthur had been ferried. Through sedges from the Parrett had come Joseph of Arimathea bearing the Grail. On the pleasant pastures of Mendip had shone the countenance of the child Jesus. Below him lay the now majestic pile of his abbey, desolate, solitary, and about to crumble into ruins.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Carley, J. P., *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House at the Head of the Moors Adventurous*, Woodbridge, 1988, pp. 81-3.

<sup>157</sup> Knowles, D., *Bare Ruined Choirs: The Dissolution of the English Monasteries*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 263-264.

Knowles's lyrical and evocative account at once serves to highlight the basic problem encountered by any student of the history of Glastonbury. No other place in England is shrouded in such a complex web of fact, myth, legend and subjective romance that cumulatively make it extremely difficult to identify and disentangle the facts from the fiction.<sup>158</sup> This problem is compounded by the complexity of the documentary sources, which - as Philip Rahtz has pointed out - 'are too complex to be summarized briefly',<sup>159</sup> and also by the propensity of commentators to interpret all the various kinds of evidence (spurious and otherwise), in order to authenticate the view of history the writer wished to promote.<sup>160</sup> In addition, interest in Glastonbury has hardly abated in the centuries since Dissolution, and though much may remain to be discovered archaeologically, it seems safe to hypothesize that much has been lost due to unscientific digs of the treasure-hunting variety and a general and prolonged pillaging and disturbance of the site. In common with all dissolved houses, most of the abbey's treasures were confiscated, and others were hidden within the various monastic structures. In 1539, 488 hidden objects were recovered while divesting the abbey of its lead, glass and dressed stone. Edward VI granted the site to the Duke of Somerset, who permitted Protestant Dutch weavers to build two dye houses and other buildings. Between 1792 and 1794 most of the remaining stone was used in the construction of a new road to Wells, the workmen augmenting their income by selling carved stones to visitors. The only building to have survived completely intact is the Abbot's kitchen (ironically because it was in use as a Quaker meeting house), but happily, and almost miraculously, much of the Lady Chapel is still standing too. The scale and quality of this chapel alone bears sufficient testimony to the status of the abbey and the cult of Our Lady, which was clearly a hugely important factor in the Glastonbury *corpus* of 'attractions' that account for its unprecedented success.

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<sup>158</sup> See Carley, J. P., *et al* ed., *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, Woodbridge, 2001.

<sup>159</sup> Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>160</sup> Philip Rahtz has pointed out that much of what has been written is of little value, *ibid.*, p. 10.

That Glastonbury Abbey represented one of the greatest successes of medieval monasticism is incontestable whatever criteria may be applied. There were of course some low points, but these periods are for the most part only low in relative terms; that is to say when they are measured against the pinnacle of status and wealth the abbey achieved. What follows represents an attempt to extricate, interpret and consolidate the various sources of evidence for the Marian cult at the abbey (including the documentary, archaeological and art historical), in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding than has hitherto been the case.

### **The Documentary Sources**

The problematic nature of the documentary sources briefly referred to in the foregoing introduction is a point that requires further clarification. Robert Willis and Philip Rahtz, writing more than a century apart, have both identified the difficulties experienced by paleographers in interpreting what survives in terms of historical authenticity.<sup>161</sup> In addition, much material was destroyed in a fire at the abbey in 1184, and more was lost or dispersed at the time of Dissolution.<sup>162</sup>

Of the more reliable surviving sources, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* establishes the eighth century as the *terminus ante quem* of the abbey's foundation. Also from the late Anglo-Saxon period is the tenth-century *Life of St Dunstan*, unreliable as history in the modern sense, the text nevertheless serves to clarify certain points. The accounts of visitors, and the reports of Thomas Cromwell's commissioners are also useful, but the source most frequently referred to by scholars is William of

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<sup>161</sup> Willis, R., *The Architectural History of Glastonbury Abbey*, Cambridge & London, 1866, pp. 1-12, and Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>162</sup> Part of a Glastonbury manuscript came to light in 1722 when an Oxford academic received some tobacco wrapped up in it. Cited by Rahtz, *ibid.*, p. 31.

Malmesbury's early twelfth-century *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*.<sup>163</sup> William (c. 1090 – c. 1143) was an English Benedictine and historian whose approach to scholarship appears to have been remarkably methodical and careful by medieval standards, always accepting the caveat that unfortunately his text does not survive in original form, but has been reinterpreted during succeeding centuries, including in the texts of later chroniclers of Glastonbury, Adam of Domerham and John of Glastonbury.<sup>164</sup> His other main works include a history of English kings, *Gesta Regnum Anglorum*, and an English ecclesiastical history, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*.<sup>165</sup>

William's work is undoubtedly the most important medieval source, firstly because much of what he has to say is remarkably reliable, and secondly, because those parts of the work that are contestable in terms of historical accuracy nevertheless do much to explain how and why the abbey developed in the way that it did. This is especially true of the Glastonbury foundation myth and the development of Lady Chapels on the site. The work was originally written c. 1120 when William was invited to write the abbey's history. This commission must have placed him in a slightly ambiguous position. His writings attest a man of integrity, whose instinct was to disseminate a true history, but such an approach would have necessitated omission of the myth and legend on which the fame and status of the abbey rested. At best he would have offended his patrons and at worst provoked hostile antipathy and probable dismissal. However, William's solution was masterly and subtle. He opens his account of the more dubious origins of the site with the words 'It is related in annals of good credit'.<sup>166</sup> He thereby includes the legends whilst simultaneously disassociating himself from them. Later, when he feels more confident that his narrative is factual he says, 'but lest I should seem to cheat the

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<sup>163</sup> Scott, J., *The Early History of Glastonbury: A Translation and Commentary on William of Malmesbury's De Antiquitate*, Woodbridge, 1981.

<sup>164</sup> Carley, J. P., ed., *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, trans. by Townsend, D., Bury St Edmunds, 1985.

<sup>165</sup> ODNB, s. n.

<sup>166</sup> Hearne, T., ed, *William of Malmesbury, De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiae*, Oxford, 1729, cited by Rodwell, W., & Bentley, J., *Our Christian Heritage*, London, 1984, p. 10.

expectations of my readers by fanciful opinions, I will leave all doubtful matters and proceed to the narration of solid facts'.<sup>167</sup> As previously stated, William's original text has not come down to us, but later versions contain ever more fanciful additions and contradictions, clearly indicative of the growth of the cult of Glastonbury throughout the later Middle Ages. A précis of the salient points of the fully developed foundation myth now follows.

In A. D. 63, St Philip sent twelve disciples to Britain, including Joseph of Arimathea.<sup>168</sup> Their mission was rejected, but they were permitted to live on the island of Yniswitrin (apple land), from which Avalon derives, and each of the twelve was apportioned a piece of land sufficient for their sustenance.<sup>169</sup> The Archangel Gabriel ordered them to construct a chapel dedicated to the Virgin in which to offer corporate worship. This building was constructed of wattle and daub. Eventually, the twelve died out and the site deteriorated.

In the year 166, Pope Eleutherius sent two missionaries who reclaimed the site and restored the church. They stayed for nine years, electing twelve of their converts to live separately on the original twelve portions of land, worshipping together in the old chapel and eventually erecting a second church east of the original one. St Patrick arrived in 433, became abbot of the community and stayed till his death in 472, being buried on the south side of the altar in the *vetusta ecclesia* – the old church. In the sixth century St David came to the site. He planned to re-dedicate the old church, but was admonished in a dream that the church had originally been dedicated by Christ himself, so he built a third church (between the other two) and dedicated that to the Virgin also. By the seventh century the old church was such a

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> A thirteenth-century Italian text, the *Transitus Mariae* names Joseph as guardian of Our Lady until her Assumption, thus inextricably linking the two saints and adding to the folklore that made Glastonbury an important Marian site. Lagorio, V. M., 'The Evolving Legend of St Joseph of Glastonbury', in Carley, J. P., *et al*, *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>169</sup> The grant of land to a group of rejected missionaries might appear implausibly generous, but in *De Gestis Pontificum*, cited by Willis, *op. cit.*, p. 6, William of Malmesbury notes the area as a morass, only accessible on foot or horseback, with no advantage either in respect of site or pleasantness.

venerated edifice that St Paulinus sought to preserve the original fabric by encasing it in lead covered boards 'that the church should lose none of its sanctity, but acquire great increase of embellishment. For it is certain that the adornment of churches renders them more impressively influential in alluring uncultivated minds to prayer, and in bending the stiff-necked to submission'.<sup>170</sup> A fourth church was added, east of the others by Ine, King of Wessex (688-626), dedicated to Christ and Saints Peter and Paul. Whichever parts of the foundation myth may or may not be true, it is interesting to note that a western location for a chapel dedicated to Our Lady appears to date from very early in the ecclesiastical history of the site.

William of Malmesbury records that the site was abandoned during the Danish invasions, but restored under kings Edmund I (r. 939-46) and Edgar (r. 959-75). King Edmund appointed St Dunstan abbot, thus introducing Benedictine rule into England. By the time of the Conquest only two churches are listed on the site, the *vetusta ecclesia* and the church of Ine. The Normans rebuilt extensively, but the original chapel appears to have survived intact. In 1126 Abbot Henry of Blois assigned to the sacrist's fund a sum for the maintenance of a wax candle to burn before the image of the Virgin in the *vetusta ecclesia*.<sup>171</sup> The same abbot embellished with silver, gold and precious stones a *superaltare* (portable altar), believed to have been given by St David, hidden during the Danish invasions and fortuitously rediscovered in St Mary's.

Whatever the true sequence of events might be, it seems certain that a highly venerated chapel of wooden construction and dedicated to the Virgin existed for many centuries at Glastonbury, but was eventually consumed by fire on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1184; a conflagration that destroyed the great church as well as the *vetusta* itself.

Clearly the origins of the first chapel of Our Lady are unknown, beyond the fact that it preceded King Ine's church of the early eighth century. Its reputed construction of wattle and daub is consistent with archaeological evidence from other sites from prehistoric times to the Middle Ages and beyond. A *Life of St*

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<sup>170</sup> Cited by Willis, R., *The Architectural history of Glastonbury Abbey, op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

*Dunstan* and William of Malmesbury refer to it as consisting of upright wooden planks,<sup>172</sup> which implies substantial rebuilding or encasement of the original structure. Protection with lead has already been referred to.

The actual appearance of the *vetusta* can only be guessed at. It might have been extremely basic, or as sophisticated as a Scandinavian stave church. The surviving timber nave of the Anglo-Saxon / Norman Overlap period at Greensted-Juxta-Ongar also springs to mind, not least as evidence that it is possible for such structures to survive for many centuries, and also because it parallels Malmesbury's description of the *vetusta* as a building of vertical planks or posts. A conjectural seventeenth-century engraving by Henry Spelman depicts the church in wattle, but his imagination does not extend beyond a basic single-storey rectangular structure with gable ends and thatched roof.

Additional evidence for the appearance of the old church is provided by a Glastonbury Abbey seal of the late twelfth century that appears to depict the abbey as it appeared before the 1184 fire. Such seals were never meant accurately to record architectural details, but were really iconographic representations. However, the seal bears a western elevation of the abbey that may include the *vetusta*. It has a central doorway under an oculus window, flanked by two pyramid-capped turrets. It is the latter detail that is most interesting, since if it is the *vetusta* depicted on the seal, there is a clear implication that the similar features on the later (extant) Lady Chapel were included in a conscious attempt to replicate certain features of the original chapel in order to perpetuate its memory and associate the later building with its predecessor.<sup>173</sup>

Details of the inside of the church are likewise vague. Nevertheless, a 'sapphire' *superaltare* embellished with other rich metals and stones has already been referred to, as has an image of the Virgin with a light burning before it. In addition William of Malmesbury records that there was 'a pavement of polished stone, in

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<sup>172</sup> Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>173</sup> These turrets have a parallel with Walsingham. See below.

which were stones interlaid with triangles and squares and set with lead',<sup>174</sup> a description of sophistication and richness, to which mental reconstruction may be added other ornaments and the memorials / tombs of various saints and notables. Reference has already been made to the burial of St Patrick on the south side of the altar. His body was entombed in a stone pyramid sheathed with gold and silver. During the reign of Ine, the relics of St Indractus and his companion martyrs were also interred; the latter beneath the pavement, Indractus himself in a stone pyramid on the north side of the altar. St Gildas was buried under the pavement before the altar and the lesser relics of many saints were displayed above and around the altar.<sup>175</sup> These references accord convincingly with the evidence of the seal that during its latter years at least, the *vetusta ecclesia* of the Virgin Mary at Glastonbury was a building of some sophistication, which together with its associations preserved it from wholesale rebuilding by the Normans until destruction by fire forced the issue.

### **Later Lady Chapels and the Cult of the Virgin at Glastonbury**

The fire that largely destroyed the abbey on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1184 was the catalyst for a complete rebuilding of the church, starting with the Lady Chapel at the west end; a policy undertaken in complete reversal of the standard practice of building from east to west. It might be argued that the decision to start thus may be interpreted simply as a practical solution to the necessity of getting a church built and consecrated for use in as short a time as possible, and doubtless this was a consideration. However, it might also be reasonably conjectured that such a radical departure from tradition represents a manifestation of the importance of the cult of the Virgin at Glastonbury and the sanctity and veneration accorded the old Lady Chapel, the *vetusta ecclesia*. The latter hypothesis gains credibility if the testimony of a brass plate, probably dating from the early fifteenth century (now lost), is accurate.<sup>176</sup> The plate recorded that the new Lady Chapel replicated the ground

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>175</sup> Malmesbury, cited by Willis, R., *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>176</sup> Carley, J. P., *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House*, *op. cit.*, p. 23, & Goodall, J. A., 'The

dimensions of its predecessor, suggesting that the space itself was particularly sacred, requiring only the protection and aggrandizement that walls and roof afforded and that the location of the plate itself marked the eastern wall of the chapel.<sup>177</sup> Otherwise there appears to be no particular reason why the more conventional order of building a great church was not adhered to. The obvious desirability of having a useable church built, consecrated and in use as quickly as possible might have been accomplished with less difficulty on the virgin ground east of the destroyed church than it was on an old site with all the practical difficulties of demolition and removal of ruins *et al.* An eastern axial chapel was not in fact begun until the abbacy of Richard Bere (installed in 1494). It was dedicated to St Edgar and its completion made the abbey the longest church in England. Unfortunately, the same abbot instigated excavations for building St Joseph's Chapel (the crypt under the Lady Chapel), which were almost certainly responsible for destroying the archaeological remains of the old church.

In addition to the necessity of clearing the site for the rebuilding, the monks disinterred the relics of Ss Patrick, Indractus and Gildas, placing them in portable feretories. The intention to rebuild was legalised in a charter of Henry II stating that 'because that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap, I, in the act of laying the foundation of the church of Glastonbury, which being in my hands, has been reduced to ashes by a fire, do decree, by the persuasion of Heraclius, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and many others, that, God willing, it shall be magnificently completed by myself or by my heirs'.<sup>178</sup> The new work was entrusted to the direction of Radulphus, son of King Stephen,

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Glastonbury Abbey Memorial Plate Reconsidered', *Journal of the Society of Antiquaries*, 66, 1986, London, pp. 364-7.

<sup>177</sup> Recorded by Spelman in *Concilia*, vol. 1, p. 20, details of the plate are noticed by Willis, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21, Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37 and Goodall, J. A., *op. cit.*, & reprinted in Carley, J. P., ed., *et al*, *Arthurian Legend*, *op.cit.*, pp. 185-192.

<sup>178</sup> 'Quoniam quae seminaverit homo, haec et metet; Ecclesiae Glasconiensis fundamentum jaciens, quae dum in manu mea fuerat incendio consumpta in cinerem resedit: eam Domino volente, peruadentibus Eraclio Patriarchae Hierosolymitano, Baldwinno Arch. Cant [et al], cum multis aliis, per me aut per heredes meos consummandam magnificentiis reparare decrevi'. Hearne, T., *op. cit.*, p. 126, & Willis, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

according to the evidence of Adam de Domerham and John of Glastonbury, William of Malmesbury's later interpolators. 'He [Radulphus] completed the church of St Mary in the place where from the beginning the *vetusta ecclesia* had stood, building it of squared stones of the most beautiful workmanship, omitting of no possible ornament. It was dedicated by Reginald, Bishop of Bath, on St Barnabas' day 1186'.<sup>179</sup>

This Lady Chapel remains one of the great examples of Transitional architecture. Consisting of four bays, it had a hipped roof and remained detached from the main church until the thirteenth century when a Galilee was provided which linked the two. Principal entrances in the north and south walls provided access from the lay cemetery and the monks' cemetery respectively. The northern portal is the finer of the two. It consists of four orders richly ornamented with foliage and figures carved in relief that depict New Testament scenes relevant to the Holy Family, particularly Our Lady. These are the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity and journey of the Magi. Also, the Adoration of the Magi, their return home, the Flight into Egypt, The Massacre of the Innocents, the annunciation of the death of Herod to Joseph and the return of the Holy Family from Egypt. The south portal was clearly intended to be similarly decorated, but with scenes from the Old Testament; however, only two scenes appear to have been completed, the Creation and the Fall of Man. There is a subsidiary entrance in the south-east bay.

The building was lit by windows in the upper storey, one to each bay and a tripartite window in the west wall. The latter feature was replicated in the east wall until the addition of the Galilee. All the fenestration is round-headed. In addition the lower storey is externally articulated by intersecting blind arcading supported on cylindrical shafts (now missing) with carved capitals and moulded bases between buttresses that once supported the internal vaulting. The angles had square turrets, each capped with a stone pyramid. The original dimensions (until demolition of the east wall) were externally 64', and internally 55' in length. The

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<sup>179</sup> *'Ecclesiam sanctae Mariae in loco quo primitus vetusta steterat, ex lapidibus quadris opere speciosissimo consummavit, nihil ornatus in ea praetermittens, quam dedicavit Reginaldus Bathoniae episcopus. A.D. mill. Centes. Octogesimo circiter sexto, die Sanctae Barnabae'*. Cited by Willis, R., *op. cit.*, p. 12.

width 32' externally and 24' internally. The motif of blind arcading is repeated on the internal walls. Writing in the eighteenth century, Collinson recorded,

Very rich compartments of zigzag arches of five pillars, and their spandrels adorned with roses, crescents, and painted stars. The south door has ornaments of flower-work, and history; and the north, which is very rich, is decorated with flourishes, foliage, and figures.<sup>180</sup>

The Galilee built at the end of the thirteenth century linked the Lady Chapel to the great church. This feature had similar dimensions to the Lady Chapel, but was divided into three bays rather than four and was two feet wider internally owing to the thin wall construction commensurate with architectural development between the two building campaigns. The easternmost bay was raised across its width by steps and the building must have been intended as a chapel containing an altar, and not merely a convenient porch. The evidence for such a usage comes from the biography of Abbot Adam de Sodbury (1322-35) by John of Glaston, who records that this abbot 'assigned to the sacristy [assigned to the endowment of the sacrist] twenty marcs yearly for the maintenance of four priests, well skilled in song, who, together with the two anciently appointed to the Galilee, and the other two maintained by the sacrist and almoner, shall daily chant Her [Our Lady's] service in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, clad in surplice and amice, and shall come in the aforesaid form, to the solemn masses of the choir'.<sup>181</sup>

This testimony accords entirely with the evidence of the surviving fabric and is an invaluable record of the development of the Marian liturgy at Glastonbury. The reference to the two chaplains anciently appointed to the Galilee make it quite clear that this compartment was originally a chapel in its own right. The assignment of four extra priests and the Galilee priests to the Lady Chapel meant that the liturgy of the Virgin was maintained by eight priests instead of two. The same source further records that the aforementioned abbot also provided the necessary eight

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<sup>180</sup> Collinson, J., *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset*, London, 1791, facsimile edition, Trowbridge, 1983, vol. 1, p. 261.

<sup>181</sup> Cited by Willis, R, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6.

surplices and amices 'for the chapel of the Blessed Mary, for the purpose of vesting the aforesaid chaplains'. Moreover, a fourteenth-century transverse arch inserted between the Lady Chapel and Galilee corroborates the documentary evidence for a much more elaborate and larger-scale liturgy of the Virgin than hitherto by suggesting that not only was the permanent chapel staff quadrupled in number, but that the Galilee effectively became the choir / chancel of the chapel itself. Further evidence of such an arrangement is contained in the testimony of William of Worcestre c. 1478. William tells us that 'the length of the chapel of the Blessed Mary, which is coterminous with the west part of the door of the nave of the church, is 34 yards and its width is eight yards',<sup>182</sup> indicating that William counted the Galilee as an integral part of the chapel (fig. 4).

### **A Crypt and a Well**

The foundations of the twelfth-century Lady Chapel were carried down to a depth of twelve feet and Abbot Bere caused a crypt to be excavated beneath the chapel c.1500. There is little evidence for the use of the crypt, other than as a convenient place for burials, except for the discovery in 1825 of a passageway from the crypt to an underground well sited at the external south-east corner of the chapel. There also survives a weathering on the chapel wall at this point, indicative of a subsidiary building attached to the chapel and accessed from it. The same excavations revealed an external flight of underground steps at this point, also leading to the well, the origins of which are unknown, but its rediscovery added another layer of interest to the Glastonbury legends and it became the 'holy' well of Glastonbury folklore (fig. 5). Willis is dismissive of any holy associations,<sup>183</sup> but further examinations in 1991 and 1992 have led Rahtz to 'support the idea that the well is of early (pre-Norman) date; it may well be a primary feature of the abbey site, perhaps even pre-dating the *vetusta ecclesia*'.<sup>184</sup> The well shaft is sited within a twelfth-century arched recess, the mouldings of which may or may not

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<sup>182</sup> Cited by Willis, R., *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79 & 80.

<sup>184</sup> Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 85-7.

have been recycled from the east window of the chapel, which became redundant when the Lady Chapel was extended into the Galilee. There is no documentary evidence whatever for a holy well, so it is possible that this feature served merely utilitarian purposes. However, it should at least be noted that the provision of a well house attached to an important building, accessed from two flights of steps and the elaborate arch of the recess all indicate that the well had an important use, the exact nature of which must remain conjectural pending further evidence, but which might have been baptismal, and / or may parallel holy wells at Walsingham and other places.

### **The Main Church**

So complete was the desecration and loss of the main church subsequent to dissolution, and such is the loss of documentation alluding to it, that although archaeological excavation has permitted a reasonable interpretation of the building's appearance, it is no longer possible figuratively to reconstruct the internal fittings or even chapel dedications with any degree of accuracy. However, the account of the visit John Leland made to the abbey in the time of the unfortunate Abbot Whiting gives some tantalizing references. Among the additions and embellishments made by Whiting's predecessor, Leland records that 'he [Abbot Bere] made a rich altar of silver and gilt and set it afore the High Altar'.<sup>185</sup> This item may have been a matutinal altar separate from the high altar itself, but more probably refers to a frontal for the high altar, which was dedicated to the Virgin. At the same altar Leland noted the Virgin's image in a tabernacle, the gift of Abbot Adam de Sodbury,<sup>186</sup> the abbot responsible for augmenting the Lady Chapel staff.

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<sup>185</sup> Cited by Willis, R., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Perhaps of greater interest is a further reference to a benefaction of Abbot Bere, who ‘cumming from his Embassadrie out of Italie made a Chapelle of our Lady de Loretta joining to the north side of the Body of the church’.<sup>187</sup>

Loreto, near Ancona in Italy, is a centre of Marian devotion that has two principal attractions. The site supposedly contains the ‘holy house’, that is to say the dwelling occupied by the Blessed Virgin at the time of the Annunciation, which had been miraculously transported by angels from Nazareth to Tersatz in Dalmatia in 1291 and by the same means translated to Loreto in 1295. The earliest documentary evidence for the shrine is an account of c. 1470.<sup>188</sup> The house also contains a particular image known as Our Lady of Loreto.<sup>189</sup> Abbot Bere must have been sufficiently impressed by the Loreto shrine to create a version of it at Glastonbury, by adding a chapel to represent the holy house that presumably contained a copy of the original image. By the time of dissolution there were therefore at least two Lady Chapels at the abbey. Excavations have revealed a small building that corresponds in size (approximately 30’ x 13’) with the Loreto house, attached to the west side of the north transept, which may be this chapel.<sup>190</sup>

John Leland makes reference to a chapel of St Mary on the north side of the choir.<sup>191</sup> Robert Willis suggests that this location refers to the north side of the choir of the Lady Chapel itself and he may be right, but it is equally possible that he is referring to Abbot Bere’s Loreto chapel or to a different Marian altar altogether.

The conclusions to be drawn from the foregoing evidence require little further clarification. Clearly Glastonbury is a very ancient centre of Christian worship with a plethora of focuses. Nevertheless, the dedication of the *vetusta ecclesia* to Our Lady and the degree of sanctity it subsequently acquired; the quality of the *vetusta*’s successor in the late twelfth century and its subsequent extension into the

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>188</sup> Cross, F. L., *op. cit.*, pp. 821-2.

<sup>189</sup> The medieval image survived until destroyed by a fire at the shrine in 1921.

<sup>190</sup> Carley, J. P., *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House, op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>191</sup> Cited by Willis, R., *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Galilee Chapel; the provision of eight priests to sing the Marian liturgy and a separate chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto all indicate that devotion to Our Lady at Glastonbury was in no way diluted by the local competition. The site of the *vetusta* and its twelfth-century successor west of the main church, and the inclusion of a Galilee inevitably invite comparison with the single other major example of this combination at Durham. However, there appears to be no evidence of any link or cross influence between the arrangements at the two churches; each place seems to have developed in response to local needs and circumstances quite independently of each other. Where parallels do exist, they seem to be more closely connected with Walsingham than with Durham or anywhere else, particularly with reference to holy wells and small timber chapels of the Virgin with pre-Conquest origins. Moreover, Abbot Bere's motives for constructing a chapel / shrine for devotion to Our Lady of Loreto invite speculation. His abbey had a splendid Lady Chapel that was endowed with the best and most prestigious in terms of art, architecture and liturgy, but perhaps he felt that something of the opportunity for close personal encounter with Our Lady in terms of pilgrimage and popular piety had been lost with the *vetusta* and he sought to make good that loss. Carley writes of Bere's enthusiasm for Italy.<sup>192</sup> A Glastonbury shrine or chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto had all the cachet associated with a shrine whose prototype was sufficiently far distanced to encourage duplication and add to the sum of Glastonbury 'attractions' and at the same time provide a personal tribute and reminder for the abbot. A chapel dedicated in honour one of the English Marian shrines could never have been more than a pale imitation of the original, a point that particularly applies to Walsingham, which was certainly the premier Marian shrine in England and among the most celebrated in Western Christendom. It is therefore appropriate that Walsingham should be the subject of the following case study.

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<sup>192</sup> Carley, J. P., *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House, op. cit.*, p. 66.

## **Case Study:**

### **The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham**

#### **Introduction**

Walsingham Parva (Little Walsingham) is and always has been a remote village, almost lost in the vastness of the Norfolk countryside. Yet, for almost five centuries this seemingly insignificant place was the premier object of Marian pilgrimage in England. The focus of devotion was a small wooden chapel, believed to be a replica of the holy house at Nazareth in which the Archangel Gabriel had visited the Virgin Mary and made the Annunciation to Her. This chapel was reputedly constructed at the command of the Virgin herself and contained a much-venerated image, enthroned, crowned and robed, with the infant God incarnate in Her arms. The fame of the shrine was such that the sobriquet 'England's Nazareth' was applied to the village and for century after century people from every stratum of society made the pilgrimage, following the example of the monarchs themselves.

Edward I went to Walsingham thirteen times. Edward II visited in 1315, followed by Isabella, Queen Dowager of France, in 1332. Edward III went in 1361 and encouraged others to follow his example, including David Bruce, King of Scotland, to whom he granted safe conduct. Edward also paid £9 expenses for John, Duke of Brittany to go, and granted leave of absence from court for his nephew the Duke of Anjou to make the pilgrimage. Joan, Queen Dowager of Henry IV visited in 1427; Henry VI in 1455, Edward IV in 1469, and Henry VII in 1487. The last English King to make the pilgrimage was Henry VIII in 1511. Henry reputedly walked the last mile barefoot, and ironically given his future role as instigator of the shrine's destruction made many benefactions. In 1511 he gave £20, followed by £23. 11s. 4d in 1512 for 'glazing our Lady's Chapel at Walsingham'. He made twice yearly payments for a candle to burn perpetually before the image, and a stipend to the prior. The final reference to the shrine in the

king's accounts says very little, yet speaks volumes: 'for the king's candle before our Lady of Walsingham and to pay the prior for his salary – nil'.<sup>193</sup>

Despite its fame and significance to national religion very little can be adduced about Walsingham in terms of what the holy house and the image it contained actually looked like; even the precise location of the shrine cannot be attested with certainty. Yet the very dearth of evidence in itself speaks eloquently of the importance and influence of the place, for it was at the most holy and illustrious sites that the reformers of the sixteenth century were most active in their attempts to obliterate every last trace of the objects of veneration, as (for example) the sites of Glastonbury and the vanished shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury bear mute witness.

The paucity of historically authenticated evidence precludes even the possibility of proving the origins of the shrine, either in date or circumstance; all we have to go on is the legend or tradition of Walsingham, which despite its shortcomings in terms of admissible evidence is nevertheless a most useful starting point in any enquiry into the history of the site, and which in any case does much to explain why Walsingham became so important, since in terms of popular piety the foundation story was received at face value by generations of medieval people.

By tradition, in 1061 an Anglo-Saxon lady called Richeldis de Faverches had three visions of the Virgin, who transported her in spirit to the house in Nazareth, scene of the Annunciation and later home of the Holy Family. The Virgin commanded Richeldis to construct a replica of the holy house on her estate at Little Walsingham, and the purpose of the repetition of the vision was to ensure that she accurately noted the house's dimensions.

Richeldis complied with her instructions, but once the house was constructed, doubts arose as to its location. One morning a heavy fall of dew covered the ground with the exception of two areas roughly corresponding to the size of the holy house. It was decided to translate the building onto one of these patches close

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<sup>193</sup> Cited by Stephenson, C., *England's Nazareth*, Beccles, 1969, p. 16.

to two wells, but having taken the house apart, the workmen experienced great difficulty in putting it together again. Richeldis spent the night in prayer and the next morning found that the constituent parts of the house had been moved by angels at the command of the Virgin herself to the other piece of ground, on which they had been miraculously re-erected. This site thereafter became its permanent location.

### **The Evidence**

The earliest documentary account of the foundation of the Walsingham shrine occurs in a medieval ballad. Only one copy survives; it is preserved in the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. The document consists of four untitled leaves, the first and last of which bear the mark of Richard Pynson, printer to Henry VII, but the date of the original composition is not known.<sup>194</sup> The ballad is a useful adjunct to the little remaining physical and documentary evidence and is therefore quoted in full.

[1]

Of this chapell se here the fundacyon  
Bylded the yere of crystes incarnacyon  
A thousande complete sixty and one  
The tyme of sent Edward Kyng of this region

[2]

Beholde and se ye goostly folks all  
Which to this place have devocyon  
When ye to our lady askyng socoure call  
Desyryng here hir helpe in your trybulacyon  
Of this hir chapell ye may se the fundacyon  
If ye wyll this table overse and rede  
Howe by miracle it was founded indeed

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<sup>194</sup> Stanza 14 suggests 1461 as *terminus post quem*.

[3]

A noble wydowe sometyme lady of this towne  
Called Rychold in lyving full virtuous  
Desired of oure lady a petycyowne  
Hir to honoure with some werke bounteous  
This blyssed virgin and lady most gracyous  
Graunted hir petycyon to edefye this chapell.

[4]

In spyryte our lady to Nazareth hir led  
And shewed hir the place where Gabryel hir grette  
Lo doughter consyder to hir oure lady sayde  
Of thys place take thou surely the mette [measure]  
Another lyke thys at Walsyngham thou sette  
Unto my laude and synguler honoure  
All that me seke there shall find socoure

[5]

Where shall be hadde in a memoryall  
The great joy of my salutacyon  
First of my joyes grounde and orygynall  
Rote of mankyndes gracious redempcyon  
When gabryell gave to me relacyon  
To be a moder through hymnyte  
And goddys sonne conceive in virgynyte

[6]

This vision shewed thryse to this devout woman  
In mynde well she marked length and brede  
Ahe was full gladde and thanked oure lady than  
Of hir great grace never destytute in need  
This forsayd hour in haste she thought to spede  
Called to hir artyfycers full wyse  
This chapell to forge as our lady dyd devys

[7]

All this a medewe wet with dropes celestyall  
And with sylver dew sent from hye adowne  
Excepte tho tweyne places chosen above all  
Where neyther moyster ne dewe might be fowne  
This was the fyrst pronostycacyowne  
Howe this our newe Nazareth here shodde stande  
Builded lyke the fyrste in the holy lande

[8]

Whan it was al fourmed than had she great doute  
Where it shold be sette and in what maner place  
Inasmoche as tweyne places were founde oute  
Tokened with miracle of our ladys grace  
That is to say tweyne quadrates of egall space  
As the flees of gedeon in the wete beyng drye  
Assigned by miracle of holy mayde marye

[9]

The wydowe thought it most lykly of congruence  
This house on the fyrste soyle to bylde and arere  
Of this who lyste to have experience  
A chapell of saynt Laurence standeth nowe there  
Faste by tweyne wellys experience doth thus lere [teach]  
There she thought to have set this chapell  
Which was begonne by our ladyes counsell

[10]

The carpenters began to set the fundamente  
This hevenly house to arere up on hye  
But sone their werkes shewed inconvenyente  
For no pece with other wolde agre with geometrye  
Than were they all sory and full of agonye  
That they could nat ken neyther mesure ne marke

To joyne togedyr their owne proper werke

[11]

They went to reste and layde all thyng on side  
As they on their maystresse had a comaundemente  
She thought our lady that fyrste was hir gyde  
Wold convey this worke after hir owne entent  
Hir meny [workmen] to reste as for that night she sente  
And prayed our lady with devoute exclamacyon  
And as she had begonne to perfowrme that habytacyon

[12]

All nyghte the wydowe remanyng in this prayer  
Oure blyssed lady with hevenly mynystris  
Hir sylfe beyng here chyef artyfycer  
Areryd this sayd house with aungellys handys  
And nat only reryd it but set it there it is  
That is two hundred fote and more in dystaunce  
From the fyrste place bokes make remembrance

[13]

Erly whan the artfycers cam to their travayle  
Of this sayd chapell to have made an ende  
They founde eche parte conioyned sauns fayle  
Better than they coude conceive it in mynde  
Thus eche man home again did wynde  
And this holy matrone thanked our lady  
Of hir great grace shewyd here specially

[14]

And syth here our lady hath shewyd many myracle  
Innumerable nowe here for to expresse  
To suche as visyte thys hir habytacle  
Ever lyke newe to them that call hir in dystresse

Four hundreth yere and more the cronacle to witness  
Hath endured this notable pylgrymage  
Where grace is dayly shewyd to men of every age

[15]

Many seke ben here cured by our lady's myghte  
Dede agayne revyved of this is no doubt  
Lame made hole and blynde restored to syghte  
Mariners vexed with tempest safe to port brought  
Defe wounde and lunatyke that hyder have fought  
And also lepers here recovered have be  
By oure lady's grace their infirmyte

[16]

Folke that of fendys have had acombraunce  
And of wicked spyrytes also moche vexacyon  
Have here be delivered from every such chaunce  
And soules greatly vexed with gostely temptacion  
Lo here the chyef solace against all tribulacyon  
To all that be seke bodily or goostly  
Calling to oure lady devoutly

[17]

Therefore every pilgryme gyve your attendaunce  
Oure lady here to serve with humble affeccyon  
Your sylfe ye applye to do hir plesaunce  
Remembrynge the great joye of hir annunciacion  
Therewith concevyng this bryef complacyon  
Though it halte in meter and eloquence  
It is here written to do hyr revernce

[18]

All lettred that wyll have more intelligence  
Of the fundacyon of this chapell here

If ye wyll aske bokes shall you encence  
More clerely to understande this forsayd matere  
To you shall declare the cronyclere  
All cyrcumstaunce by a noble processe  
Howe olde croyclers of thys bere wytnesse

[19]

O englonde great cause hast glad for to be  
Compared to the londe of promys syon  
Thou atteynest my grace to stande in that degree  
Through this glorious ladye's supportacyon  
To be called in every realme and region  
The holy lande oure ladye's dower  
Thus arte thou named of olde antiquyte

[20]

And this is the cause as it apereth by lyklynesse  
In the is belded newe Nazareth a mancyon  
To the honour of the hevenly empresse  
And of hir moste glorious salutacyon  
When gabryell sayde at olde Nazareth Ave  
This joy here dayly remembred for to be

[21]

O gracious lady, glory of Ierusalem  
Cypresse of sion and joye of Israel  
Rose of Ieryco and sterre of Bethleem  
O glorious lady our askynge nat repell  
In mercy all wymen ever thou dost excel  
Therefore blessed lady graunt thou thy great grace  
To all that thee devoutly visyte in this place. Amen.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Gillett, H. M., *Walsingham*, London, 1946, pp. 78-81.

In common with many legends, the foundation of the Walsingham shrine as narrated in the ballad has much that has the ring of truth about it as well as much that is fabulous. The first point of interest is the specified date of 1061 (stanza 1), which seems a very arbitrary date to have been made up. It does not fit any religious commemoration or anniversary as for instance the year 1000 would have done. It cannot be proven, but otherwise there is no real reason to doubt its authenticity. John Leland accepts it unequivocally and there is a further piece of evidence that suggests a date close to the traditional one. This is the earliest documentary evidence of a Lady Chapel at Walsingham and is the record of a benefaction made by Richeldis's son Geoffrey de Faverches, who prior to embarking on 'a pilgrimage to the Holy Land granted to God and St Mary and to Edwy [Edwin] his chaplain the chapel which my mother has founded in Walsingham in honour of Mary ever Virgin, together with possession of the Church of All Saints of the same village and all its appurtenances in lands, tithes and rents, to come into the possession of Edwy on the day on which I leave for Jerusalem'.<sup>196</sup> Unfortunately, the document is undated, but I would suggest that the fact that it clearly indicates that Geoffrey was going on pilgrimage, not on crusade, argues in favour of the mid eleventh-century date rather than against it, since pilgrimage ceased and crusade started in the wake of the capture of Jerusalem by the Seljukian Turks in 1071.<sup>197</sup> A further point of interest from this document is that the wording clearly suggests that the chapel was considered to be of greater importance than the church.

The difficulty experienced in choosing a suitable site for the chapel (stanzas 8-12) is also of interest and suggests another element of truth to the story. If concocting a work of complete fiction, what purpose would be served by including this incredible area of confusion into a narrative of otherwise clear instructions from the Virgin herself to the point of repeating the original vision three times to be sure of getting things right? Such an inclusion does not make any sense, whereas the idea of those responsible for the construction changing their minds for some

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<sup>196</sup> BL. MS. Nero E. VII, Walsingh. Chart.

<sup>197</sup> The first crusade from the West did not begin until the 1090's.

practical reason seems entirely plausible. The twin wells (stanza 9) survive a few yards east of the ruins of Walsingham Priory, so there is every reason to accept that this was the original chosen site, one that was quickly rejected, for whatever reason.

Stanzas 8-12 are also valuable in making it abundantly clear that the holy house was originally constructed of timber. Not only is the choice of fabric of interest for its own sake, having an obvious parallel with the *vetusta ecclesia* at Glastonbury, but stanza eight clearly indicates that the component parts of the structure were prefabricated prior to erection in accord with standard medieval practice. Furthermore, the choice of wood argues more convincingly for the acceptance of the late Anglo-Saxon date than it does for a later medieval one, when masonry must have been the preferred material for a building of some status, even in Norfolk where building stone is scarce.

The ballad affirms that the purpose of the holy house was primarily to commemorate the Incarnation (stanzas 1, 17 & 20), and attests to the fame of the shrine as a focus of pilgrimage and site of miracles. The penultimate verse provides a tiny and tantalizing (though unsurprising) glimpse of the liturgical practice within the chapel, the daily recitation of *Ave Maria* in commemoration and praise of the Angelic Salutation, one of the 'joys' of Mary.

As the fame of Walsingham grew, so did the benefactions, and it would be tedious in the extreme to attempt to record them all. Suffice it to say that in addition to the royal visitors and benefactions cited previously, popes, lesser prelates and many others all paid tribute, so that by the time of dissolution the gross income of the priory that administered the shrine was £446, 14s, 4 3/4d, in addition to the offerings at the shrine itself that were valued at £260, 12s, 4 1/2d per annum.<sup>198</sup> The latter sum is a testament to the importance of Our Lady of Walsingham. Alone, the shrine attracted offerings amounting to more than half the other income of the priory, and Walsingham Priory was a wealthy foundation, holding land or property

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<sup>198</sup> Blomefield, F. & Parkin, C., *Essay Toward a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, in 11 vols, London, 1805-10, vol. 4, p. 836.

in eighty-six parishes in Norfolk alone by 1291.<sup>199</sup> In 1550, after visiting the shrine of the Magi in Cologne Cathedral, Roger Ascham<sup>200</sup> wrote ‘The three kings be not so rich, I believe, as was the Lady of Walsingham’.<sup>201</sup>

For all its wealth, the integrity of the original Walsingham shrine in terms of its size, simplicity and the modest nature of its basic structure appears to have survived intact throughout its life. What is not known is to what extent this structure was repaired or replaced as necessitated by natural decay. Only two contemporary descriptions have come down to us, and though to some extent they correlate, details are scanty and in some cases ambiguous. In addition, pictorial evidence of the appearance of the shrine and the famous image of Our Lady of Walsingham may be provided by the priory seal.

The earlier of the two surviving descriptions is that of William of Worcestre [*sic*], who visited Walsingham in 1479. William gives the dimensions of the holy house as seven virgas and 30 pollices long by four virgas and ten pollices wide (c. 23 feet 6 inches by 12 feet 10 inches) and states that it was a timber structure. He adds that the chapel was enclosed within an outer chapel measuring 16 virgas long and 10 wide.<sup>202</sup> He refers to the latter as ‘*novum opus*’, a term that might imply a new building, one undergoing refurbishment / repair, or one that was always ‘new’ in contradistinction to the more ancient structure it enclosed.<sup>203</sup> The use of the outer chapel is not stated, but it seems reasonable to conjecture that its primary function was to protect the holy house itself from the elements, in addition to which it may have served as a vestibule / ambulatory for the efficient processing of pilgrims.

The second of the two accounts comes from Desiderius Erasmus, who visited Walsingham in 1512 (and possibly a second time in 1514), and whose account

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<sup>199</sup> Gillett, H. M., *op. cit.*, p. 8

<sup>200</sup> ODNB, *s. n.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>202</sup> Dimensions cited by Gillett, *ibid.*, p. 16, and Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p.76.

<sup>203</sup> The term ‘*novum opus*’ cannot therefore be accepted at face value. A parallel example occurs at Peterborough Cathedral, the east end of which is still known as ‘The New Building’, centuries after its construction.

appears in a colloquy first published in Basel in 1526 as *A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake*. The work was anonymously published in English in 1536 or 1537 as *The Pilgrimage of Pure Devotion*, possibly at the instigation of the political authorities for propaganda purposes. As an accurate historic record the account is flawed. The colloquy is a conversation between two fictitious characters, Menedemus, a cynical commentator, and Ogygius, a gullible pilgrim. *A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake* is based on Erasmus's experiences and views, but was written several years after his visit so some details may not be accurately recalled and Walsingham is not specifically mentioned by name. His aversion to relics and pilgrimage make the possibility of biased reporting a distinct possibility and the medium of the colloquy was meant to entertain as well as inform and was never intended as a historic record. Nevertheless, as a commentator who saw the shrine in its last years before dismantlement, dissolution and Reformation eradicated it, Erasmus provides a particularly valuable record.

He mentions at least three distinct buildings. The priory church, which he describes as 'fine and splendid, but the Virgin doesn't dwell there; in honour of her Son she yields that to him. She has her own church, that she may be on the right of her Son'.<sup>204</sup> The third building Erasmus mentions is 'To the east . . . a small chapel, filled with marvels',<sup>205</sup> close to two wells, which probably refers to the Chapel of St Lawrence to the east of the priory church, occupying the original but rejected site of the Holy House referred to in the ballad. The church of the Virgin is described as 'not yet finished . . . windows and doors open', but 'in that church, which as I said is unfinished, is a small chapel built on a wooden platform. Visitors are admitted through a narrow door on each side. There's very little light: only what comes from tapers, which have a most pleasing scent . . . and if you peered inside, Menedemus, you would say it was the abode of the saints, so dazzling is it with jewels, gold and silver'.<sup>206</sup> Later in the colloquy Menedemus asks Ogygius if he thinks the Virgin indicated that she had heard his prayers by the slightest nod, by which he must be referring to the image of Our Lady of Walsingham itself. In

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<sup>204</sup> Thompson, C. R., ed., *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, Chicago and London, 1965, p. 292.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294-5.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

response, Ogygius reminds Memedemus that ‘there was a dim religious light, and she stood in the shadows, to the right of the altar’.<sup>207</sup> The building thus described closely resembles the earlier testimony of William of Worcestre, particularly with reference to the surrounding unfinished structure. The altar, riches and image are accounted for, but the precise location of the shrine chapel remains problematic and controversial, despite archaeological attempts to clear up the mystery.

At the Dissolution, the site was granted to Sir Thomas Sydney and a substantial dwelling was constructed from the ruined buildings. In the seventeenth century ownership passed to John Warner, Bishop of Rochester, then to his nephew John Lee, Archdeacon of Rochester. The archdeacon assumed the name Lee-Warner, which family name was retained for many generations despite the periodic extinction of the male line.<sup>208</sup> In 1853 the site was owned by the Rev’d D. H. Lee-Warner, who encouraged his nephew the Rev’d James Lee-Warner and Henry Harrod F.S.A. to excavate. An account of the dig was written by Lee-Warner and published in *The Archaeological Journal*, in 1856. In this account, reference is made to the difficulties encountered by the disturbances to the site subsequent to dissolution, where ‘so changed is the surface of the soil, and so occupied at the same time by the gravel walks and shrubberies of an ornamental pleasure ground (to say nothing of a large yew tree, which has probably grown and luxuriated for at least two centuries) that excavation with a hope of success is well nigh impracticable’.<sup>209</sup> However, having made these caveats Lee-Warner goes on to assure readers that ‘within recent times something has been done, and the result has been the formation of a ground-plan in which the *disjecta membra* are for the first time put together so as to show their connection and arrangement’.<sup>210</sup> There then follows a description of foundation stones that Lee-Warner believed to belong to the *novum opus*. The building he discovered was joined to the north side of the nave of the priory church (fig. 6). ‘Its level was about 2 ½ feet above that of the

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<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>208</sup> Goodrich, P. J., *Walsingham, its History and its Shrine*, London, 1937, pp. 7, 126-7.

<sup>209</sup> Lee-Warner, J., ‘Walsingham Priory, a memoir read at the meeting of the Institute, Cambridge, June, 1854: with an account of recent discoveries’, *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 13, London, 1856, p. 117.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

church; its pavement was of Purbeck marble, bedded in solid mortar of three inches in thickness; and it was entered by a doorway of three steps pierced in the 12-foot wall which separated the church from it. This being the door of entrance, a corresponding door of egress was placed directly opposite, flanked by large buttresses; or possibly these foundations may have carried a shallow porch'. Also discovered was a stone platform located at the east end of the compartment, on which Lee-Warner believed the actual shrine to have rested. 'The measurements of this building coincide so exactly with the dimensions of the *novum opus*, as already quoted from William of Worcestre, that not a shadow of doubt can exist as to their identity'.<sup>211</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not possible conclusively to corroborate Lee-Warner's assertion. He may have been right, but important questions remain unanswered. In particular, the great thickness of the walls he discovered are suggestive more of a tower than a sheltering chapel. It is possible that an upper passage within the thickness of the walls and accessed by vices in corner turrets provided convenient viewing points of the holy house, but it is odd that Erasmus does not mention this and although his testimony is somewhat ambiguous, his evidence seems to imply that the shrine of Our Lady was in a separate building. He states that 'she has her own church', not that Her chapel is within or appended to the great church. Also, having visited the chapel at the wells, Ogygius informs Menedemus that he went 'on to the little chapel, the shrine of the Holy Virgin', then 'after lunch we went back to the church'.<sup>212</sup> Moreover, Erasmus asserts that the inner shrine chapel is 'built on a wooden platform',<sup>213</sup> not a masonry platform as found by Lee-Warner.

In 1921 the incumbent of Walsingham, Alfred Hope Patten, had an image of Our Lady of Walsingham (based on an image on the old priory seal) carved and set up in the parish church. This was the catalyst for the revival of pilgrimage and ten years later the image was solemnly translated to a new holy house and outer chapel constructed on land to the north of the old priory. During the preparation of

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<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>212</sup> Thompson, C. R., *op. cit.*, p. 297.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

foundation trenches for these buildings, an ancient well was unearthed which had been filled with clay. Once cleared of this obstruction, clear water appeared to a depth of five or six feet and a number of old shoes were found at the bottom that were dated by staff of the Victoria and Albert Museum to the sixteenth century. Surrounding the well was a cobbled yard and three water diviners asserted that the spring feeding the well thereafter went in a direct line to the twin wells in the priory grounds. By 1937 plans were in hand to extend the new site by construction of a full-scale church over the holy house. The excavations preparatory to the new build revealed the foundations of a narrow rectangular building with turrets at each angle and a central porch. The principal dimensions were *c.* 56' x 18'. On the soil within the foundations a thin layer of black wood and twigs was found, which was centrally placed within the outer walls *c.* 26' in length. Naturally, the question arose as to whether these finds were the remains of the medieval wooden shrine and the outer chapel. The priory seal may be cited in support of this hypothesis. This survives in a single wax impression dateable to the late twelfth century. Seals can be notoriously inaccurate in their highly stylised representations. However, the reverse side depicts the image of Our Lady of Walsingham, and the obverse depicts a cruciform church or chapel with a central tower and a turret at each angle, which may correspond with the archaeological findings of the 1930's (fig.7).

In 1961, the foundations discovered by Lee-Warner and Henry Harrod were again archaeologically investigated, but inconclusively. It is possible that both sites (or neither) may be authentic. The *novum opus* mentioned by William of Worcestre could be represented by Lee-Warner's finds on the north side of the priory church, to which the holy house was translated from an earlier site for reasons of better security and management of pilgrims than had hitherto been possible, and the testimony of the ballad clearly supports the idea of a translation, for whatever reason. A further possibility that does not appear to have been previously suggested is that the Lee-Warner site is that of the Lady Chapel of the priory in contradistinction to the shrine itself; after all, in terms of its size and the constant traffic of pilgrims, the holy house cannot have been a practical or convenient setting for the ritual practice of the full Marian liturgy, and it seems inconceivable that any part of such a liturgy would be truncated in Walsingham of all places.

Regarding the image itself, the priory seal depicts Our Lady enthroned and crowned. She holds a lily sceptre in her right hand resting across her right shoulder. On her left knee and cradled in her left arm the infant Christ appears to be holding a book. Both figures are nimbed. Though not necessarily accurate in every detail, it is highly probable that this representation is essentially that of the medieval image that formerly graced the holy house (fig. 8).

Suppression came to Walsingham on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1538, when the administration of the priory and all its possessions passed to the royal commissioner Sir William Petre, but not before attempts to intervene had resulted in martyrdom for those concerned. There had been plans to appeal directly to the king to preserve the shrine, but news of this intention was leaked and construed as rebellion. The ‘conspirators’ were swiftly arrested and on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1537 condemned to be drawn, hung, beheaded and quartered for high treason. Ralph Rogerson, Richard Hendley, Thomas Menal and Andrew Pax were executed in the ditch of Norwich Castle on May 26<sup>th</sup>. John Semblye and John Sellers died at Yarmouth on May 28<sup>th</sup>. George Gysborough and Nicholas Mileham (the sub-prior) were executed before the gates of Walsingham Priory on May 30<sup>th</sup>, and William Gysborough and John Pecock died at Lynn on June 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>214</sup>

The evidence points to the last prior, Richard Vowell, as the betrayer of Nicholas Mileham, for Chief Commissioner Roger Townsend explicitly commended Vowell in a letter to Thomas Cromwell in which he refers to the prior as ‘the taker of one of the most rank traitors privy to the Walsingham Conspiracy.’ The final surrender of Walsingham is dated October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1539, and Vowell was granted the unusually large pension of £100 per annum. The other Canons received £4 - £6 per annum.<sup>215</sup>

In July 1538, ‘the images of Our Lady of Walsingham and Ipswich were brought up to London with all the jewelles that honge about them, at the Kinges commaundment, and divers other images, both in England and Wales, that were used for common pilgrimages, because the people should use noe more idolatrye

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<sup>214</sup> Gillett, H. M., *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

unto them, and they were burnt at Chelsey',<sup>216</sup> during September, in the presence of Cromwell himself.<sup>217</sup> The loss of the Walsingham shrine was deeply felt, and was the subject of a bitter poem by Philip, Earl of Arundel, who was martyred during the reign of Elizabeth I. His words provide a fitting conclusion and epitaph to the memory of the most famous and most venerated of the medieval Lady Chapels.

In the wracks of Walsingam  
Whom should I chuse  
But the Queene of Walsingam  
To be guide to my muse?

Then, thou Prince of Walsingam  
Graunt me to frame  
Bitter plaints to rewe thy wronge  
Bitter wo for thy name.

Bitter was it, oh to see  
The sely sheepe  
Murdred by the raveninge wolves  
While the sheepearde did sleep.

Bitter was it, oh to viewe  
The sacred vyne  
Whiles the gardeners plaied all close  
Rooted up by the swine.

Bitter, bitter oh to behoulde  
The grasse to growe  
Where the walles of Walsingam

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<sup>216</sup> Cited by Gillett, H. M., *ibid*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>217</sup> There is a tradition that the Ipswich image, otherwise known as 'Our Lady of Grace' was sold and is venerated today in Nettuno, Italy, but Dr Lindley has advised me that the Nettuno image is post-medieval.

So stately did shewe.

Such were the worth of Walsingham  
While she did stand  
Such are the wrackes as now do shewe  
Of that (so) holy lande.

Levell, levell with the ground  
The Towres doe lye  
Which with their golden, glitt'ring tops  
Pearsed oute to the skye.

Where weare gates noe gates are nowe,  
The waies unknowen,  
Where the presse of freares did passe  
While her fame far was blown.

Oules do srike where the sweetest himmes  
Lately were songe,  
Toades and serpents hold their dennes  
Where the palmers did throng.

Weep, weep, O walsingham,  
Whose dayes are nightes,  
Blessings turned to blasphemies,  
Holy deedes to dispites.

Sinne is where our Ladye sate,  
Heaven turned is to helle;  
Sathan sitte where our Lord did swaye,  
Walsingham, oh farewell!<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Bodl. MS. Rawlinson MSS., fol. 26 b, cited by Gillett, H. M., *op.cit.*, pp. 82-3.

## **Walsingham Supplementary Note: The Langham Virgin**

Attention should be drawn to the close affinity that exists between the image on the Walsingham seal and that exceedingly rare survival of English wooden figure sculpture of the period, the so-called Langham Virgin, now in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (fig. 9). A hitherto unnoticed correlation between the seal and the figure is remarkable, and the survival of both is fortuitous. The statue is stylistically close enough to provide a valuable adjunct to the seal in any conjectural reconstruction of the Walsingham image, and is moreover a unique survival in England.

The Langham Virgin is constructed of polychromed oak, was discovered in Langham Church, Essex, and acquired by the museum in 1925. It stands almost 19" high and 9 ½" wide. The Virgin is represented as a figure seated on a throne (much damaged) with the infant Jesus seated on her left knee. Her right arm has been broken off below the elbow, but otherwise holds the same pose as the Virgin on the seal, as does the right arm of the infant, which is held straight across his mother's body with two fingers extended in blessing. The head and left arm of the child are missing. The legs of the Virgin are slightly apart and have folds of u-shaped drapery between them in a manner parallel with the seal. Her head is crowned, and excessive wear and a hole in the top of the head suggest that a more elaborate diadem may once have graced the figure. There is also a large cavity at the back. Fragments of original paint survive, and suggest a red dress or robe, together with a blue mantle. The child's robe appears to have been white. Alexander and Binski date this piece between 1200 and 1220, but Williamson suggests 1220-30.<sup>219</sup>

Williamson is relatively dismissive of the figure in that he argues that its rarity might 'allocate it an undue importance; it is [he writes] doubtless no more than a

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<sup>219</sup> Alexander, J., & Binski, P., *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, Royal Academy Exhibition, London, 1987, p. 303. Williamson, P., *Gothic Sculpture 1140-1300*, New Haven & London, 1995, p. 114.

typical product of the early thirteenth century, the kind of sculpture which would have been made in large numbers'.<sup>220</sup> He and the other commentators cited do not notice the evidence that the figure was once adorned with a detachable crown and may have been dressed with other regalia such as a sceptre and gospel book. Neither do they notice the cavity, which suggests the possibility that the piece may once have been the repository of a relic, or that it was hollowed out to reduce its weight for processional use. Clearly it was a cult / votive image. Moreover, that the sculpture is an extremely rare survival of something that was once 'typical' are facts that make it particularly interesting and relevant, because the very ordinariness of the piece suggests that the Langham Virgin represents the kind of ubiquitous wood sculpture that must have been familiar to the vast majority of people in their parish churches, the subject of the third chapter of this study.

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<sup>220</sup> Williamson, *ibid.*

## **Case Study:**

### **Canterbury Cathedral, the Metropolitan Church of Christ**

#### **Introduction**

The significance of Canterbury as focus of the renewal and consolidation of Roman influence on the English Church from Augustine's arrival in 597, and the subsequent establishment of the primatial cathedra in Christ Church are too well known to require any detailed clarification, and are sufficient reasons for the inclusion of a discussion of the development of Marian devotion, manifested in at least four Lady Chapels that have existed within this church, two of which are extant.

#### **The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral**

The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral of Christ, Canterbury was gutted by fire on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1067 and no fabric now stands above ground. However, the testimony of documentary sources including that of the monk Eadmer, have facilitated reconstruction of the plan of the church,<sup>221</sup> and in the case of the west end the documentary evidence has in large part been substantiated by archaeological excavation.<sup>222</sup>

Eadmer's testimony records the 1067 fire that largely destroyed the cathedral and its subsequent rebuilding under Archbishop Lanfranc. He recalls that the destroyed church had been built by the Romans; an ambiguous assertion, in that he might

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<sup>221</sup> Chief documentary sources are in Brooks, N., *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597-1066*, Leicester, 1984, pp. 37-59. Also, the early fabric is interpreted by Taylor, H. M., 'The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral Church at Canterbury', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 126, 1969, pp. 101-29, and Woodman, F., *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, London, 1981, pp. 13-32.

<sup>222</sup> Blockley, K., and Bennett, P., *Canterbury's Archaeology 1992 – 1993: 17<sup>th</sup> Report of the Canterbury Archaeology Trust*, Canterbury, 1994, & Blockley, K., *Canterbury Cathedral Nave: Archaeology, History and Architecture*, London, 1997.

mean a Romano-British structure, or one built by the Roman mission of Augustine and his followers. There is probably truth in both. Augustine's work was centred in Canterbury because he had been welcomed there by King Æthelbert of Kent (c. 580-616/18), whose wife Bertha was already a Christian, worshipping at the (originally) Roman church of St Martin. Æthelbert gave Augustine another Roman church, which was subsequently adapted / rebuilt as the Anglo-Saxon Church of Christ, the metropolitan Cathedral.

Of particular interest are two further comments by Eadmer; one that locates the Lady Chapel, or more precisely the Oratory of St Mary, in the Anglo-Saxon structure; the second because it discusses a part of the crypt that subsequently became a focus of Marian devotion, known as the Chapel of Our Lady Undercroft. He describes the oratory thus: 'The [west] end of the church was adorned by the oratory of Mary the blessed Mother of God; which was so constructed that access could only be had to it by steps. At its eastern part there was an altar . . . When the priest performed the divine mysteries at this altar he had his face turned to the east, towards the people who stood below. Behind him to the west was the pontifical chair constructed with handsome workmanship of large stones and masonry (*cemento*) . . . set against the wall surrounding the building . . .'

<sup>223</sup>

Archaeology has established that the Anglo-Saxon cathedral was bipolar, and that construction of a western apse containing the Oratory of St Mary represented the final phase of the church, probably executed during the pontificates of Archbishops Lyfing (1013-20) or Æthelnoth (1020-38).<sup>224</sup> Such a development is entirely in accordance with the liturgical requirements of the *Regularis Concordia*,<sup>225</sup> the logistical problem of access being alleviated by provision of vices in hexagonal turrets to north and south. The siting of the primate's chair at the extreme west end of an upper room that must have been out of sight of people in the main body of

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<sup>223</sup> Salzman, L. F., *Building in England down to 1540*, Oxford, 1952, 1997 edition, p. 361. Original translation by Willis, R., *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, London, 1845, pp. 9-16.

<sup>224</sup> Brooks, N., 'The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral Community, 597-1070' in Collinson, P., Ramsay, N., & Sparks, M., eds, *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, Oxford, 1995, p. 37.

<sup>225</sup> See chapter I for details.

the church signifies that in the case of enthroned archbishops, location was more important than visibility, and attests to the importance of the Marian Oratory or Lady Chapel, an arrangement moreover that has a parallel in the practice of seating clerics in apses dedicated to Mary previously noted.

If Augustine's missionary intent was finally and irrevocably to bring the English Church into the Roman fold, it was clearly advantageous to convince the English of the authority of the Roman Church by all practicable means including the iconographic emulation of Roman models. Thus the dedication of the cathedral to Christ mirrored the dedication of the Lateran basilica, and as Eadmer explicitly informs us with reference to Christ Church, Canterbury, 'This crypt below [the high altar] was fashioned in the likeness of the confessionary of St Peter's . . .',<sup>226</sup> The Anglo-Saxon cathedral was therefore by association inextricably linked with two of Rome's most important religious sites.

The *confessio* beneath the high altar of Constantine's basilica of St Peter in Rome was adorned with 'barley sugar' columns believed to have originated in Solomon's Old Testament Temple, and although subsequent scholarship dates these to *c.* 200, the sobriquet 'Solomonic' still applies to this type of column, and the significance of the spiral motif and its association with St Peter's is unimpaired.<sup>227</sup> The type was adopted, though in a much debased form by Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman builders as an appropriate iconographic symbol denoting a particularly important area.<sup>228</sup>

The extant Romanesque crypt of Canterbury Cathedral houses at its centre the chapel of Our Lady Undercroft (Anglo-Norman crypts dedicated to the Virgin have

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<sup>226</sup> Salzman, L. F., *op. cit.*, p. 361. Original translation by Willis, R, *Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-16.

<sup>227</sup> Fernie, E., *The Architecture of Norman England*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 284 & 286. Also, Fernie, E., 'The Spiral Piers of Durham Cathedral', BAA, *Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral: Conference Transactions for the year 1977*, Leeds, 1980, pp. 49-53.

<sup>228</sup> An Anglo-Saxon example survives in the four columns with spiral carving in the crypt under the chancel of the church of St Wystan at Repton, which is known to have been the burial place of St Wystan and two Mercian kings.

been previously noted). Attention should be drawn to the shafts of four columns surrounding the altar of this chapel; just four of the many columns that support the vault of the Romanesque crypt. They are decorated with spiral carvings, a not uncommon motif of the time, but in this case the pattern differs from other examples in this location and the shafts are carved from a different (darker) stone. The reason for these differences and their grouping may reflect a conscious intention on the part of the Romanesque builders to indicate the site of an important area by use of the debased Solomonic motif in emulation of the model at St Peter's, and in the tradition inherited from the Anglo-Saxon crypt, as described by Eadmer. It is also conceivably possible that these shafts are recycled survivals from the Anglo-Saxon confessional.

The dedication of the crypt described by Eadmer is unknown, but it was probably a repository of relics and other treasures. Eventually, the area of the Romanesque crypt beneath the high altar became the chapel of Our Lady Undercroft,<sup>229</sup> an important cult area, which according to Erasmus housed fabulous treasures.<sup>230</sup> Edward Woodstock, The Black Prince (d. 1376) requested burial ten feet west of the altar here<sup>231</sup> and stone screens to east, north and south were probably erected in anticipation of his internment, which in the event took place in the Trinity Chapel close to the shrine of St Thomas. The prince bequeathed several valuable items to this chapel,<sup>232</sup> comprising a complete suit of white [vestments], diapered with a blue vine.<sup>233</sup> Also, two single vestments<sup>234</sup> and towels, an altar frontal he had been

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<sup>229</sup> The testimony of the monk Gervase (writing c. 1200), suggests that the entire crypt was dedicated to the Virgin. 'In the crypt, under this altar of Christ, stood the altar of the holy Virgin Mary, to whose honour the entire crypt was dedicated. Which crypt occupied precisely the same space and compass in length and breadth as did the choir above it'. Cited in Willis, R, *Canterbury Cathedral, op. cit.*, pp. 42-7.

<sup>230</sup> Thompson, C. R., *op. cit.*, p. 308.

<sup>231</sup> Despite his founding of two chantries in the crypt of the south-east transept, dedicated respectively to the Virgin and the Trinity.

<sup>232</sup> The only extant copy of this will is in *The Register of Archbishop Simon of Sudbury*, fol. 91. A transcription appears in Wickham Legg, J., & St John Hope, W. H., eds, *Inventories of Christchurch, Canterbury*, London, 1902, pp. 96-99.

<sup>233</sup> An interesting example of interrelated iconography that combines the traditional Marian colours and the vine that has eucharistic connotations and simultaneously recalls the Tree of Jesse.

given by the Bishop of Exeter, which had a depiction of the Assumption and other imagery complete with a matching tabernacle. Also, a pair of twisted silver candlesticks,<sup>235</sup> two silver basons with his arms, an enamelled chalice with the Warrenne arms, two cruets in the form of angels, his mass book and porthos.<sup>236</sup>

Archbishop John Morton died in 1500 and he was buried beneath a modest slab before the image of Our Lady in the undercroft chapel in accordance with his known preference. This relatively humble internment was not considered an adequate indicator of Morton's status, and an elaborate monument was eventually constructed within one of the arch openings separating the chapel from the ambulatory. His remains however were left undisturbed in accordance with his wishes. The treasures within the Chapel of Our Lady Undercroft were protected by an iron grille (*clausura*), a section of which had to be set back to facilitate accommodation of the monument. The former presence of the grille is attested by lack of detail on the north side of a structure that is otherwise encrusted with sculpture. There is tracery panelling, together with images and badges that include Tudor roses and portcullises among their motifs. The inclusion of royal insignia on the archbishop's tomb probably alludes to Morton's considerable involvement in Henry Tudor's successful ambitions to seize the throne.<sup>237</sup> The statues almost all represent saints named as intercessors in Morton's will and the stylistic affinity with the rising new Lady Chapel of Henry VII at Westminster is apparent throughout.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Sufficient for a single priest to celebrate, *i.e.*, suitable for low masses without deacon or subdeacon.

<sup>235</sup> An interesting continuation of the spiral theme.

<sup>236</sup> The porthos was the portiforium [breviary] containing the daily offices.

<sup>237</sup> Morton was Bishop of Ely at the time.

<sup>238</sup> Built 1503-12.

## Anglo-Norman and subsequent developments

Important though the Chapel of Our Lady Undercroft undoubtedly was, rarely was it utilized as the principal Lady Chapel except in unusual circumstances. The successor of the Oratory of St Mary in the Anglo-Saxon cathedral was a Lady Chapel consisting of the two easternmost bays of the north nave aisle in the Anglo-Norman cathedral. The reasons for this new location were to facilitate the most practical performance of the liturgy, as the *Decreta* of Archbishop Lanfranc make abundantly clear and as previously discussed in chapter I. Neither was the symbolic significance of this location lost on commentators since the Lady altar was to the north [heraldic right] of the Jesus / Holy Cross altar in the nave, a convenient iconographic reference to the Virgin standing to the heraldic right of the rood.<sup>239</sup>

A daily Lady Mass seems to have been inaugurated in the Lady Chapel some time during the twelfth century, and at the end of the thirteenth, the Register of Archbishop Robert Winchelsey indicates a long established requirement that the precentor and seven monks attend this Mass.<sup>240</sup> From February 1305 the clerks of the other Marian altars within the cathedral (Undercroft and Martyrdom<sup>241</sup>), and the clerk of Thomas Becket's shrine were also required to attend.<sup>242</sup> Their presence and that of the precentor attest to the importance of this Mass.

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<sup>239</sup> This iconography was noticed by Erasmus with reference to The Marian shrine at Walsingham. 'When he [Christ] faces west he has his mother on his right; when he turns to the east she [Mary] is on his left.' *Peregrinatio religionis ergo* (A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake), trans. Thompson, C. R., *op. cit.*, p. 292.

<sup>240</sup> Graham, R., ed, *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey, Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, 1293-1313*, 2 vols, Canterbury & York Society, vol. 1, 1952, pp. 51-2, & vol. 2, 1956, p. 820.

<sup>241</sup> An altar in the 'Martyrdom' area of the north transept, dedicated to the Virgin, and - according to Erasmus - part of the pilgrim route. 'A Wooden altar sacred to the Holy Virgin is shown there; a very small one, not worth seeing except as a monument of antiquity, a rebuke to the luxury of our times. There the holy man [Becket] is said to have spoken his last farewell to the Virgin when death was at hand. On the altar is the point of the sword with which the crown of the good bishop's head was cut off', Thompson, C. R., ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 304-5.

<sup>242</sup> BL. MS. Cotton Galba E. iv, fos. 72 & 75.

That the location of the Lady Chapel at the east end of the north nave aisle was one of long standing practicality cannot be doubted since the precedent was repeated when the nave was rebuilt at the end of the fourteenth century, and for which Prior Thomas Chillenden received credit in the Kalendar of Obits. '*Navem istius ecclesie cum capella beate Marie virginis in eadem scita opereque decenti fabricata totaliter renovavi*', and '*nova capella beate Virginis Marie in eadem navi*'.<sup>243</sup>

The latest documentary record of the Lady Chapel in the nave occurs in the sacrist's accounts of 1412,<sup>244</sup> thirty-six years before a new Lady Chapel was begun in 1448, and forty-three before it was consecrated in October 1455. The new chapel was built onto the east end of the north-west transept and dedicated in honour of the Assumption and St Benedict, the latter in commemoration of Lanfranc's two-storey chapel that had hitherto occupied the site. The ground floor had housed St Benedict's Chapel, wherein a light burned constantly before an image of the Virgin. This arrangement would undoubtedly have encouraged devotion to Our Lady here, a factor that may partially account for the choice of location when the proposal to build a new Lady Chapel was under active consideration. The official dedication was destined to be overshadowed by close proximity to the site of Becket's murder, and the new Lady Chapel eventually acquired the soubriquet 'Our Lady Martyrdom', but this must have been a post-Reformation colloquialism if the previously noted testimony of Erasmus is reliable.

However much a venerated image of the Virgin may have inspired the building of a new Lady Chapel by power of suggestion and popular piety in terms of choice of location, it cannot alone account for the translation from a site with all the advantages previously enumerated, a change that has never been satisfactorily explained, but on which the following hypothesis aspires to shed some light. The reason for the shift must be sought elsewhere, and once more the overriding consideration appears to be liturgical. If the great Sarum rite epitomized the apex of liturgical development among secular foundations, it is not unreasonable to seek an equivalent among the religious establishments. Quite apart from the

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<sup>243</sup> Lambeth MS. 20, f. 210b.

<sup>244</sup> Cited by Wickham Legg, J., and St John Hope, W. H., *op. cit.*, p. 161.

phenomenal success of the cult of Thomas Becket, Christ Church, Canterbury had in any case a built-in pre-eminence as the primatial church, and had the largest community of monks in England. Clearly then, in terms of personnel, Christ Church was equipped to undertake the performance of *Opus Dei* in a manner befitting its great status, including the prescribed services in the Choir and in the Lady Chapel.

### **Music and ritual**

The ritual of the daily Lady Mass was a celebration that was considered particularly suitable for the performance of polyphonic music. This trend inspired the composition of more such music, which in turn helped promote the practice. A high proportion of surviving polyphonic music from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was written for use at the Lady Mass.<sup>245</sup> However, the religious foundations found themselves disadvantaged in comparison with their secular counterparts, in that since *c.* 1150 when boy oblation had ceased, liturgical music in monasteries had had to make do without the input of boys' voices, which was not a problem until the rapidly evolving polyphony began to require more singing in the treble part. The deficiency was usually made good by recruiting boys from educational establishments such as almonry schools, or in the case of Christ Church, by combining a Lady Chapel choir and school in a single foundation.

Thus in 1438 Prior John Salisbury legislated for the recruitment of eight boys under the directorship of Lionel Power as cantor, specifically to form the nucleus of a Lady Chapel choir, the monks to provide voices for the remainder of the five-part scorings that became the standard configuration – Trebles, Alto, Tenor, Tenor, Bass, *i.e.*, eight boys and four men. This choir was not a large one, and the singing of polyphonic mass settings requires a high degree of skill and concentration. The acoustic of the nave aisle would not have complemented the singing, and the

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<sup>245</sup> Bowers, R., 'The Performing Ensemble For English Fourteenth-Century Church Polyphony', in Boorman, S., ed., *Studies in the Performance of Late Mediaeval Music*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 161-92.

quantity of human traffic in this area of the cathedral must have rendered it particularly noisy, which would have been distracting at the very least, and may even on occasion have overwhelmed the power of a small choir. The impact of hordes of pilgrims is one that should not be underestimated. If the testimonies of Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis and Bishop Odo of Tours (with reference to their own establishments) are anything to go by, the nave at Christ Church must often have been an exceedingly noisy place.<sup>246</sup> This I believe was the root cause of the decision of Prior John Elham to build a new Lady Chapel within a decade of the recruitment of singing boys; to provide an architectural setting worthy of the Marian liturgy and moreover one that was comparatively quiet yet acoustically flattering. The new chapel rose in only seven building seasons, a timescale that further suggests the urgent necessity of relocation when compared with the decades expended on the north-west transept of the same period.

### **The fifteenth-century Lady Chapel**

The chapel itself is among the unsung gems of Perpendicular architecture, too little noticed by art historians eager to pay homage to the style's better known icons at such places as Westminster, Windsor and Cambridge; even Harvey's magisterial survey, *The Perpendicular Style*, does not include it.<sup>247</sup>

Though begun under Prior John Elham in 1448, the Lady Chapel was effectively built during the time of his successor Thomas Goldstone I (prior 1449-68),<sup>248</sup> who was buried there. The design is attributed to cathedral mason Richard Beke (fl. 1409 – d. 1458).<sup>249</sup> The chapel is entered from the north-west transept via an imposing arch with a cinquefoil in each spandrel, each with a carved rose in the

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<sup>246</sup> Hersey, C. K., 'The Church of St Martin at Tours', *Art Bulletin* no. 25, 1943, p. 20; Panofsky, E., *Abbot Suger*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Princeton, 1979, p. 43.

<sup>247</sup> Harvey, J., *The Perpendicular Style 1330 – 1485*, London, 1978.

<sup>248</sup> Obituary, BL. MS. Arundel 68, fol. 5.

<sup>249</sup> Dobson, B., 'The Monks of Canterbury in the Later Middle Ages, 1220-1540', in Collinson, P., Ramsay, N., & Sparks, M., *op. cit.*, p. 98.

centre. Above the arch are five image niches of considerable depth, their bases intact, but otherwise empty. The bottom half of the entrance arch has an impressive stone screen that appears to have been something of an afterthought judging by the obvious signs of damage caused by its insertion and stylistic inconsistencies with the chapel. There is little doubt that the Lady Chapel would appear to better advantage without this insertion, but nevertheless it is an interesting piece in its own right and retains a significant amount of original metalwork (fig. 10).

The chapel proper is two bays long. The lower walls of the westernmost bay are quite plain, attesting to the original presence of wooden choir stalls. Higher up, the bays are filled by huge windows. Those on the south side adjoining the Choir are blind, otherwise much original glass survives and has a pale watercolour quality, probably chosen to provide adequate light in a building sandwiched between Chapter House and Choir and no doubt contrasting effectively with the original paint and gilding, of which only fragments survive.<sup>250</sup> The north wall of the eastern bay contains a blocked door that formerly led to a vestry squeezed between the chapel and Chapter House. The same wall and that to the east bear scars indicating that there were originally three steps, on the topmost of which the altar stood. The size of the altar may be determined by a plain area flanked by traceried panels. It was seven feet six inches wide, and chasing in the east wall indicates that the *mensa* was about three feet above the topmost step. Richly canopied image niches flank the altar. Space precludes a full architectural description of all the myriad carved details that make the Lady Chapel the richest part of the cathedral, but the outstanding gem is the fan-vault of c. 1460, which achieves a dignified grandeur of deceptive simplicity and is the earliest surviving large-scale vault of this kind in the south-east of England.

Two surviving inventories provide further evidence of the chapel furnishings and the use to which it was put. The first has been dated to c. 1530.<sup>251</sup> The second list is from the 1540 Dissolution inventory.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> The glass (c. 1455), also contains representations of love knots, the family badge of Thomas Bourchier, the archbishop of the day.

<sup>251</sup> St John Hope, W. H., *op. cit.*, p. 164.

## The First Inventory

Thys ys an Invyntory off suche bokys & other stuff wtin or lady chapell In ciste church.

It' iiij vestmente wt all things to the same.

It' a pendant & a ffreng wt an awter clothe to the Awtr ffor the pincypall dayes.

It' a pendent wt ij awter clothys ffor the fferyall dayes & the Kurtens thereto.

It' a payer off Kurtens off whyt sylk.

It' the hanging off the chapell ffor bothe the side.

It' a carpet ffor the auter & a bell.

It' the myssall ffor the auter wt vij grayles ij sawters & an olde sawter ij small myssalle wt an olde s'vyce boke.

It' the great black boke wt the vytatory boke.

It' iiij querys off the sequens & the v boke off v parte wt a boke off the base part.

It' the boke of iiij pte wt ij queres off the mens & off the basse thereto.

It' ij small querys off thoms mann.

It' mr hawte boke wt an olde vytatory boke.

It' the boke that the masse off ij tenors ys In [& ij sawt', has been erased].

It' ij laten canstycke for awter.

In the time of da John olph' chawntr & John wood mr off the chyldern. In ciste church.

Though largely self-explanatory, this inventory has several points of particular interest. Liturgical books form a significant part of the list, and references to various singing parts corroborate the extensive use of polyphony previously discussed. Also we learn that in addition to the usual kinds of altar fitting, the chapel had decorative hangings on both sides.

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

## The Second Inventory

Our Ladie Chapell

Item one vestment of white damaske complete wth floures of golde.

Item one vestment of white silke mixte wth golde.

Item one vestment of golde baudekyn white wt orpheras of blew and floure de Lyces.

Item one vestment of white golde baudekyn wt garters on hit.

Item one vestment of white satein of briges for ev'y daie.

Item one corporas case of blew velvet myxte with golde.

Item one hanging of white fustian for ev'y daie. The frenge of white damaske enbroudered wth golde.

Item ij aulter clothes one diapor the other plaine cloth.

Item one hanging for the aulter of white damaske enbroudered wth Lyons of gold and a frenge of the same.

Item one peire of white curtains of white silke.

Item one peire curtains for the feryall dais lynen.

Item one hanging for above ov the aulter of olde white baudekyn wt roses golde.

Item ij peire organs and one large deske.

Item one hanging lampe copper and guylte

Item ij pece of tapestry with angelle for the quyre there.

Clearly the Lady Chapel was well equipped with vestments. That all were in the Virgin's colours strongly suggests that it was utilized exclusively for the Marian liturgy and did not serve as a location for other saints' commemorations. This is no great surprise in a large cathedral with many altars, but nevertheless provides an interesting contrast with the various vestment colours found in Lady Chapels in parish churches that suggest that use of the latter was not exclusively Marian.

The gilt copper lamp may refer to the successor or even the original such lamp that burned before the image of Our Lady in the old Chapel of St Benedict. Its location, suspended before the altar in the new chapel is attested to by fixing holes in the vault.

A single organ was generally referred to as a pair, owing to the pair of bellows it contained. The inventory therefore tells us that the chapel had not one, but two organs; no doubt the complexity of some of the polyphonic music was beyond the capacity of a single instrument of the sixteenth century.

## **Conclusion**

The history of the Lady Chapels at Christ Church, Canterbury, provides conclusive evidence of devotion to the Virgin, unbroken from erection of the first cathedral to the Dissolution. Their various locations indicate adaptations made in response to the evolution of the medieval liturgy and aspirations to provide the most fitting setting possible for the Queen of Heaven, utilizing all the appropriate arts of architecture, decoration, liturgical choreography and music. In addition, the simultaneous existence of a second Lady Chapel, that of Our Lady Undercroft, suggests acknowledgement and response to different needs; perhaps providing a more mysterious and more intimate environment for individual piety and a repository for votive offerings.

## Case Study:

### Peterborough Abbey / Cathedral: Ss Peter, Paul & Andrew

#### A Vanished Lady Chapel

In the year 1273 a new Lady Chapel was begun at Peterborough Abbey. This building was attached to the east wall of the north transept, but was otherwise freestanding.<sup>253</sup> The new addition was consecrated by Bishop Oliver Sutton on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1290, and a ten day indulgence was granted to all who heard Mass there on Sundays.<sup>254</sup> Demolished in 1661, documentary evidence is scarce.<sup>255</sup> Consequently the chapel has been little noticed by scholars; neither has the site ever been excavated. However, a figurative (though fragmentary) reconstruction is made possible by a study of such documentary sources as are extant. The chronology of the abbey is largely based on the testimony of Hugh Candidus, a twelfth-century monk, whose work consists of a Latin copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* made between 1155 and 1175. Hugh's text was updated in 1256 by Robert of Swaffham<sup>256</sup> and again by Walter of Whittlesey and an anonymous scribe down to 1338-9.<sup>257</sup> These medieval chronicles have provided the basis for subsequent histories of the church<sup>258</sup> and it is to Whittlesey that we owe the earliest extant description of the Lady Chapel, which is as follows.

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<sup>253</sup> The reasons for the location are problematic. The source may have been the recent addition of a Lady Chapel in this position at Ramsey, but ultimately the choice was probably practical. The south side of the church was heavily populated with the usual monastic buildings and the close proximity of the presbytery to the eastern boundary of the site, precluded a building of the long axial type.

<sup>254</sup> Hill, R. M. T., ed., *Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton 1280-1299*, III, Lincoln Record Society, 48, Lincoln, 1952 /54, p. 15.

<sup>255</sup> The dearth of documentary evidence has been verbally confirmed by Peterborough Cathedral Archaeologist, Mr D. F. Mackreth FSA.

<sup>256</sup> Peterborough Dean & Chapter MS. 1, and Martin, J., *The Cartularies and Registers of Peterborough Abbey*, Northamptonshire Record Society, vol. 28, Northampton, 1978, pp. 7-12.

<sup>257</sup> BL Add. MS 39758 and Martin, *ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>258</sup> The VCH account of the building history by Peers, C., 'Peterborough Minster', VCH *Northamptonshire*, vol. 2, London, 1906, pp. 424-460 relies heavily on these chronicles and Pevsner, N., concurs in *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdonshire and Peterborough*, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 307. The most recent architectural history of the

*In ipsius etiam abbatis Ricardi tempore<sup>259</sup> . . . inchoate est capella beatae Mariae Virginis, Anno Domini MCCLXXII, per venerabilis virum Dominum Willelmum Parys, tunc Priorem, qui primum lapidem totius capellae fabricae apponens manu propria, plurimaeque evangelia in quadam acedula scripta sub eodem lapide apposuit.<sup>260</sup>*

Symon Gunton's *The History of the Church of Peterburgh* of 1686 is a particularly important source in that it was written within living memory of the chapel's standing.<sup>261</sup> Gunton died in 1676, but the value of his research was recognised by the Dean of Peterborough, Symon Patrick, who prepared the work for publication, adding a substantial supplement of his own and 'A Short and True Narrative of the Rifling and Defacing [of] the Cathedral Church of Peterburgh in the year 1643', by Francis Standish.<sup>262</sup> Gunton informs us that,

In the time of Abbot Richard there was one William Parys Prior, who built the goodly Chappel commonly called the Ladies Chappel, which in the late times of violence was levelled with the ground. William Parys himself laid the first stone, and under it, many sentences of Scripture written, but whether in Brass or Lead, Whittlesey tells not. And he not only laid the foundation, but perfected the whole work, and adorned it with windows, and paintings on the walls, and settled five pound per annum upon it for service therein. Afterwards

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cathedral is Lisa Reilly's *An Architectural History of Peterborough Cathedral*, Oxford, 1997.

Unfortunately, as far as the Lady Chapel is concerned Reilly draws heavily on Mary Dean's 'The Beginnings of Decorated Architecture in the Southeast Midlands and East Anglia', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1979, some of whose hypotheses I believe to be flawed. See below.

<sup>259</sup> Abbot Richardis de London, 1262-73.

<sup>260</sup> Transcript from Sparke, J., ed., *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Varii*, London, 1723, pp. 149-50.

<sup>261</sup> Gunton, S., *The History of the Church of Peterburgh*, Patrick, S., ed., London, 1686, facsimile edition, Peterborough & Stamford, 1990.

<sup>262</sup> Patrick's manuscript survives. BL. MS. Add. 22666.

dying, he was buried in the North part of the Church, near unto the said Chappel, and the Inscription upon his Grave-stone is yet to be seen.

*Hic jacet Willielmus Parys quoridam Prior Burgi, cujus anime misereatur Deus, Amen. Paternoster, Ave Maria*'.<sup>263</sup>

Sparke gives the additional information that Parys's internment was 'before the image of Our Lady and Child on a column'.<sup>264</sup> I have noticed that a thirteenth-century triple base survives on the west side of the northernmost pier of the north transept, which may have supported such an image, sited outside the chapel.

Gunton's testimony is supported by the evidence of the only known illustration of the Lady Chapel, an engraving of the exterior by Daniel King (fig. 11).<sup>265</sup> This drawing is not as accurate as one would wish. It places the chapel much further south than is suggested by the surviving gable weathering on the east wall of the transept, and the window tracery shown is crudely depicted, though the latter has some affinity with late thirteenth-century tracery in the southernmost bay of the east wall of the north transept<sup>266</sup> and in the fenestration of the east wall of the south transept (though the latter examples have been heavily restored). Nevertheless, the drawing is an important adjunct to the other documentary sources, which together

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<sup>263</sup> Gunton, S., *op. cit.*, p. 37. The inscription is echoed in Bridges, J., & Whalley, P., ed., *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*, 2 vols, Oxford, 1791, vol. 2, p. 568, and disproves an assertion made by Mary Dean that Parys was buried at the west end of the chapel, *op. cit.*, p. 181. Bridges gives the date of Parys' death, 1286.

<sup>264</sup> Sparke, J., *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>265</sup> Dean, M., *op. cit.*, p. 181, asserts without evidence that the drawing is by Charles Wild and was made c. 20 years after the destruction, though on p. 183 she makes reference to King's illustration without further explanation. In fact the drawing was commissioned by John Oldfield of Spalding, executed by Daniel King and was first published in Dugdale, W., & Dodsworth, R., *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. 1, 1655, p. 64.

<sup>266</sup> This window, dates to c. 1275. It has three lights and three oculi in the head with cinquefoils. It must have been inserted as part of the Lady Chapel project in order to compensate for the light excluded from the transept.

suggest a building on a scale almost as monumental as the choir itself. Additional details concerning the chapel are contained in *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.<sup>267</sup>

The Lady Chapel was five bays in length, each bay articulated by a stepped buttress, and each filled by a traceried window (fig. 12). Whittlesey informs us that the main fabric materials were stone, wood and glass, the roof covered in lead (the latter crowned by a small turret or bell cote in the King engraving). The window glass depicted important Marian iconography including the Virgin herself, the Tree of Jesse and a series of English kings.<sup>268</sup> The King engraving suggests that the east window may have been divided by an external buttress and Gunton describes the window in the following terms:

The eastern window of this Ladies Chappel was the fairest and goodliest in all the Church, scarce a fairer in any other Cathedral. It was adorned with painted glass containing many stories, amongst the rest, of Julian the Apostate, and these two verses, *Cuspide Mercurii Julianus Aposatacasus: Vincis, ait, vincis, heu, Nazarene potens*.<sup>269</sup>

The interior of the chapel was also elaborately ornamented with sculpture, paint and gilding, and the ceiling is described as consisting of gilded wooden panels, suggestive of a feature similar to the nave ceiling, which consists of lozenge shaped painted panels. However, the nave ceiling of c. 1220 must have seemed very dated by 1290, an inappropriate component of the Lady Chapel design and therefore an unlikely source of inspiration. The ceiling is explicitly described as wooden, not stone vaulted, but might it not have been timber vaulted in the manner of nearby Warmington? The date of the latter suggests that the possibility of a

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<sup>267</sup> By Sir William Parre and colleagues in 1535, in Caley, J., & Hunter, J., eds, *Valor Ecclesiasticus, temp. Henr. VIII*, 6 vols, London, 1810 – 1834, vol. 4, pp. 279-284.

<sup>268</sup> The medieval thought processes that noticed that *Ave* spelt *Eva* backwards (a link that reinforced Mary's role as second Eve), also noted the close correlation between *virga* (rod) and *virgo* (virgin), with reference to The Tree of Jesse in *Isaiah* 11, 1-3, which became an important constituent of Marian iconography. This development is discussed by Watson, A, *Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, London, 1934.

<sup>269</sup> Gunton, S., *op. cit.*, p. 100.

correlation should not be excluded<sup>270</sup> (though the later recycling of ceiling panels argues against the hypothesis), and if proven, would suggest a Lady Chapel ceiling much more appropriate to the architectural and decorative splendours of the building than a simple wooden type. Moreover, the hitherto unexplained existence of the most unusual feature of a wooden vault in a parish church would be accounted for and provide a model for figurative reconstruction of the Peterborough Lady Chapel, the interior of which had been further ‘beautified at the expense of one hundred pounds’ by Robert Kirkton or Marchaunt, the penultimate abbot, 1497-1528, who was buried in the chapel.<sup>271</sup> Kirkton’s refurbishment consisted of ‘pictures and gilded work, much of which was lately extant’, according to Gunton.<sup>272</sup>

Clearly, the interior was sumptuously appointed and the inventory of *Valor Ecclesiasticus* indicates a further layer of enrichment in the Lady Chapel’s goods, as follows:

#### In The Ladie’s Chappel

Imprimis an image of our Lady with reddis risey,<sup>273</sup> set in a tabernacle well gilt, upon wood, with twelve great images, and four and thirty small images of the same work, about the chappel.

Item a pair of organs, one desk, and four seats, one tabernacle of the Trinity, and one other of our Lady, one desk, and one old candlestick of latten, four pedecoaths called tappets.

Item two vestments of white damask with flowers, one red vestment of red satten with flowers, and also albes for the same.

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<sup>270</sup> Circa last quarter of the thirteenth century. Pevsner, N., *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, revised by Cherry, B., London 1973 & 1995, p. 445.

<sup>271</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 558-9.

<sup>272</sup> Gunton, S., *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>273</sup> The term ‘reddis risey’ is a curious one that is problematic in terms of interpretation. However, I have discovered that an important needle-making centre was established in Redditch c. 1200. Ref., Field, A., ‘Needlelace and Whitework’, in Synge, L., ed., *The Royal School of Needlework Book of Needlework and Embroidery*, London, 1986, p. 226. The term reseau refers to a type of lace. Ref., Clabburn, P., *The National Trust Book of Furnishing Textiles*, London, 1988, p. 253. It is therefore possible that the term refers to needlelace, probably in this case a veil for Our Lady’s image.

Item one suit of crimson velvet with orphreys of imagery of gold, and one cope, and four albes.

Item three white altar cloaths, one of them diaper, with three old painted fronts, two orfreys, eight surplices.<sup>274</sup>

The number, type and manner of liturgical observances within the chapel remain obscure. Two volumes (of three) of a fourteenth-century Customary<sup>275</sup> survive, but neither makes any reference to Marian observances, which must have been contained in the lost third volume, though the general nature of such observances may be presumed from the known practices in other places. The function of the Lady Chapel as an independent quire dedicated to veneration of the Queen of Heaven cannot be doubted, though the absence of specific evidence is regrettable. However, occasional references in the accounts do provide tantalizing glimpses into the life of the chapel. The Peterborough monks had a cell at Oxney where they retired periodically for bloodletting and retreat from the austerities of monastic life.<sup>276</sup> This retreat had its own chapel dedicated to the Virgin, from which the monastery received the offerings to the sum of 3s. 4d, according to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, of 1535.<sup>277</sup> The warden of the Lady Chapel in the abbey church received £7 11s. 1 ½ d.<sup>278</sup>

Deductions amounting to 6s. 8d. went to Thomas Hakeman, bailiff of the lands appertaining to the Warden of the Lady Chapel.

*Valor Ecclesiasticus* also lists the deduction of £6 in annual payment for the ‘two hundred pounds of wax, used in the Lady Chapel in the aforesaid monastery, by the endowment of abbot Robert Kirkton’.<sup>279</sup> This is a huge amount for one chapel, bearing in mind that £15 was expended annually on five hundred pounds of wax

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<sup>274</sup> Gunton, S., *op. cit.*, p. 61 & Mellows, W. T., ed., *The Last Days Of Peterborough Monastery*, Northamptonshire Record Society, vol. 12, Kettering, 1947, p. 23.

<sup>275</sup> Lambeth MS. 198 & 198b.

<sup>276</sup> Mellows, W. T., *op. cit.*, p. xi.

<sup>277</sup> Caley, J., & Hunter, J., eds, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>278</sup> Mellows, W. T., *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

used in the chancel [choir] and on the maintenance of the lamps throughout the church.

The cumulative evidence indicates a Lady Chapel of incredible magnificence at Peterborough, some 46 yards long and 14 wide, according to *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.<sup>280</sup> The building was clearly most impressive both in terms of architecture, decorative embellishments and equipment and may owe to this magnificence the honour of being selected (in preference to the main church) by Cardinal Wolsey as the setting for the Maundy liturgy when he stayed at the monastery during Passion week in 1530, on which occasion 'he made his Maundy in our Lady's chapel, having fifty-nine poor men whose feet he then washed, wiped and kissed. Each of these poor men had twelve pence in money, three ells of canvas to make them shirts, a pair of new shoes, a cast of bread, three red herrings, three white herrings, and the odd person had two shillings'.<sup>281</sup> The fifty-nine poor men must have provided a vivid contrast to the combined splendours of the chapel, the cardinal and his retinue, and would thereby have made Wolsey's condescension and charity to his inferiors appear all the greater.

The abbey survived the Dissolution by becoming a cathedral, and seems to have remained largely intact until the Civil War and Interregnum. However, the physical attacks made on Peterborough Cathedral during these periods were particularly ferocious. The contemporary account of Francis Standish, recorded by Gunton's editor Dean Patrick reads like a Passion narrative, which from the dean's standpoint is entirely appropriate.<sup>282</sup> The following extracts graphically illustrate the destruction and are included here because they have a bearing on the final fate of the Lady Chapel. He writes 'A short and true narrative of the rifeling [*sic*] and defacing [of] the Cathedral Church of Peterburgh, in the year 1643.'<sup>283</sup> He suggests that 'ye inhabitants of Peterburgh at ye time were accounted by these Reformers both a malignant and superstitious kind of people',<sup>284</sup> and tells us that

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<sup>280</sup> Cited by Mellows, W. T., *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>282</sup> BL. MS. Add. 22666.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Early in ye morning [they] break open ye church doors, pull down ye organs, of which there was two paire. The greater paire stood upon a high loft, over ye entrance to ye quire, was thence thrown down upon ye ground and there stamped and trampled upon and broke in pieces with such strange, furious and frantic zeal, as can't be well conceived. . . The great painting of Christ and saints over the high altar was destroyed by shooting with muskets.<sup>285</sup> 'Thus in a short time a faire and goodly structure was quite stript [sic] of all its ornaments, all beauty and made a spectacle, a very chaos of desolation and confusion, nothing scarce remaining but only bare walls, broken seats and shattered windows on every side.'<sup>286</sup>

The cathedral church was saved from final demolition through the auspices of Oliver Saint John, a former ambassador to Holland, who later wrote 'All the reward of that Embassy was, that whereas the Minster of Peterborough, being an ancient and goodly Fabrick, was propounded to be sold and demolished, I begg'd it to be granted to the citizens of Peterborough, who at present and ever since have made use of it'.<sup>287</sup>

Some of the damage had to be made good if the church was to function as a place of public worship and Dean Patrick tells us how this was accomplished. 'Now ye town considering ye largeness of ye building and ye greatness of ye charge to repair it, wch of themselves they were not able to defray, they all agree, to pull down ye Ladies Chappell as it was then called, an additional building to ye north side of ye minster (being then ruinous and ready to fall) and to export ye materialls [sic] thereof, lead, timber and stone to sale, and to convert ye mony it was made of them towards ye repairs of ye great fabrick.' The repairs included 'fitting up ye quire, and making it pretty decent for ye congregation to meet in. And this they did by taking ye painted boards yt came off from ye roof of ye Ladies Chappell and

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<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96.

<sup>287</sup> Sweeting, W. D., *Historical and Architectural Notes on the Parish Churches in and around Peterborough*, London, 1868, pp. 48-49.

placing them all along at ye back of ye quire in such manner as they continue to this day'.<sup>288</sup>

As well as explaining precisely in what circumstances the Lady Chapel was finally demolished, Patrick's narrative begs an interesting question. Was the chapel really as 'ruinous and ready to fall' as he asserts? The materials he lists for sale were clearly valuable enough to cover the cost of their own dismantlement and partially defray the cost of repairs elsewhere. They include wood and lead, implying that the chapel was still roofed, and the admission that 'ye painted boards yt came off from ye roof' were in good enough condition to be recycled into the refitted choir lends weight to a hypothesis that the 'ruinous and ready to fall' condition was an exaggerated claim made of a building that had been damaged by Reformation and Civil War iconoclasm, but which may otherwise have been substantially intact.<sup>289</sup> The burial of Simon English, 'the distinguished Peterborough schoolmaster',<sup>290</sup> in the Lady Chapel in 1592, and the erection of a commemorative tablet support this hypothesis since a distinguished citizen is unlikely to have been buried in a ruin. Also, comparison may be made with Ely, which in the same period survived destruction simply because the fabric was so ravaged that the cost of demolition was calculated to outweigh the value of the materials. Perhaps at Peterborough Dean Patrick was simply finding means to justify the exploitation by destruction of a fine building for which the church had no further use.

What is certain is that the razing of the chapel was thorough. Nothing survives above ground except the aforementioned roof weathering, a small section of blind wall arcading on the east wall of the transept and the remains of two arches (now windows) that formerly gave access from the two westernmost choir aisle bays (fig. 13). The accounts for 1699 record the expenditure of £20 paid to John Lovin

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<sup>288</sup> BL. MS. Add. 22666, pp. 97-8.

<sup>289</sup> This recycling of the roof timbers need not preclude the possibility of a wooden vault in the Lady Chapel provided the webbing boards were flat.

<sup>290</sup> Mellows, W. T., ed., *The Foundation of Peterborough Cathedral, A. D. 1541*, Northamptonshire Record Society, vol. 13, Kettering, 1941, p. liv. Volume 13 of the Northamptonshire Record Society publications precedes volume 12 owing to the interruption of the Second World War. See vol. 12, preface, p. v.

for four 'new buttresses where the Ladies Chappel stood and making all that handsome, for stopping a great cleft in the north aisle and other work about the minster'.<sup>291</sup>

The westernmost of the two remaining arches accessed a room of uncertain use, but which may have provided a vestry; the other led into a passage that gave access to the Lady Chapel itself. Immediately east of the passage and accessed from it, the chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury was situated between the Lady Chapel and choir, occupying one bay. This building was an insertion made by Godfrey of Crowland, abbot 1299-1321,<sup>292</sup> which Gunton notices as follows.

On the north side of the church there was lately a passage into the now demolished Ladies Chappel, in which passage was a little Chappel on the right hand, Archt [sic] over with stone, having a fair east-window, and on the north side little windows looking into the Ladies Chappel: Overhead were two chambers, which by common tradition hath told, to have been the habitation of a devout Lady, called Agnes, or Dame Agnes, out of whose lodging-chamber there was a hole made askew in the window walled up, having its prospect just upon the Altar in the Ladies Chappel, and no more.<sup>293</sup>

We are not told when this anchoress / hermit occupied her lodgings, but clearly there was an elevation squint in the fabric and the Lady Chapel was the focus of her religious devotion.

The most recently published interpretation of the Lady Chapel is Reilly's,<sup>294</sup> who - as previously stated - derived most of her information from Dean.<sup>295</sup> The latter author, whilst acknowledging the dearth of reliable information concerning the chapel, yet interprets that information as suggesting the Ste Chapelle as the ultimate stylistic source; which influence was transmitted to Peterborough via

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<sup>291</sup> Sweeting, W. D., *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>292</sup> Apparently while he was still cellarer. VCH, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 433.

<sup>293</sup> Gunton, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>294</sup> Reilly, L., *op. cit.*

<sup>295</sup> Dean, M., *op. cit.*, p. 183.

Westminster, and that 'Peterborough is thus the first example of the transmission and application of this important French and English court-related idea, a building which prefigures the better-known examples of the second half of the century in London and provides an important intermediary between Westminster and the Palace Chapel of the Bishops of Ely, in the 1280's, and St Stephen's Chapel in the 1290's'.<sup>296</sup> Dean's sole evidence is Whittlesea's medieval description of a richly decorated interior, and the assumed correlation between surviving window tracery in the transepts with that depicted in the King engraving, and whilst her hypothesis is a highly attractive one, I think that there is simply too little evidence to support it. Of greater significance and interest is that Peterborough, Bury and Ramsey were the thirteenth-century progenitors of the only extant example of the north side 'detached' group of East Anglian Lady Chapels - Ely, commenced in 1322.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Dean, M., *op. cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>297</sup> The Ely Lady Chapel and its iconography is discussed in Broughton, L, forthcoming, 'The Lady Chapel: A Garden Enclosed', chapter 8 in *Interpreting Ely Cathedral*, and I am grateful to Dr Broughton for allowing me to read this chapter in advance of publication.

## **Case Study:**

### **St Alban's Abbey / Cathedral of St Alban**

#### **Introduction**

This abbey has been selected for inclusion in this study on the grounds that it has an important extant example of an eastern axial Lady Chapel and also because there is sufficient surviving evidence of Marian devotion in various other areas of the church to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the cult than has hitherto been the case here or in other major churches.

#### **Evidence and Interpretation**

Amongst the Rolls Series of printed documents there is a two-volume set, edited by Henry Riley.<sup>298</sup> The principal source document<sup>299</sup> is notoriously difficult to work from, a problem noted by Riley in his introduction to volume one in the following terms:

The work itself is contained in a small unattractive quarto volume (MS. Harl. 3775), where it forms one of more than a dozen closely packed items, most of them relating to St Alban's; it is written throughout, on parchment of very inferior quality, in a cramped and minute hand, that is at all times uninviting, and occasionally all but indecipherable to even the well-practised eye; while the Latin in which the writer has clothed his entries is repeatedly found to violate the ordinary rules of grammar and orthography, words also being not unfrequently [*sic*] left out, and sentences left incomplete. In some few instances also, allusions are made to current events, of so faint and dubious a

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<sup>298</sup> Riley, H. T., ed., *Annales Monasterii S. Albani, A Johanne Amundesham, monacho, ut videtur, conscripta, A. D. 1421-1440; quibus praefigitur chronicon rerum gestarum in monasterio S. Albani, A. D. 1422-1431, A quodam auctore ignoto compilatum*, London, 1870-71 & 1965.

<sup>299</sup> BL. MS. Harley 3775, fol. 179a.

complexion, that it seems all but hopeless to attempt to discover with preciseness what the writer really means.<sup>300</sup>

That said, the principal source of interest for current purposes appears in volume one as an annotation of a document of c. 1430, which contains references to the shrines of Ss Alban and Amphibalus, and lists every altar, monument and tomb then existing in the church and the other monastic buildings. This record was partially and unreliably rendered into English in the eighteenth century,<sup>301</sup> but a fuller and more accurate translation was published in the wake of the Rolls Series edition.<sup>302</sup>

John Amundesham (the original author of the second text) noted that unmarked burials and removals for various reasons of tombs and monuments could result in the ‘swift oblivion’ of ‘the very things which for importance and merit ought to be remembered’.<sup>303</sup> His record is an invaluable adjunct in determining the extent of the Marian cult within the abbey at a particular time, which (as might be expected in a Benedictine House) was considerable and was by no means confined to *the* Lady Chapel on the eastern axis of the church. These peripheral locations of devotion to Our Lady will therefore be examined before focussing on the Lady Chapel proper.

The Marian altars and their locations according to the testimony of Amundesham, (supplemented by information provided by Lloyd 1872) were as follows c. 1430.

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<sup>300</sup> Riley, H. T., *op. cit.*, 1870-1, p. xi.

<sup>301</sup> Newcome, P., *The History of the Abbey of St Alban*, London, 1795.

<sup>302</sup> ‘Certain Annotations concerning the Altars, Monuments, and sites of Tombs, in the Church of the Monastery of St Alban’, 1873 published with ‘An Architectural and Historical Account of the Shrines of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibalus in Saint Alban’s Abbey, 1872, in a single volume, Lloyd, R., *Shrines, Altars and Monuments in St Alban’s Abbey*, London, 1873. References to these works appear herein as Lloyd 1872 & 1873 respectively.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 5.

1. St Mary of the Four Tapers – east end of choir aisle.
2. B.V.M. – east end of south nave aisle.
3. St Mary at the Pillar – west end of pier in fifth bay of nave.
4. St Mary – by the altar of St Andrew in St Andrew’s Chapel.
5. St Mary – abbot’s chapel, over forensic parlour<sup>304</sup> attached to south side of nave.
6. St Mary – moved with altars of Ss Benedict and Thomas of Canterbury from west ends of piers in sixth, seventh or eighth bay of nave to screen of Holy Cross.
7. St Wulstan or The Salutation – south east end of the Saint’s Chapel (shrine of St Alban).
8. St Blaise- altar at which the Lady Mass had formerly been celebrated.
9. St Mary – south transept.

The reference to St Mary of the Four Tapers is a curious one, referring to an altar at which a daily Mass of Our Lady and other masses were celebrated, but the custom of burning four tapers appears to have derived from an earlier practice of celebrating the Lady Mass at the altar of St Blaise. Amundesham explains the later custom in the following terms.

There is moreover, there, the Altar of St Mary, called that “Of the Four Tapers,” where daily, two masses were usually said, for the Church, and for the Dead, besides other masses celebrated thereat. Thus it is called “For the Church,” because the Mass is that of St Mary, but its second Collect is for the Church. And (the Altar) is for this reason termed “ Of the Four Tapers,” because four wax tapers, maintained by four Officers of the Convent, are there daily lighted; where the masses of the Lords John, Roger, and Hugh, Abbats [*sic*], were sometimes celebrated.<sup>305</sup>

The basic fabric of this area is thirteenth century and the Chapel of Our Lady of the Four Tapers was established in the angle created by a thirteenth-century squaring

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<sup>304</sup> Where the monks were permitted to receive visitors.

<sup>305</sup> Lloyd, R., *op. cit.*, 1873, p. 16. I believe Amundesham’s explanation to be incomplete. The practice of burning two candles before images of Our Lady is a well attested one, but it was also customary to burn two candles at the ceremony that invoked St Blaise to bless throats on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. I suggest this association to be the probable origin of the four tapers.

of the ambulatory to the east of the proto-martyr's shrine. This multi-functional area also housed the shrine of St Amphibalus on the main axis. The Four Tapers Chapel is distinguished by rich wall-arcading (much restored) and a trifoliate piscina.

The altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the east end of the south nave aisle was one of three altars across the width of the church that had previously been located on the west side of piers within the north arcade, but which had subsequently been translated to areas flanking the great stone pulpitum of c. 1350.<sup>306</sup> The other two dedications were Ss Benedict and Thomas of Canterbury (cited previously at No. 6). A fourth altar, that of the Holy Cross, occupied the usual location on the axis. The pulpitum originally extended across the full width of the church, making an effective barrier between the monks' choir and the nave and consequently made an impressive reredos to each of the four altars. The Marian altar was raised on two steps, enclosed by the aisle wall to the south, and to the north by iron railings that formed part of an enclosure around the Holy Cross altar. In addition, this part of the south aisle is groin vaulted. Cumulatively these features suggest a substantial and impressive Lady Chapel in this area; one that for a time may have functioned as the principal focus of Marian devotion in accordance with the *Decreta* of Archbishop Lanfranc.

A small chapel known as St Mary at the Pillar occupied the area between the fourth and fifth piers (counting from the west) of the southern nave arcade. The altar stood against the west side of pier five, upon which a wall painting depicting the Adoration of The Magi served as a reredos. This relatively small area was enclosed to north and south by iron railings that do not appear to have projected beyond the width of the piers, a gap for access being located at the north west. The chapel thus created was (according to the Amundesham testimony) 'sufficiently ornamented and adorned [with] books and vestments, together with the various appliances of the altar, in divers ways, according to the requirements of the festivals' by William

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<sup>306</sup> This feature may have been designed with such a translation in mind.

Wyntyrshulle, a former almoner of the church, who was buried in the nave outside the chapel entrance.<sup>307</sup>

The Chapel of St Andrew is no longer extant, but once occupied an area outside the main body of the church on the north side of the nave, extending eastwards from the west end for six bays and roughly comparable to the nave in width, within which Amundesham attests altars of SS Andrew, Mary and Nicholas. As patron, the principal altar of St Andrew was almost certainly located at the east end, flanked by those of Ss Mary and Nicholas. This chapel had originally been built during the abbacy of Robert Gorham (1151-66),<sup>308</sup> but demolished and rebuilt subsequent to Amundesham's writing, whose testimony must therefore refer to the earlier building. No longer visible, the ground plan of the chapel was established by excavations under the direction of Gilbert Scott in 1860-1.<sup>309</sup>

The evidence for assigning a Marian dedication to the altar of the abbot's chapel is inconclusive. The chapel itself was apparently dedicated in honour of St Alexius during the abbacy of Richard D' Aubeney (1097-1119), by Ranulph, Bishop of Durham.<sup>310</sup>

The dedication of an altar on the south side of the Saint's Chapel – the chapel containing St Alban's shrine, remains unclear, but may have been to the Salutation. What is more certain is that Our Lady was represented in this chapel by relics of her vestments, contained with other relics in one of two suns with silver gilt rays, which were kept on the crest of the feretory of St Alban.<sup>311</sup>

Two apsidal Romanesque chapels formerly existed on the east sides of each transept. Those in the angles between the transepts and choir projected eastward for approximately a bay and a half (fig. 14). The larger of the chapels attached to the south transept may well be the altar of St Blaise, to which Amundesham makes

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<sup>307</sup> Lloyd, R., *op. cit.*, 1873, p. 14.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 63.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 63.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 64.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 1872, p. 14. The suns with silver-gilt rays suggest reliquaries of the monstrance type.

reference as the location of the Lady Mass before construction of the Four Tapers Chapel. He locates this close to the later work near to the monks' cemetery and attests that 'it is utterly destroyed and done away: nor is the memorial of the said [place] preserved elsewhere to this time'.<sup>312</sup> According to Matthew Paris,<sup>313</sup> the practice of lighting four tapers was begun here at the instigation of Abbot William de Trumpington (r.1214-35), who directed that the tapers should be provided by the almoner and the kitcheners.<sup>314</sup> The same source informs us that 'they may daily be lighted, and may burn whilst the Mass of the Blessed Virgin is said without musical inflexions (namely that for the Church)', though there is an apparent contradiction in the next line that states 'Mass is always *sung* with a chalice of gold and a special vestment, and four lighted tapers, whereof two (those, to wit, which are placed towards the east) are the gift of Adam the Cellarer'. It was the same abbot, William de Trumpington, who 'seeing that it was done in all the noble Churches of England' instituted 'a daily mass of the Blessed Virgin . . . solemnly sung to note'.<sup>315</sup>

Scholars have noted that Trumpington's directives replaced the older tradition of celebrating a Lady Mass only on Saturdays,<sup>316</sup> but in fact Paris's testimony is much more intriguing. He states that (previously) 'unless a reasonable cause intervene, a Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin is made in albs, through the whole day and night, - a thing not done in other churches'.<sup>317</sup> An observance that took a day and a night and which might be cancelled with 'reasonable cause' suggests a liturgical practice of greater sophistication than a simple vigil, albeit one that included the Mass in its rubrics.

Approximately fifty years after the inauguration of the daily Lady Mass, and on completion of a new eastern axial Lady Chapel the old chapel was demolished / adapted for a treasury / vestry, and a small transeptal chapel dedicated to St John

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<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 1872, p. 16.

<sup>313</sup> Walsingham, T., *Gesta, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 234.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 284.

<sup>316</sup> E. g., Draper, P., 'Seeing that it was Done', *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>317</sup> Walsingham, T., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 284.

the Evangelist was created in the transept where the entrance to the old chapel had been. The link between Our Lady and St Blaise seems to have been perpetuated at an altar located in the south east corner of the north transept and dedicated in honour of Our Saviour, St Mary the Virgin, Ss Laurence and Blaise.<sup>318</sup> This had been instigated and endowed by the same William Wyntyrshulle who had also endowed, and was buried close to, the chapel of St Mary at the Pillar. The true dedication of the north transept altar is highly problematic, being also variously referred to as the altar of Pity or the Holy Cross. In fact, the confusion is easily accounted for by minor re-orderings of devotional appurtenances. Apparently an image of St Laurence had been moved to this area from the almonry. Also, an old crucifix known as the Leaning Crucifix was located here, as was an image of Our Lady that had formerly stood over the altar of St Blaise.<sup>319</sup>

It is therefore the demolished chapel, not the later Chapel of the Four Tapers, nor the extant eastern axial Lady Chapel that is arguably the most important in the history of the abbey in terms of architecture and liturgy in that the practices instituted by Trumpington provided the inspiration for its successors. The Chapel of the Four Tapers as part of a retrochoir containing the shrine of Amphibalus was completed before the axial chapel and probably became the main Lady Chapel prior to completion of the same. This would explain the continuity of transferring the provision for burning four tapers from the transeptal chapel to the chapel named after the practice. Furthermore, since the Mass for the Church continued to be offered in the Taper Chapel after completion of the axial Lady Chapel, the failure to transfer the tapers to the latter is likewise explained.

If the previous hypotheses are accepted, then the addition of an eastern axial Lady Chapel may be largely explained in terms of providing a more worthy architectural setting for the daily liturgy offered in honour of the Virgin than could be provided by the outdated Romanesque fabric and moreover, one that was sited in a place of greater honour. There can be little doubt that the eastern axial position was usually the most favoured location. As previously noted, the exceptions tend to prove the

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<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 17.

<sup>319</sup> Walsingham, T., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 159 & 287.

rule in that there are almost always pressing reasons for siting Lady Chapels elsewhere. At Canterbury, the cult of St Thomas, provision for his relics and an adequate route for pilgrims effectively precluded an axial Lady Chapel. The same was true at Ely, while at Peterborough (as we have seen above), the close proximity of the eastern land boundary may well have been a factor in the decision to provide a Lady Chapel to the north of the main church. At St Albans the design for 'squaring' the east end with adequate provision for the shrines was conceived with a more fitting Lady Chapel as its architectural climax.

The main building campaign of the extant Lady Chapel at the east end of the abbey lasted from 1308 to 1315. It is three bays in length and one storey high. The chapel was utilized as a schoolroom for three hundred years from 1550 to 1870 and suffered heavily as a consequence, though had it not been adapted to this useful purpose it would probably have been lost altogether. Matthew Paris describes the building of the chapel and some of its features and his testimony is worth quoting in full:

Concerning the building of the Chapel of St Mary, the cost being effectually supplied by Abbot Hugh de Eversden and Master Reginald of St Albans. This Abbot (1308-26) since he venerated, amongst all the Elect of God, His Blessed Mother, with special devotion, always desired to be able entirely to dedicate a building and its ornaments to the same Virgin. Amongst his deeds, which were always noble, he brought to a praise-worthy completion the Chapel of the said Virgin in the Eastern part of the Church which had been begun many years before, in the manner following.

There was a certain clerk named Master Reginald, receiving the best corrody and fee from the House of St Alban, who being inspired with the love of God, gave helping hands to finish the said work. But when the clerk aforesaid, being continually occupied, delayed at the Court of Rome, the progress of the work was, owing to his absence, and the slothfulness of his agent, intermitting, slow, and tardy. When at length, after much delay, it had been finished as far as the top of the walls, the clerk yielded to fate, leaving by his will two hundred marks for the work before mentioned. The Lord Abbot Hugh,

receiving this money, laboured so earnestly for the completion of this work that in a short time he had, to the honour of the glorious Virgin, finished the roof with choice timber and an arched vault, and most beautiful glass windows; - a magnificent sight; Walter of Langleie and Alice his wife helping the abbot in the cost. Moreover that place contiguous, in the shape of a square chapel, separating the Presbytery from the said chapel, with a ceiling in the midst of which the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is figured (wherein now the shrine of St Amphibalus is placed) he at the same time took pains to finish.<sup>320</sup>

Much of the foregoing is self explanatory, but one or two points raise questions that suggest our knowledge of this building's history is not as straightforward as is sometimes supposed. Most important in terms of its liturgical implications is Paris's explicit statement that the chapel had been begun 'many years before' the abbacy of Hugh de Eversden (r, 1308-26). If he is right, then the need for a better venue for celebration of the Marian liturgy followed closer on the heels of Trumpington's directives than may be supposed if 1308 is accepted as *terminus ante quem*.

During the Lady Chapel's long eclipse as a schoolroom a public right of way effectively detached it from the rest of the abbey, but its subsequent recovery and restoration in the nineteenth century were sympathetically accomplished, especially in comparison with other areas of the abbey.<sup>321</sup> Externally, most of the window tracery has been replaced. Internally the cinquefoil wall-arcading is heavily restored, and the stone vault dating from the restoration is a radical departure from the wooden original, but otherwise a surprising amount of original fabric survives (fig. 15). Sophisticated Geometrical tracery fills the windows, which are ornamented with ballflowers. The tracery retains traces of red pigment. The east window has five lights and five of the remaining six windows have four lights, that above the sedilia taking the form of a rounded triangle.

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<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 114, & Lloyd, R., *op. cit.*, 1873, p. 51.

<sup>321</sup> For restoration of the abbey, see Chamberlin, R., *The English Cathedral*, Exeter, 1987, pp. 156-160.

Of greater interest are nine canopied niches carved into the central mullions and jambs of each side window excepting the 'odd' one above the sedilia. Some of these figures are missing, but an attempt to identify the survivals follows and concludes this case study of a particularly interesting example of the various ways that devotion to Our Lady manifested itself in the arrangements of this major church. Windows are listed clockwise beginning with the north west, and all figures read from the top down.<sup>322</sup>

### **Window One:**

West jamb:

1. A figure wearing pontifical vestments
2. A figure wearing pontifical vestments
3. Missing

Mullion:

1. A figure wearing pontifical vestments
2. A figure wearing pontifical vestments
3. A monk / abbot in habit

East jamb:

1. A figure wearing pontifical vestments
2. A figure wearing pontifical vestments
3. Missing

### **Window Two:**

West jamb:

1. St Edmund
2. A figure wearing pontifical vestments

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<sup>322</sup> Based on the identifications suggested by Peers, C. R., & Page, W., VCH, *Hertfordshire*, vol. 2, London, 1908, pp. 488-9.

3. A figure in vestments, but with head missing

Mullion:

1. Male figure with spear and book
2. Missing
3. Missing

East jamb:

1. Edward the Confessor
2. Figure with head missing
3. Missing

**Window Three:**

West jamb:

1. A male figure holding a palm (symbol of martyrdom)
2. Unidentified
3. Missing

Mullion:

1. A king
2. A king
3. Kneeling figure

East Jamb:

1. An archbishop
2. A figure holding a crown
3. A kneeling figure

**Window Four, The East Window** (has no figure sculpture)

**Window Five, Above The Sedilia** (has no figure sculpture)

**Window Six:**

East jamb:

1. An Evangelist
2. A prophet
3. Missing

Mullion:

1. A prophet
2. Unidentified
3. St Stephen (protomartyr)

West jamb:

1. An Evangelist
2. Male figure with column (Samson or Simon Stylites?)
3. A Prophet

**Window Seven:**

East jamb:

1. A queen
2. A female martyr
3. A queen

Mullion:

1. The Virgin & St Anne
2. St Barbara
3. Missing

West Jamb:

1. Female martyr
2. An abbess
3. Missing

The surviving sculptural figures are of such a disparate group of subjects that no particular iconographic scheme suggests itself, except to add that traces of painted stems and vine leaves and an inscription survive on the western splay of window 7. The inscription was recorded by John Weever the antiquary in 1631, and reads,

*Dulce pluit manna partum dum protulit Anna,  
Dulcius ancilla dum Christus crevit in illa.*<sup>323</sup>

The manna rained sweetly while Anna  
brought forth her offspring,  
More sweetly still while Christ was growing in that maidservant.

This inscription clearly ties in somehow with the figures of St Anne and the Virgin in the mullion of this window. Space precludes a detailed analysis or comparative study here, but such work is currently in preparation.<sup>324</sup> However, Nicola Coldstream has identified the niches themselves as early examples of the nodding ogee, a form first manifest in small-scale sculpture of the throne of the shrine of St Edburga of Bicester, dated before 1312 and which is now located at Stanton Harcourt.<sup>325</sup>

The new work was a setting for the cult of the Virgin and some extra chantry altars; its relation to the shrines of Saints Alban and Amphibalus was secondary. There was a tripartite emphasis in the eastern arm on the high altar, shrine and Lady Chapel, and the high altar, not the shrine dictated the layout.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Discussed and translated in Roberts, E., *The Wall Paintings of St Albans Abbey*, St Albans, 1993, p. 58.

<sup>324</sup> Goodall, J., forthcoming.

<sup>325</sup> Coldstream, N., *The Decorated Style: Architecture and Ornament 1240-1360*, London 1994 & 1999, p. 44.

<sup>326</sup> Coldstream, N., 'Cui Bono? The Saint, the Clergy and the New Work at St Albans', in Fernie, E., & Crossley, P., eds, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

## Conclusion

The evidence makes it abundantly clear that the cult of the Virgin at St Albans was as highly developed as anywhere and was manifest in a variety of locations throughout the abbey. At the east end, the cumulative problems of providing appropriate liturgical space, the accretion of the relics and shrines of important saints, including that of the national protomartyr, Alban and access to them for pilgrims while simultaneously preserving the privacy of the choir to the use of the monks were solved in a masterly fashion that did not in any way appear to dilute *hyperdulia* or give it undue emphasis. The correct equilibrium of emphases was created and is still evident. St Albans is therefore a particularly important example of a well ordered worship space that may in large part be figuratively reconstructed throughout, and at the east end *was* in large part reconstructed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## **Case Study:**

### **Winchester Cathedral Lady Chapel**

#### **Introduction**

The importance of Winchester in the ecclesiastical history of England can hardly be overestimated. It was in the vanguard of the development of Marian devotion, hosted the tenth-century council that inspired the *Regularis Concordia*, and remained an important centre of national life. Some of the earlier arrangements for Marian devotion have been previously alluded to,<sup>327</sup> and given the importance of Winchester throughout the Middle Ages it is fitting that the magnificent and extant Lady Chapel should be the focus of the final case study of Lady Chapels in major churches.

#### **Evidence and Interpretation**

The Winchester Lady Chapel is of the eastern axial projecting type, the present structure originally begun c. 1202, but substantially remodelled thereafter. The original project was part of a major scheme probably initiated by Bishop Godfrey de Lucy (d. 1204), and completed by his successor, Peter des Roches (d. 1238). This campaign included the addition to the east end of the cathedral of a three bay retrochoir and two bay Lady Chapel (fig. 16). The original purpose of the former remains conjectural in that there is no evidence that the shrine of St Swithun was placed therein before the fifteenth century. Draper makes the point, however, that the available space almost exactly replicates that of the liturgical choir and might have accommodated the entire community for the daily Mass of the Virgin.<sup>328</sup> In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that the whole community attended this

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<sup>327</sup> In addition to which there was formerly an altar of the Virgin on the site of Wykeham's Chantry, which would have accorded with the requirements of Lanfranc's *Decreta*. Waterton, E., *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, London, 1879, pp. 239-241.

<sup>328</sup> Draper, P., & Morris R. K., 'The Development of the East End of Winchester Cathedral from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century', in Crook, J., ed., *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years, 1093-1993*, Chichester, 1993, p. 178.

service, but nevertheless, the space may well have been utilised for the purpose of accommodating large numbers of people for important Marian functions, and also for the convenient processing of pilgrims. In short, the retrochoir made a convenient 'nave' for the 'chancel / choir' of the Lady Chapel itself. The subsequent rebuilding of the eastern bay of the chapel was commenced under Prior Hunton (1470-98) and completed under his successor Prior Silkstede (d. 1524). The question of the rebuilding of this bay has been challenged by Park and Welford who have convincingly argued that 'this fabric is essentially a 14<sup>th</sup>-century rebuilding of 13<sup>th</sup>-century work, with the c. 1500 elements [panelling and windows] being merely additions'.<sup>329</sup> The chief evidence for this hypothesis is that the external buttresses are typical of the fourteenth century with ogee canopies, which are not coursed into the walls. In addition a crypt beneath the eastern bay is thirteenth century, but with clear evidence of fourteenth-century remodelling. Furthermore, it should be noted that externally on the north side two bays of traceried blind arcading are indicative of the thirteenth-century origin of this fabric.<sup>330</sup> The dimensions of the Lady Chapel therefore remain those of the structure that was begun in 1202 and were not compromised by the addition of an extra bay.

### **Decoration and Iconography**

The eastern bay of the chapel has one seven-light window in each of the east, north and south walls, dated to the late fifteenth century. These windows once contained glass depicting the Tree of Jesse (east), the Nativity (south), and the Apocalypse (north).<sup>331</sup> Below the windows a string course is carved with panelling and shields. The latter contain the arms of King Henry VII, Elizabeth of York, and Arthur Prince of Wales; also those of Bishop Courtney and the See of Winchester, the

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<sup>329</sup> Park, D., & Welford, P., 'The Medieval Polychromy of Winchester Cathedral', in Crook, J., ed., *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years 1093-1993*, Chichester, 1993, p. 132.

<sup>330</sup> This partial survival is due to the addition of a fifteenth-century vestry abutting this wall which is no longer extant, but which formerly obscured the redundant arcading, obviating the necessity of its removal.

<sup>331</sup> BL. MS. Lansdowne, 213, fol. 365.

rebus of Prior Hunton and *In Gloriam Dei*. The Hunton rebus also appears in the spandrels of a blocked north door that formerly accessed a vestry. The inclusion of the royal arms commemorates the queen's patronage of the late fifteenth-century remodelling, undertaken in thanksgiving for the birth of Prince Arthur and his baptism at Winchester in 1486, a fact unnoticed by any of the contributors to John Crook's *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years, 1093-1993*.<sup>332</sup>

The choice of Winchester as the site of the prince's birth and baptism must have been a matter of careful and deliberate choice. Henry VII's claim to the throne by hereditary right was a tenuous one, but he was shrewd and anxious to bolster the legitimacy of his dynasty by any means possible. He lost no time in eliminating the Earl of Warwick, who had a direct Plantagenet claim; and by marrying Elizabeth of York he united the houses of York and Lancaster. At the time, Winchester had largely supplanted Windsor as the supposed site of King Arthur's Camelot,<sup>333</sup> so it was entirely fitting that the heir to the throne should be born there and named after King Arthur. The degree of ceremony that marked the occasion was lavish even by royal standards<sup>334</sup> and underlines King Henry's masterly understanding of the importance of publicity and public relations, to which the Queen's benefaction in remodelling the Lady Chapel was to provide lasting testimony.

The western bay of the chapel retains its fifteenth-century stalls to north and south, returning at the west end. Above these stalls to north and south three trefoiled arch heads each encompass two open lancets, above which a central quatrefoil flanked by two trefoils formerly provided light via arched fenestration in the outer wall.<sup>335</sup> The lower walls originally had stone stalls, divided by Purbeck shafts supporting trefoiled arches with quatrefoils in the spandrels. All except the

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<sup>332</sup> Crook, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 178 ff.

<sup>333</sup> Stevenson, J., ed, *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, 2 vols, Rolls Series, London, 1858, vol. 1, pp. 129 & 344, & vol. 2, pp. 259 & 278.

<sup>334</sup> The details are recorded in *Breviarium Nidrosiense*, Paris, 1519, cited by Bussby, F., *Winchester Cathedral 1079-1979*, Southampton, 1979, pp. 68-69.

<sup>335</sup> These lights became redundant when the walls of flanking chapels were raised. The quatrefoils and trefoils themselves are apparently carved with rebates for glazing frames on their outer sides. VCH, *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, vol. 5, London, 1912, p. 53.

western shafts were cut away to facilitate the fitting of the extant wooden stalls, but the identical feature survives virtually intact in the retrochoir and may be interpreted as further evidence that the Lady Chapel and retrochoir were conceived and intended to be regarded as respective parts of a single liturgical area.

The stone wall-arcading was also removed in the eastern bay of the chapel, no doubt because it would have appeared conspicuously outdated seen in conjunction with the fifteenth-century remodelling. The subsequent empty wall space conveniently provided a 'blank canvas' for a series of wall paintings depicting the miracles of the Virgin. These paintings have a close affinity with the series in Eton College Chapel.<sup>336</sup> For reasons of conservation, the scenes are covered by reconstructions on panels, painted by E. W. Tristram during the 1930's, whose analysis, made in partnership with M. R. James, remains the most detailed study.<sup>337</sup>

In common with the Eton scheme (executed c. 1479-87), the Winchester series comprises two registers of paintings executed in semi-grisaille. Some of the scenes are virtually identical, but more interestingly some of them are reversed, suggestive of the use of a common cartoon at both places. Beginning in the south east corner, the following miracles are depicted.

1. A young man has placed his ring onto the finger of an image of the Virgin for temporary safe keeping. The image bends its finger to prevent removal of the ring, which miracle convinces the man to enter monastic life.

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<sup>336</sup> Park, D., & Welford, P., point out the connections between Winchester and Eton at this time. The latter was modelled on Wykeham's Winchester College, and Bishop Waynflete was overseer of the building works there. 'The medieval polychromy of Winchester Cathedral' in Crook, J., *op. cit.*, p. 134. The Eton cycle is comprehensively discussed by Gill, M., 'The Wall Paintings In Eton College Chapel: The Making of a Late Medieval Marian Cycle', in Lindley, P., ed., *Making Medieval Art*, Donington, 2003, pp. 173 – 201.

<sup>337</sup> James, M. R., & Tristram, E. W., 'The Wall Paintings in Eton College Chapel and in the Lady Chapel of Winchester Cathedral', in *Walpole Society*, 17, 1928-9, pp. 1-43. The paintings had been previously copied by Carter, J., *Specimens of the Ancient Sculpture and Painting now remaining in the Kingdom from the earliest period to the reign of Henry VIII*, vol. 1, London, 1780 (no page numbers given).

2. The Virgin endows her protection on an unlearned priest who knew only the Lady Mass.
3. Prior Silkstede kneels before the Virgin. He is praying '*Benedicta tu in mulieribus*' ('Blessed art thou among women'). Under the scene a further inscription reads 'Prior Silkstede also caused these polished stones, O Mary, to be ornamented at his expense'.
4. A Jewish boy is thrown into a furnace by his father for receiving the Eucharist, but is delivered by the Virgin.
5. Pope Gregory carries in procession a painting of Our Lady believed to be by St Luke in order to invoke her protection against plague. The angel of death is depicted sheathing his sword indicative of the Virgin's intervention.
6. A woman whose son had been kidnapped, but later returned unharmed, returns a silver image of the Christ Child she had stolen from the Virgin's image in her despair.
7. The Virgin heals a woman taken ill on pilgrimage.
8. The Virgin endows boys with strength beyond that of men.
9. A dead nun is temporarily restored to life to make confession of a sin not confessed before death.
10. The Virgin rescues a drowning monk (who is also being tortured by evil spirits), and replaces him with a corrupt monk.
11. Two people suffer death for throwing stones at the Virgin's image.
12. The Virgin affords safe passage for travellers by sea.
13. In lieu of a priest, Christ himself celebrates the mass of the Virgin, attended by saints and angels.
14. St John of Damascus's lost arm is restored, thereby proving him innocent of the charge of corresponding with unbelievers.
15. The Virgin saves from hanging a thief who particularly venerated her.
16. The Virgin intervenes in the burial of an immoral clerk in unconsecrated ground, insisting on his internment in hallowed ground because he was her votary.
17. The Virgin intervenes to prevent the devil from hindering a painter attempting to depict him in as horrifically ugly.
18. The miracle cycle is interrupted midway along the north wall by the blocked door that formerly led to the vestry, but an Annunciation fills the space over the door.

19. A knight who has committed theft is delivered from the devil by invoking the merciful intercession of the Virgin.

It is not certain whether or not the paintings suffered the whitewashing inflicted on their counterparts at Eton during the Reformation, but the iconoclasts have defaced certain areas and inscriptions, particularly the north-east and south-west scenes. The series is executed beneath a cornice embellished with gilt metal stars. There is a dearth of documentary evidence pertaining to the paintings, but fortunately this is not the case with the Eton series, the close correlation of which to the Winchester cycle permits parallels to be drawn. In both cases the late fifteenth-century vogue for Netherlandish art is clearly apparent, and also in both cases the walls in question were not originally intended to have this kind of decoration. Of greater interest is the light that the decorative scheme may throw on the dedication of the Winchester Lady Chapel.

The Eton chapel was incontrovertibly dedicated in honour of the Assumption and all the miracles of the Virgin attested in the paintings in both chapels are posthumous events – that is to say they do not record the apocryphal scenes from Our Lady's lifetime, but Her supernatural interventions in human affairs instigated from Her throne in heaven, which position she attained as the end result of the Assumption. Thus the schemes of Her miracles may be read first and foremost as celebrations of that Assumption. This correlation between Assumption and miracles was once made by the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais in his *Speculum Historiale* (1244-1254), a history of the world that attests to 32 post-Assumption Marian miracles the purpose of which was to glorify the power and status of the Queen of Heaven. Vincent asserts that 'after her Assumption the Virgin was made illustrious by many miracles [performed] in various parts of the earth and at various times'.<sup>338</sup> The choice of subject material in the Winchester cycle of paintings, an Assumption ridge boss and a probable altar frontal painting (see below) depicting the Coronation of the Virgin (an event marking the reason for and

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<sup>338</sup> Wilson, E. F., *The 'Stella Maris' of John Garland edited together with a study of certain recollections of Mary Legends made in Northern France in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1946, p. 37.

culmination of the Assumption) are cumulatively indicative of a possible Assumption dedication for this Lady Chapel.

Both bays of the chapel have lierne vaults of the fifteenth century. Ridge bosses depict a sculptural representation of Christ in majesty / judgement and the aforementioned Assumption scene in which a crowned Virgin is depicted in clouds with four angels within a cusped circle. Lateral ribs have bosses depicting the arms of various bishops including Beaufort and Langton and the rebuses of priors Hunton and Silkstede. There also survives *ex situ* a thirteenth-century boss of stiff-leaf foliage and two fighting / sporting dragons, which Dr Lindley has noted may once have graced the eastern bay of the Lady Chapel or Bishop Langton's Chapel.<sup>339</sup>

Also surviving from the thirteenth century, but *in situ* is a corbel head on the south side of the entrance to the Lady Chapel. The sculpture is damaged, but represents a balding man realistically grimacing under the load the corbel is bearing. Dr Lindley has pointed out that the style and quality are equal to one of the finest surviving corbels of the period; that from Clarendon Palace, carved by a Westminster Abbey craftsman.<sup>340</sup> This corbel is not the only detail of the Lady Chapel that links it with Clarendon. Tiles relating to the Queen's Chamber of the palace and those associated with the royal apartments of Winchester Castle are the same type as fragments discovered under the stalls of the Lady Chapel, which almost certainly formed part of the original floor covering. 'If so, the Lady Chapel must have been paved with tiles of this type about 1250, that is, about twenty years after the chapel was completed, and a few years before the major project of paving the retrochoir was undertaken'.<sup>341</sup> The instance of duplicate tiles existing in the

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<sup>339</sup> Lindley, P., 'The Medieval Sculpture of Winchester Cathedral', in Crook, J., ed., *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years, 1093-1993*, Chichester, 1993, p. 101. Dr Tudor-Craig has noted an affinity between this boss and the central boss in the Guardian Angels Chapel and with corbels and bosses in the Holy Sepulchre Chapel, in Alexander, J., and Binski, P., eds, *Age of Chivalry, op. cit.*, pp. 301-2.

<sup>340</sup> Lindley, P., *ibid*, p. 101.

<sup>341</sup> Norton, E. C., 'The Medieval Tile Pavements of Winchester Cathedral', *BAA Medieval Art and Architecture at Winchester Cathedral: Conference Transactions for the year 1980*, Leeds, 1983, p.

Lady Chapel and the Queen's Chamber at Clarendon may or may not be coincidental, but in either case provides an important and rare fragment of iconographic evidence that was intended to be read and understood to the advantage of the earthly and heavenly queens; confirming the former's hierarchical status in the accepted natural order of queenship, legitimacy and mystique and honouring the latter by indicating that the Lady Chapel was intended to be an earthly palace for the Queen of Heaven.

A further important piece of iconography celebrating the Queen of Heaven survives on a fragment of Purbeck marble discovered when Bishop Fox's tomb was opened in 1820. This is the previously mentioned painting of the Coronation of the Virgin, flanked by two censing angels. Since discovery the painting has deteriorated dramatically, but fortunately the Dean and Chapter have in their possession a watercolour copy made by F. J. Baigent in 1848 (fig. 17). Tristram has suggested that this may have been part of the frontal of the Lady altar,<sup>342</sup> and dates the piece to c. 1260.<sup>343</sup>

### **Furnishing and Liturgy**

Of particular interest is the unique survival of wooden medieval stalls within the Lady Chapel. These, and the late medieval screen dividing the chapel from the retrochoir have been the subject of a detailed study by Charles Tracy<sup>344</sup>, whose observations form the basis of this discussion. The screen has clearly been altered to facilitate the fitting and function of the stalls, by adaptation of its double doors to open outwards instead of inwards so as not to interfere with the return stalls

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80. See also, Eames, E. S., 'A Tile Pavement from the Queen's Chamber, Clarendon Palace, Dated 1250-2', *JBAA, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, 20-21*, London, 1957-58, pp. 95-106, and Draper, P., 'The Retrochoir of Winchester Cathedral', *Architectural History*, vol. 21, London, 1978, pp. 1-17.

<sup>342</sup> Tristram, E. W., *English Medieval Wall Painting of the Thirteenth Century*, Oxford, 1950, p. 618.

<sup>343</sup> Park D., & Welford, P., *op. cit.*, suggest c. 1310-20, based on the figure style and ogee cusps depicted on a frame around the principal figures, p. 132.

<sup>344</sup> Tracy, C., 'The Lady Chapel Stalls' in Crook, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 231-246.

fitted immediately within the chapel. Tracy suggests a date for the screen of not later than 1498.<sup>345</sup>

Flanking the central opening are six five-light pierced and traceried arches<sup>346</sup>, the mullions of which are repeated at dado level in the typical Perpendicular manner. The screen is topped by a wide loft, which must have had a liturgical function, a hypothesis reinforced by the discovery in 1969 of a stone stair inserted within the thickness of the north wall of the chapel.<sup>347</sup> The latter provided a convenient means of access to the loft and has a moulded stone doorcase that may be stylistically dated to *c.* 1475, and which therefore suggests a closer date for the screen / loft ensemble than Tracy's 1498 supposition.

The stalls themselves are of exceptionally high quality, excepting the caveat of a considerable amount of restoration / replacement. Tracy's survey provides an analysis from which the following extract may serve as a basic description.

The stalls are of the 'single screen' type. They have bench seating, without misericords, a tendency which began to appear throughout England at about this time. On the north side the benching is broken into by two original bench ends between which was the entrance to the staircase. The traceried elevation behind and above the seats consists of two tiers of arcading, divided by uprights, surmounted by a coved canopy with vine-trail frieze and cresting [Tracy notes that the cresting is modern]. There are eleven seats each side with desks in front, and a further three bays on the returns. The desks are carried on ventilated stone plinths with elaborate buttressing and tracery to the fronts. The desk ends are of traditional form with trefoil-shaped carved poppy heads. On their leading edges they incorporate traceried polygonal buttresses, similar to those at the divisions of the desk fronts. The buttresses on the desk ends accommodated lively half-length figures of Tudor ecclesiastics as if standing

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<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>346</sup> Tracy mistakenly states 'six-light', *ibid.*, p. 232, but only the central opening has six lights.

<sup>347</sup> Tracy, C., *ibid.*, p. 233.

in pulpits, preaching. The shorter desk front buttresses resemble architectural tourelles with capped and finialed roofs.<sup>348</sup>

Tracy presents a convincing case for dating the stalls to *c.* 1515, which dovetails conveniently with the previously mentioned remodelling under priors Hunton and Silkstede. However, though in many respects highly detailed, Tracy's analysis is not comprehensive in that it omits any detailed discussion as to the function of the wooden furnishings, excepting the single vague reference (previously cited) to a 'liturgical' function for the loft over the screen, but if the fullest possible interpretation of the fabric of the Lady Chapel is to be achieved, the liturgical function must be of paramount importance. The dedication of an apsidal chapel attached to the east end of the original Anglo-Norman fabric is not known with certainty, but its replacement by the extant retrochoir and Lady Chapel in the thirteenth century must have been inspired in large part by the need for an adequate provision for the Marian liturgy. Little documentation with specific reference to Winchester has survived, but there is enough to indicate the origins and final period of the Lady Chapel choir, and gaps may be reasonably conjectured from surviving evidence relating to other Benedictine houses to infer that the daily Lady Mass was celebrated at Winchester with as much solemnity and splendour as elsewhere.

The choir and clergy attendant on the Virgin were originally provided with the stone seats on the north and south sides of the chapel noted previously, the arcaded canopies of which survive behind the extant wooden stalls. As elsewhere in England, and mentioned by Abbot William of Trumpington *c.* 1225 with reference to St Albans,<sup>349</sup> the daily mass of the Virgin at Winchester was undoubtedly offered in plainsong, and Roger Bowers has convincingly demonstrated how this practice might have gradually evolved into the most complex polyphony.<sup>350</sup> He records that Westminster Abbey was the first English monastery to employ a cantor to play a Lady Chapel organ and instruct the singers (*c.* 1390), and that

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<sup>348</sup> Tracy, C., *ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>349</sup> Draper, P., 'Seeing That it was Done', *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>350</sup> Bowers, R., 'The Lady Chapel and Its Musicians', in Crook, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 247-256.

Winchester may well have been the second, a development made possible by a substantial endowment made by John and Alice Talmache in 1400-1. Accordingly, in 1402 John Tyes was appointed cantor, which post he held for twenty years. His duties included help and attendance at principal high altar celebrations, daily attendance at Lady Mass at which he was to play the organ, and the teaching of up to four boys at a time in chant. The lower voice parts of the choir were supplied by monks sufficiently gifted vocally, and possessing the technical competence necessary for the performance of polyphonic musical settings. Of these settings, a *Gloria* and a *Sanctus* by Tyes survive in a manuscript of music for the Lady Mass, c. 1419.<sup>351</sup>

At this stage, the boys were not expected to master the intricacies of sacred polyphony; this requirement was inaugurated from c. 1460 by the secular and collegiate churches, followed eventually by the monastic foundations. At Winchester the change can be clearly traced from the appointment in 1482 of Edmund Pynbrygge as cantor, whose duties now expressly required that he teach eight boys polyphony in addition to plainchant. It is the latter development of doubling the number of boys' voices and greatly enhancing their singing role, and the consequent implied augmentation of the contribution from mens' voices that suggests to me a catalyst for the major refurbishment of the Lady Chapel, including the provision of the screen and loft, subsequently altered to facilitate the inclusion of the wooden stalls. Certain parts of the liturgy would have been sung from the loft and I would suggest that the Lady Chapel organ may have been located there. It is difficult to envisage anywhere else where it might have conveniently fitted, since an instrument at ground level of even modest proportions must have obscured the altar from the sight of some of the occupants of the stalls. Interestingly, Bowers only identifies the liturgical function of the loft as a suitable place for the *chanting* of the epistle and gospel at High Mass<sup>352</sup> and clearly does not associate this feature with the polyphonic contribution. However, in a major study of medieval music, Harrison specifies that the four rudiments essential for the provision of polyphony were a rood-loft, an organ, clerks and books of

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<sup>351</sup> BL. MS. Add. 57950, fol. 15.

<sup>352</sup> Bowers, R., *op. cit.*, p. 253.

pricksong.<sup>353</sup> Harrison's assertion suggests therefore that the strategic location of singers and instrument were vital factors in the performance of polyphonic music and I believe the surviving furnishings at Winchester are clear evidence of the development of liturgical practice within the chapel from the thirteenth century to the Reformation.

Cumulatively, the evidence of the screen, stalls, east end alterations and decorative scheme may be regarded as respective parts of a single campaign of renovation and modernisation of the Lady Chapel, which the growing importance and elaboration of the Marian liturgy made desirable, and which the patronage of the queen and benefactions from among the resident religious made possible.

## Conclusions

Each case study provides a fascinating insight into the development of and provision made for the cult of Our Lady in a variety of particular places. In addition, the cumulative evidence enables some equally interesting general conclusions to be made, since it is abundantly clear that there were no rules, but that a variety of solutions were possible in order to dovetail with the prevailing conditions, needs and requirements of particular places at particular times without the necessity for serious compromise.

The careful preservation of the *vetusta ecclesia* at Glastonbury and the holy house at Walsingham indicate that built-in sanctity could apply just as much to buildings with particular Marian association as it did to saints' shrines and relics, to the extent that at Glastonbury the space itself retained its sanctity and association even after the loss of the original building. Conversely, it is also clear that practicalities were the overriding contributory factors in places that had no such built-in Marian sanctity other than that which was normally associated with consecrated buildings. This was evidently the case at the sites of the remaining case studies of Canterbury,

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<sup>353</sup> Harrison, F., *Music In Medieval Britain*, London, 1958, p. 197.

St Albans, Peterborough and Winchester where provision for Our Lady had to fit in with other considerations.

This is particularly true with reference to the location of Lady Chapels. The introduction to this chapter indicates a clear preference for the eastern axial location in major churches, but it is also abundantly clear that a variety of locations for the chapel could be, and were, utilised. Iconographically, an axial location was desirable for the most important chapel in the church, but such symbolism was not an overriding factor where local conditions precluded them. There was evidently a preference for north side locations in eastern England that may be at least partially explained by the arrangements at Walsingham, and the northern location had its own symbolic significance (see chapter 3), but it is also clear that practicalities (such as the eastern boundary of the monastery at Peterborough) were also important considerations. The greatest of the eastern exceptions is at Norwich Cathedral, where the national preference for the eastern axial position was adopted when a Lady Chapel (to replace a chapel dedicated to the Saviour) was begun in 1240. Neither were northern locations an exclusively eastern phenomenon.

Access for clergy and laity alike was clearly important, but I do not believe that too much emphasis should not be placed on this, since the provision of aisles and ambulatories of whatever style or form facilitated controlled access to various shrines and chapels at appropriate times without intruding on the liturgical choir itself. However, the evidence of suitable areas for Marian devotion in various other areas of the churches indicates that the needs and requirements of popular piety and Marian commemorations of a more minor nature than those which took place in the main chapels were also abundantly provided for.

The foregoing evidence then, indicates that the significance of location should be neither under or overestimated, but evaluated individually in each case, and the same is true with regard to architectural style. It is clear that what really mattered was *what went on* within the Lady Chapels. The liturgical findings outlined in chapter one complement the findings of chapter two, not least with regard to the fixtures and fittings that might be termed the liturgical properties and scenery that facilitated and / or enhanced the veneration of Our Lady. The dramatic increase in

the provision of spectacular Lady Chapels during the later Middle Ages reflected and was made primarily in response to increased liturgical need, as Marian observances, especially the provision of a daily Lady Mass proliferated, and which observances were clearly often celebrated with a degree of sophistication (especially with regard to music) that surpassed those of the choir itself.

## Chapter III

# Lady Chapels And The Marian Cult In Medieval Northamptonshire Churches

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the setting of Lady Chapels and Marian devotion at local level by analysis of parish churches and minor religious houses within a single county – Northamptonshire. The idea is to contrast and compare these lesser churches with the greater churches examined in chapter two, highlighting the salient points of interest in such terms as the incidence of Lady Chapels, their locations, the influence of church dedications, their use, their furnishings, and the impact Marian devotion had on popular piety and *vice versa* in the smaller churches of a particular county. The reasons for focussing on one county are that the huge number of lesser churches throughout the country precludes the possibility of making a cohesive and coherent study possible within the constraints of a single chapter. Also, Northamptonshire appeals in terms of its central location, which makes the probability of a wide variety of interesting examples more likely than may be the case elsewhere. The decision to focus on a county rather than a diocese has been suggested largely by the precedent of antiquarians, whose pioneering studies are invaluable in a study of this kind. A preliminary discussion is followed by the presentation of a catalogue of places with surviving evidence of Marian devotion.

### County Boundaries

The mid 1970's reappraisal and consequent adjustment of county boundaries for administrative purposes has meant that the area around and including Peterborough, formerly known as the Soke has been lost to the county. However, since the affected area was historically part of Northamptonshire and has therefore been included in the documents, and publications such as the *Victoria County*

*History*, it is clearly appropriate to adhere to the old delineation in order to preserve the integrity of the sources and avoid unnecessary confusion. Affected places are indicated in the text by the bracketed inclusion of their ‘new’ county. This decision to adhere to the old boundaries has an important precedent in the practice and policy of the Northamptonshire Record Society, which prestigious and influential body still numbers the bishop and dean of Peterborough among its *ex officio* vice-presidents and still includes the Soke in its own areas of research and publications.<sup>354</sup>

### **Spellings, Grammar and Nomenclature**

The spellings and grammar of quotations in the text have been rendered into modern usage wherever strictly necessary to facilitate clarity, but whenever practicable the original form of words has been retained in the interest of preserving the fragile spirit of the original, so easily lost in a modernised transcription, which may also unwittingly obscure the meaning and mindset of the original writer; the way a thing is said can be as telling as what is said, particularly in medieval wills. Documents are also prone to misinterpretation in terms of the terminology they employ. In particular ‘aisle’ might refer to a side aisle, a chancel chapel or a transept.

### **The Sources:**

#### **Antiquarian Evidence**

Antiquarian evidence is a fundamentally important source of research information, providing as it does an invaluable adjunct to surviving primary documents and fabric evidence. Any definition of the term ‘antiquarian’ is subjective but may be broadly defined as the collection of facts as an end in itself, in contradistinction to

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<sup>354</sup> E.g., Raban, S., ed., *The White Book of Peterborough*, Northamptonshire Record Society, Lancaster, 2001.

the historian, whose task is to evaluate relevant source material in order to construct hypotheses from which the past may be convincingly interpreted. The value of antiquarian sources is therefore immediately apparent as (theoretically) a repository of primary material, collated objectively without any agenda other than the preservation and dissemination of knowledge. Such works may therefore be regarded as primary sources in their own right, largely free from the agenda of the historian, which must by definition be subjective. Nevertheless, antiquarian testimony is subject to selective editing and the dangers of omission, contextual misinterpretation and consequent error.

So far as buildings were concerned, the antiquarian's task was to record monuments and inscriptions, charitable benefactions, genealogical and heraldic information and lists of office holders in preference to architectural description. Moreover, the lack of an adequate architectural terminology for medieval buildings must in itself have been a sufficient disincentive. Only in the wake of such works as Rickman's *Attempt To Discriminate The Styles Of Architecture In England From The Conquest To The Reformation*, first published in 1817, was the emphasis to change. Even works such as Dugdale's *St Paul's*,<sup>355</sup> contain remarkably little by way of architectural description. In true antiquarian spirit Dugdale confines himself to catalogues of inscriptions, endowments and clergy, but the provision of Hollar's engravings of Old St Paul's may be regarded as evidence of antiquarian acknowledgement of the value inherent in recording the appearance of the fabric by means that could not be adequately expressed in words.

### **Northamptonshire Antiquaries**

Before the nineteenth century, then, antiquarians had little choice but to confine their architectural activity to basic description if they were to avoid descent into the realms of speculation and fantasy that were the hallmarks of previous commentators on medieval buildings. This was the approach of

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<sup>355</sup> Dugdale, W., *The History of St Paul's Cathedral in London*, *op. cit.*, London, 1658.

Northamptonshire's principal antiquary of the eighteenth century, John Bridges, who describes the county churches in such basic terms as main body, aisles, chancel and tower, together with internal measurements. An advantage of this simple approach is that the basic plan of the building in question is at once fixed in the reader's mind; a method that might profitably have been emulated by way of an introductory sentence to each entry in Pevsner's *Buildings of England* series more than two centuries later.

John Bridges was born at Barton Seagrave, Northamptonshire, during the second half of the seventeenth century, the eldest of twelve children. He entered the legal profession, becoming a bencher at Lincoln's Inn and was appointed Solicitor of Customs in 1695. In 1711 he became Commissioner of Customs and in 1715, cashier of Excise. He was also a governor of Bethlehem Hospital and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He began his research into the history of Northamptonshire in 1719 and died in his Lincoln's Inn chambers in 1724.

His manuscripts were preserved by the family and were finally edited and published in two volumes as *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire, Compiled from The Manuscript Collections of The Late Learned Antiquary John Bridges, Esq.* edited by Rev. Peter Whalley, 1791.<sup>356</sup>

'Mr Bridges was a man in the highest degree qualified to direct such an undertaking . As an investigator of Antiquities, his skill and diligence procured him great respect...'<sup>357</sup> He also had the pecuniary means to facilitate his researches in the philanthropic tradition of the gentleman amateur. Whalley informs us that 'Mr Bridges . . . employed several persons of abilities and skill to make drawings, collect information, and transcribe such monuments and records, as were essential to his purpose . . . in this manner he expended several thousand pounds [and] the transcripts thus collected extend to upwards of thirty volumes in folio'.<sup>358</sup> Pre-eminent among Bridges' assistants were professionals William Slyford

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<sup>356</sup> Bridges, J., Whalley, P., ed., *op. cit.* Bridges' biographical details are derived from Whalley's introduction to this work, in which he appears to have made due allowance for the introduction of the Gregorian calendar adopted in England in 1752.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. iii.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. iii.

(transcriber), and Peter Tillemans (artist). The latter was engaged at the rate of one guinea per day and 'the run of the house' to produce drawings to illustrate the work.<sup>359</sup> Local men were also employed from time to time to measure and make notes, or in the case of Thomas Eyre of Kettering, to produce a map of the county. The antiquary White Kennet, dean and later bishop of Peterborough, also assisted Bridges in the area of the Soke of Peterborough. The involvement of these and other men and sources in Bridges' work is comprehensively discussed by Brown and Foard.<sup>360</sup>

As a primary source of information, Bridges' work provides many instances of buildings that have been substantially altered or which have ceased to exist since his researches. An example of this occurs at Daventry, where his description of the church and the engraving he commissioned provide the last and the most complete testimony of a building that was demolished in 1752, and his work contains many instances of inscriptions in brass and glass that have been subsequently lost. The preservation of Bridges' manuscripts in the Bodleian Library is of paramount importance, containing as they do many nuggets of valuable information that are not in the published volumes.

Almost a century after John Bridges' death, George Baker, a second Northamptonshire antiquary of outstanding importance published volume one of *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (London, 1822). A second volume was published in two parts (1836 and 1841 respectively). In his preface to the second volume, Baker apologises for the delays in publication with the following explanation in which he expresses sentiments, which may be shared by many people engaged in academic research.

The sources of topographical information are numerous, but unfortunately, they are often imperfect, and sometimes apparently irreconcilable, if not absolutely contradictory. I have frequently spent days, and even nights, in

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<sup>359</sup> Brown, T., & Foard, G., *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 3.

endeavouring to ascertain a single fact, or clear up a doubtful point, which when accomplished would scarcely add a single line to the narrative.<sup>361</sup>

Baker relies on the work of his predecessor a great deal and acknowledges his debt, but his contribution is valuable for two main reasons: firstly, in noting important changes since Bridges' day, and secondly, in his adoption of Rickman's recently published nomenclature of architectural description, referring for example to the 'Decorated English style of Edward III.'<sup>362</sup> Sometimes the changes he records are positive; for example he notes that the removal of numerous coats of whitewash from the font at Little Billing has revealed hidden inscriptions,<sup>363</sup> but more often the changes are losses rather than gains. 'The following inscriptions, copied from Bridges, are now buried under the new floor',<sup>364</sup> thus demonstrating the outstanding value of Bridges' work in recording features that have since vanished and of which we would otherwise have no clue as to their former existence.

### **Medieval Wills**

Medieval wills are a useful source of information concerning the extent of the Marian cult in Northamptonshire. The surviving wills are all late, but this is not necessarily a disadvantage, since they refer to the medieval churches at the height of their development. They provide evidence of altars, guilds, burials and chapels; images, lights and other devotional accoutrements, testifying to the pre-eminence of St Mary in comparison with all other saints. The Northamptonshire wills were the subject of an article by Rev. J. Charles Cox in the *Archaeological Journal* of 1901,<sup>365</sup> which must presumably have been the inspiration for a much more comprehensive survey by Rev. R. M. Serjeantson and Rev. H. Isham Longden,

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<sup>361</sup> No page references are given in the preface.

<sup>362</sup> Baker, G., *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, vol. 1, London, 1822, vol. 2, London, 1836 & 1841, vol. 1, p. 24.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 30.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 119.

<sup>365</sup> Cox, J. C., 'The Parish Churches of Northamptonshire: Illustrated by Wills, Temp. Henry VIII', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 58, London, 1901, pp. 113-132.

which was published in the *Archaeological Journal* of 1913.<sup>366</sup> The earliest wills date from 1320, but the vast majority were proven between 1510 and 1558. The editors' method was to extract and collate legacies to the church or to the incumbent with the object 'to chronicle and examine the legacies left by our forefathers to the side-chapels, altars, images and lights in our various Northamptonshire churches, for by so doing we discover what altars existed in each particular church, and which saint was most popular in any given district'.

Northamptonshire wills identify three types of ecclesiastical building where worship is the primary function; parish churches, detached chapels and religious houses. To facilitate clarity in the following statistics, all will hereafter be referred to as churches. The total number of churches mentioned in the wills is 363. The total of known dedications is 352. Of this number, 81 have Marian dedications, plus 1 dual dedication of the Annunciation and All Saints at Fotheringhay. This makes St Mary by far the most popular dedication. Her nearest rivals are All Saints / Hallows at 48, Ss Peter & Paul at 28, and St Andrew at 23. Of the churches listed, 229 have one or more Marian bequest.

The wills record / imply Marian altars in 70 churches, and make specific reference to Lady Chapels in 67. There are also 24 references to guilds of Our Lady. Since chapels and guilds must have had altars in order to fulfil their primary functions, the total is 161. However, if plural references are deducted – that is cases in which wills refer to a combination of altar, gild or chapel (numbering 24), the total of Lady altars attested in Northamptonshire wills is 137. Bearing in mind that these figures are based on bequests in surviving wills, but that not all wills have survived, and that the lack of a Marian bequest does not mean that the cult was absent from any particular church, the real total is likely to have been significantly higher.

In addition, wills make frequent reference to items of Marian devotion that are not necessarily associated with altars, such as lights and images. The former implies

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<sup>366</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., and Isham Longden, H., *op. cit.* (hereafter Serjeantson & Isham Longden), pp. 217-452.

the presence of the latter, and the latter might take one of many forms, for example painting or sculpture depicting popular themes such as Our Lady of Pity,<sup>367</sup> of Bethlehem,<sup>368</sup> and of Grace.<sup>369</sup> There are also references to tabernacles of Our Lady, and these too indicate an image.<sup>370</sup> Wills indicate Our Lady of Pity in 31 Northamptonshire churches. 10 of these make explicit reference to an image, 1 indicates an altar and there are 8 references to lights. 3 wills specify a location for Our Lady of Pity, all in the south aisle. These are Cransley, Edgcote and Polebrook. The altar was at Deene. Polebrook is particularly interesting because in addition to explicitly indicating that Our Lady of Pity was on the south side, a further will makes reference to Our Lady in the north aisle (see below). This arrangement invites speculation that the south may have been a preferred location of Our Lady of Pity, though a wall painting at Slapton argues against any such reductionist theory (see below).

Medieval wills then provide a rich archive of information about religious belief and practices in England. Of particular interest to the medieval art historian are the glimpses they provide of the internal arrangements and contents of churches before the depredations of the Reformation and subsequent bouts of iconoclasm emptied them of all but fragments of their medieval fixtures and fittings. They also tell us of the material evidence of piety and patronage in frequent references to multiple altars, to images in sculpture, paint and glass: of screens and monuments, roods, guilds and burials: of votive masses, chantries, *Aves*, *Pater-nosters*, building projects and maintenance: needlework for altars, images and vestments, and above

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<sup>367</sup> An image of the Virgin with the dead Christ on her lap.

<sup>368</sup> A representation of the Virgin 'in gesyn', or brought to bed immediately preceding the birth of Jesus.

<sup>369</sup> The iconography of Our Lady of Grace (if any existed) remains unknown.

<sup>370</sup> The evidence of wills is a comparatively neglected area of study. E.g. Morgan speculates from the evidence of inventories that such items as Marian images within tabernacles and painted altar frontals seem once to have been common in parish churches. The evidence from wills proves incontrovertibly that this was the case. Morgan, N., 'Texts and Images of Marian Devotion in Thirteenth-Century England' in Ormrod, W. M., ed., *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1989 Harlaxton Symposium*, Stamford, 1991, pp. 69 – 103. See also discussion of medieval service books below.

all else, they tell us of lights of every kind. Torches, tapers, 'tryndalls' and lamps burning before altars and images, roods and reliquaries; on hearses, tombs, tabernacles and pillars – for liturgical reasons and in the pious hope that the living flame would honour God or a particular saint in return for the respective benefits they might bestow in a kind of reciprocal arrangement between patron and patronised.<sup>371</sup>

It is unsurprising therefore that lights in some way connected with the Marian cult are particularly ubiquitous features of the documents. In the Stopford-Sackville archive preserved in the Northamptonshire Record Office is a tiny (about postcard size) thirteenth-century vellum charter grant, whereon is recorded in exquisite handwriting the means by which a lamp is to be maintained at the Lady altar in Islip church, and the times when it should burn.<sup>372</sup> On the latter point, this hitherto unnoticed document confirms the logical expectation that the lamp should be lit for masses, vespers and vigils of the Virgin and therefore explicitly indicates the liturgy in use at a particular Marian altar in the thirteenth century. In addition there is a direction that the lamp should burn at night, indicating that complete darkness in the vicinity of the altar / image was undesirable even out of service time.

The provision of lights was clearly considered to be highly desirable, and was a visible manifestation of the level of popularity of a saint's cult; and one which could be self-generating by itself inspiring more contributions and therefore more lights burning in the saint's honour. Sometimes the provision and maintenance of lights was the basis on which individual guilds were founded, clear evidence of which appears in the Calendar Rolls of 1448 with reference to St Magnus's in London where 'certain parishioners . . . have set up of late a light of five wax candles before the image of St Mary the Virgin in the said church to burn at certain times and specially daily at the hour of vespers in which an antiphon of *Salve*

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<sup>371</sup> See also, Dendy, D. R., *op. cit.*, Postles, D., "Lamps, lights and layfolk: 'popular' devotion before the Black Death", *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 25, No 2, Amsterdam, 1999, pp. 97-114, & Rock, D., *Hierurgia, or The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, vol 2, fourth edition, London, 1900, pp. 175-200.

<sup>372</sup> NRO. MS. SS. 2066.

*Regina* is wont to be chanted before the same image; the which many others of the parish seeing and desiring to share in the work have associated themselves with the others to lighten their costs, and they have instituted the gild of *Salve Regina* in the said church . . .<sup>373</sup> The Roll records the formal approbation of the king, the provision of wardens, and confers the right to acquire lands, rents and other possessions.

The reference to ‘a light of five wax candles’ is also of great interest. It indicates that any documentary mention of ‘a light’ does not necessarily imply a single flame, but rather a degree of light and that the premise of more being better was sufficient incentive to contribute to the light honouring the saint and thereby sharing in the reflected glory of that saint, both in a literal sense and in the favour the saint might bestow on a contributor. These dual benefits account for a huge number of bequests in Northamptonshire wills made in respect of light provision and maintenance of all kinds, including at Irthlingborough, two pounds of wax ‘for to make a tryndall to hang befor our Lady of the church of Alhalows’.<sup>374</sup> The light of five candles at St Magnus’s appears to echo common practice in the vicinity of Marian images and was probably in honour of the five joys of Our Lady.<sup>375</sup> In 1531 ‘a candylstick of V flowers & V tapers of ponde waxe to be sete before our lady’ was left to Braybrooke Church.<sup>376</sup> To Brington a will of 1520 bequeathed ten shillings to ‘the ymage of our laydy that stondyth in the chansell of Bryngton a candylstyk of laten wt v branches’.<sup>377</sup> At Pytchley there was a similar bequest to the image of Our Lady of Pity in 1502,<sup>378</sup> and at Farndon in 1532 a testator specified 7/6 to be expended on five ‘candillstiks of laten for to sett beffore her’.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry VI, vol. 6, A. D. 1452 – 1461*, London, 1910, p. 173.

<sup>374</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

<sup>375</sup> The events considered to be the ‘joys’ have varied from time to time, but they have usually been five in number. At the end of the fifteenth century they are listed as Annunciation, Nativity (Christ’s), Resurrection, Ascension and Assumption. Ref. *Liber Festivalis*, the Annunciation, fo. c. Rouen, 1499, cited by Rock, D., *op. cit.*, vol. 3, 1849-53, pp. 289-90.

<sup>376</sup> Cox, J. C., *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>377</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

In apparent contradiction of this hypothesis it should be noted that the Northants wills contain bequests of a five-branch candlestick to the Trinity at Stoke Bruerne,<sup>380</sup> and five tapers to the Sacrament at Finedon.<sup>381</sup>

Also of interest is a bequest made in respect of the church at Plumpton. The 1546 will of Richard Byrd indicates that the light he formerly maintained before Our Lady was now kept before the Sacrament.<sup>382</sup> This change was no doubt necessitated by Thomas Cromwell's Injunctions of September 1538, which legislated that 'no candles, tapers, or images of wax to be set before any image or picture but only the light that commonly goeth across the church by the rood-loft, the light before the sacrament of the altar, and the light about the sepulchre, which for the adorning of the church and divine service ye shall suffer to remain'.<sup>383</sup> Byrd's will is therefore highly indicative of the progress of Reformation and its practical effects at local level; in this case the prohibition of lights before images being overcome by the simple expedient of moving the light.

Burning substances emit gases, vapours and fine particles in the form of smoke, and smoke pollutes the atmosphere and ultimately anything on which the fine particles settle. The Northamptonshire wills make frequent reference to the painting and gilding of images and the tabernacles containing them,<sup>384</sup> and though

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<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 392-3.

<sup>383</sup> Frere, W. H., and Kennedy, W. M., eds, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, vol. 2, London, 1910, pp. 34-43.

<sup>384</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, page numbers in brackets. References to painting / gilding of tabernacles containing Marian images occur at Addington Parva (268), Broughton (289), Higham Ferrers in 1521 & 1529 (341), Kettering x 2, both in 1523 (351), Polebrook (393), Ravensthorpe (398) and Welford (428). Bequests for the painting, gilding or unspecified repair of the Marian images occur at Benefield (275), Brackley, SS John & James (281), Brackley, SS Peter & Paul (282), Cransley x2, both in 1522 (305), Fineshade Priory (444). Grendon (329), Pattishall (387), Tichmarsh x 2 [the repair of the chancel image & painting of the Pity image in the church] (416), Weekley (427) and Welford. (428). Additional variations on this theme occur at Brixworth, All Saints, where burnishing of the image is specified (287), and at Pattishall where a testator directs that the wall behind Our Lady of the Nativity should be painted (387).

no doubt ordinary wear and tear necessitated refurbishment from time to time, the smoke from the lights and from incense must have greatly accelerated the process of dirt and decay, and explains the desirability of providing for an untarnished image, which in the case of Our Lady was particularly appropriate. The extent of popular devotion to her cult must have rendered pollution particularly problematic in Lady Chapels, though the problem was obviously general. This is nowhere more graphically demonstrated than in a reference to a Norfolk church and the funeral expenses of John Paston, which record payment in 1466 'to the glaser for takyn owte of ij panys of the windows of the schyrche, for to late owte the reke of the torches at the deryge'.<sup>385</sup> Specific references in Northamptonshire wills to the refurbishment of Marian images and / or the tabernacles in which they were housed are further evidence that the problem was a frequently recurring one; how else could a testator know that the need for renewal was likely to coincide approximately with the time of their death?

Inventories of the contents of Lady Chapels at parish level are very rare indeed,<sup>386</sup> and it is the wills that are the best (though fragmentary) source of information, allowing us at least partially to reconstruct the contents of the chapels and the range of fabrics from which they were made. The 1492 will of Margaret Garnon, with reference to the Lady Chapel at Alderton, bequeathes money for 'an auter cloth for our lady auter with curteyns for the same',<sup>387</sup> clearly indicating that the altar had curtains on three sides supported on riddell posts in accordance with medieval custom. The same testator also bequeaths a new image of Our Lady for the Lady Chapel and an alabaster tabernacle in which to house it.<sup>388</sup> Curtains are also the subject of a 1522 bequest of two ells of broad cloth at Whittlebury; not this time around the altar, but 'to be drawne upon wyre befor hir' [Our Lady].<sup>389</sup> The significance of this bequest is twofold. Firstly, if each curtain (assuming there were two) consisted of one ell, then the size of the image / tabernacle may be

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<sup>385</sup> Blomefield, F., & Parkin, C., *Essay Toward a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, in 11 vols, London 1805-10, vol. 6, p. 484. Also Rock, D., *op. cit.*, vol. 2 (1849-53), pp. 500-501.

<sup>386</sup> A notable exception survives with reference to Great Addington.

<sup>387</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

determined, though admittedly only very approximately; in this case probably *c.* three feet.<sup>390</sup> Secondly, the provision of broadcloth (a strong fabric suitable for furnishings<sup>391</sup>) and wire implies a more permanent arrangement than the veiling of images during Lent; it suggests therefore, that important images were not always on view, but were only exposed at specific times, just as certain lights only burned during liturgical functions, and just as relics were only exposed for veneration at appropriate times in accordance with the liturgy. At Newbottle an incumbent bequeathed two sawn boards for the tabernacle containing Our Lady's image in the chancel, which presumably were intended to make doors to close the image from the profane gaze.<sup>392</sup>

However, when they were exposed to view, paint and gilding were not the only 'clothes' an image might wear or have in close proximity. At Bozeat a will proven in 1516 bequeathes a 'flameolum' to the image of Our Lady of Pity.<sup>393</sup> To the image of Our Lady of Grace at Austin Friars, Northampton, Anne Wake, 1504 left a silver gilt spoon with a fork at the end, and Margaret Humphrey left her best gilt girdle in 1513.<sup>394</sup> Agnes Heywarde bequeathed (to the same image) her best ring, and to the Lady Chapel of White Friars, Northampton, she left 'To the blessyd image of or Lady . . . a second best ring', 1537.<sup>395</sup> The latter image also received 'a pere of cor[al bedes]' from Agnes Barwick, 1526.<sup>396</sup> At Yardley Hastings Our Lady of Pity was bequeathed the second brass pot of Katherine Goodwyn, 1529,<sup>397</sup> and at Rothwell the chapel of Our Lady received 'a corse of sylke blue, the harness

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<sup>390</sup> An English ell was five quarters in length. Four nails made one quarter and 2 ¼ inches made one nail, so one ell was forty-five inches long. Cutting, heading and hemming of two ells of fabric would therefore permit the making-up of a pair of curtains each of *c.* 36 inches in length. Ref. Clabburn, P., *op. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>392</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281. A footnote defines flameolum as 'a garment usually of silk'.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

<sup>395</sup> The best ring went to the image of Our Lady of Grace at the Austin Friars, Northampton. *Ibid.*, p. 446.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 1537 & 1526 respectively, p. 447.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.

thereof gylted' from Dame Agnes Pulton, 1502.<sup>398</sup> With the exception of the latter bequest, all the testators make reference to specific images rather than to the chapels housing them and the bequests are clearly of personal and valued items, strongly indicative of affection for and devotion to the images in question. Votive offerings of a feminine nature had clearly given pleasure to their former owners and it was no doubt hoped that they would find favour with Our Lady too.

The concept of bequeathing personal items to Lady Chapels or more specifically to the images of Our Lady within them invites comment on the nature of medieval Catholicism, a subject that has been extensively studied by Eamon Duffy.<sup>399</sup> It should be emphasised that the chapels in parish churches were not simply places owned by the Church and administered by the clergy, to which the laity were admitted only for religious observances, but were truly catholic in the sense of being universal; that anyone who wished to contribute to their upkeep and adornment might do so, and thereby have a real share by virtue of donations made according to their means. The wills make this abundantly clear. Wealthy people might provide for the building of an entire chapel and the lodging and maintenance of one or more priests.<sup>400</sup> At the other end of the social scale people might (and frequently did) bequeath items as lowly as kerchiefs and fragments of cloth from which small altar linens such as corporals, houseling cloths and lavabo towels might be made.<sup>401</sup> Other items bequeathed specifically for use in Northamptonshire Lady Chapels include a sheet and a tablecloth as well as money for the purchase of specified items, including a vestment,<sup>402</sup> candlesticks, a pax,<sup>403</sup> a lamp<sup>404</sup> and an altar cloth 'of satten silke'.<sup>405</sup> At Oundle, Agnes Dobs (1514) appears to have been torn between her two favourite saints and accordingly left

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<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 1502, p. 401.

<sup>399</sup> Duffy, E., *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400 – c. 1580*, London, 1992.

<sup>400</sup> E. g. ., Aldwincle, All Saints (see below).

<sup>401</sup> Kerchiefs were probably pieces of cloth suitable for covering the head.

<sup>402</sup> Long Buckby, 1532: Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

<sup>403</sup> Cottingham: Chapel of Our Lady, 1549: *ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>404</sup> Daventry, 1528: *ibid.*, p. 310

<sup>405</sup> Kilsby, 1535: *ibid.*, p. 353.

half a sheet to the Lady altar and the other half to that of St Syth.<sup>406</sup> White was always the official liturgical colour of Our Lady, but blue was popular too, and to the Church of Our Lady at Edgcote the 1540 will of Thomas Carill bequeaths (among a myriad of liturgical accoutrements) a ‘hole sewte of blew, that is to say a cope of damaske, j chesiple and ij tynicles and alle thapparelle that longithe therto’,<sup>407</sup> in other words a complete set of vestments necessary for the celebration of High Mass.

The upkeep of lights and maintenance of services and fabric could be ensured by the income generated by bequests of livestock and foodstuffs. Sheep, beehives, arable crops, cheese, ‘my best red blossom cow’,<sup>408</sup> and ‘a cow named Pinnie’<sup>409</sup> are all included in bequests to Marian altars within the county. At Wold (now Old) Our Lady is left ‘a whether’ (sheep), a cow, another sheep and two hives.<sup>410</sup> That animals were not necessarily sold, but sometimes incorporated into a permanent stock intended to provide a regular income, is made clear. For example, at Chipping Warden a will bequeaths a sheep to Our Lady’s stock<sup>411</sup> and at Harlestone Richard Harris leaves in 1532 ‘To our blessed Ladye a cowe to fynd a light yerelie before our blessed ladye. Allso I wyll that my executors shall have the gydyng of the said cowe, and her encrease to fynde the foresaid lighte, and the encrease that comyth yerelie off the said cow besides the fyndeng of the said light to go to the reparacons of our lady aulter wher shall be modt nede’.<sup>412</sup>

The bequest of personal items and money towards the purchase of specific liturgical items was one means by which donors could provide for their own post-mortem remembrance. In a very real sense they were providing secondary relics of themselves for use on or about the altars / images of their favourite saints. The

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<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384. Although this example was unusual, it was common practice to divide monetary sums among different saints and their accoutrements.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>408</sup> Flore, 1535, *ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>409</sup> Northampton, White Friars, *ibid.*, p. 447.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 435.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

provision of material goods ensured their remembrance in the minds and prayers of their still living brethren, and in the saints who were the recipients of such bequests; thus their passage through purgatory might be eased. In addition, and to the same purpose testators might provide for liturgical services for specific periods, as for example at Lilbourne, where the 1519 will of Thomas Hyllys requests burial in the Lady Chapel and leaves sufficient funds to pay for a priest's meat, drink and lodging, and bread, wine and wax 'to syng wt' for a whole year.<sup>413</sup> A similar will was proven in 1507 in respect of the will of Thomas Jebbes who requested burial before the image of Our Lady and 'An honest priest to sing for a year' at Her altar.<sup>414</sup> A variation on this type of will occurs at Harpole where the 1528 will of Gye Breten requests burial within the 'Lady yle' and 'also I wyll yt ij trentalls be downe and said for me att our lady altar'.<sup>415</sup> A trental of masses is also requested in the will of W. Conquest in the Lady Chapel at Potterspurty,<sup>416</sup> and at Oundle, T. Hunt bequeathed his house (after the decease of his wife) to Robert and Jane Denham, provided that 'they kepe Dirige & masse' in the Lady Chapel.<sup>417</sup>

The references to 'trentalls' in the Harpole and Potterspurty Lady Chapel provide an interesting insight into liturgical practice. This devotion was properly known as The Trental of St Gregory, and consisted of a sequence of masses offered in commemoration of various feasts. The Sarum Missal defines the trental thus:

Whoever may desire to keep the Trental of S. Gregory must celebrate three Masses of the Lord's Nativity, three of the Lord's Epiphany, three of the Purification of S. Mary, three of the Annunciation of the same, three of the Lord's Resurrection, three of the Lord's Ascension, three of Whitsun-Day, three of the Trinity, three of the Assumption of S. Mary the Virgin, three of her Nativity; and let these masses be celebrated within the Octaves of the above feasts, all as on their day, but with these Collects after the Collect for the day. Let him also say daily *Placebo* and *Dirige*, with nine Psalms,

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<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>414</sup> Wyke Dyve, *ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 335-6.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 394.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

Lessons, and Anthems, except in Easter-tide, when the Service must be said with three; and let the Commendation of Souls be said so many times. Let the first Collect be the following; let him also say it every day at Mass throughout the year.<sup>418</sup>

The legend behind this devotion concerns the pontiff's mother, whom Gregory idolised as a saint. After her death he had a vision of her in the form of a tortured demon. She confessed to having given birth to an illegitimate child, which she had secretly murdered and buried for the sake of her reputation, but now suffered torment in purgatory. She imparted to Gregory the instructions for the trental, and after he had completed the same, his mother appeared in a second vision, this time radiating such bliss that he mistook her for the Virgin. The trental became popular because the legend suggested that even the worst sins might be expiated if the prescribed devotions were offered to the benefit of a testator's soul. It was not exclusively Marian in emphasis, but the celebration of the necessary masses at the altar of a particular saint might recruit that saint to the cause of the soul. No saint was more efficacious in intercessory power than Mary and twelve of the thirty masses were in Her honour. A simple variant on trental occurs in the will of Agnes Hilton, 1534, who requested thirteen masses 'that weare shewd to busshoppe [Pope] Innocente be revelation by an aungell from allmytie Godd', to be celebrated for her at All Saints, Northampton.<sup>419</sup> This variation on the Gregorian trental has not been noticed by Duffy.

Another popular devotion, this time one with a more Marian theme occurs in a number of wills requesting a mass or masses of or at *Scala Coeli*. In common with

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<sup>418</sup> Pearson, A. H., ed., *op. cit.*, p. 584. The editor of this famous translation of early sixteenth-century printed editions states that he has 'not consciously omitted, softened, or accommodated a single expression, in accordance with any private opinions, his aim being faithfully and without comment to give an English version of the original in its integrity', p. viii.

<sup>419</sup> Thirteen particular masses were celebrated. They were of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Septuagesima, Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Holy Cross, Our Lady, The Trinity, the Apostles, and the Angels. The will specifies particular propers, antiphons and anthem for the mass of Our Lady, but no other particular instructions except for the reading of the Passion narrative after the mass of Palm Sunday. Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

the Trental of St Gregory this mass was considered to be particularly efficacious in releasing tormented souls from purgatory. According to legend, St Bernard was celebrating a requiem mass in the Church of St Mary, built over the cemetery of San Zeno, outside the walls of Rome, during which he had a vision of the souls released from purgatory by virtue of the mass and climbing to heaven by means of a ladder, the *Scala Coeli*, and assisted by angels.

In that place a chapelle ys  
Scala Cely called hit ys  
'Laddere of heven' men clepeth hit  
In honoure of our Lady be my wytte.<sup>420</sup>

The church was renamed St Mary at *Scala Coeli* and an indulgence became attached to requiems celebrated there; a privilege eventually granted to certain other churches, including Henry VII's new Lady Chapel at Westminster Abbey,<sup>421</sup> the gild of St Mary at Boston, and the church of The Austin Friars in Northampton. In connection with the latter, the 1519 will of John Pratt requests 'An honest priest to syng for one hole yere at the altar of Scala Celi before our lady of grace in the church of the Freers Augustyns'.<sup>422</sup> Another testator wills masses and prayers for his soul for a year and thirty days at the original *Scala Coeli* in Rome,<sup>423</sup> whilst two others request the cycle of masses at Westminster and Oxford. Those who could not afford to pay for the full cycle could opt to have one or more *Scala Coeli* masses. Unfortunately, the wording of the wills is often ambiguous in requesting masses 'of' or 'at' *Scala Coeli*. It is therefore unclear whether the services always took place at one of the recognised centres or were sometimes celebrated in the parish churches.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> From *The Stacyons of Rome*, cited by Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>421</sup> According to Duffy, *op. cit.*, Henry obtained the indulgence for his chapel in 1500. If he is right, the privilege was granted before the chapel was built, 1503-19, pp. 375-6.

<sup>422</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>424</sup> Northants wills contain eleven such requests.

It is interesting to speculate to what extent the rubrics of medieval service books were followed in individual churches. Pfaff has indicated that only about one hundred liturgical books have been identified as having once belonged to parish churches or chapels,<sup>425</sup> and has concluded that because the books tended to include all that was done at Salisbury Cathedral, they are not necessarily a reliable indicator of what was said and done in parish churches.<sup>426</sup> I believe him to be right in that liturgical practice must have been adapted to dovetail with local needs and practicalities, but in studying only the extant books, Pfaff has failed to notice those that were bequeathed to churches, but which no longer survive. I consider that notwithstanding the obvious limitations concomitant with attempting to draw conclusions from nonexistent books, these are nevertheless important indicators of liturgical practice in particular parishes. For example, Northamptonshire will record ten bequests of the *Processionale*, which are worthy of particular note<sup>427</sup> since they indicate that at least some of the liturgical processions and by implication their rubrics regarding stations, and the sprinklings and incensings *et al* of various altars prescribed by the *Processionale* were observed at the various altars and therefore within the Lady Chapels of particular parish churches.

It should not be supposed that the imagery of chapels within churches was restricted solely to the saint in whose honour the chapel was dedicated. The wills contain references to Our Lady light at or by the altar of St Nicholas at Gayton<sup>428</sup> and ‘To oure ladye in Seynt Nycholas yle’ at East Haddon.<sup>429</sup> At Holdenby, St

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<sup>425</sup> Ker, N. R., ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London, 1964 & Watson, A. G., *Supplement to the Second Edition*, London, 1987.

<sup>426</sup> Pfaff, R. W., ‘Prescription and Reality in the Rubrics of Sarum Rite Service Books’, in Smith, L., & Ward, B., eds, *Intellectual Life In the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Margaret Gibson*, London, 1992, pp. 197 – 205.

<sup>427</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, Boughton, 1539, p. 280. Corby, 1539, p. 301. Farthingstone, 1531, p. 321. Marholm, 1506, p. 362. Raunds, 1514, p. 397. Rothersthorpe, 1532, p. 400. Thorpe Mandeville, 1533, p. 415. Weldon, 1558, p. 428. Wellingborough, 1544, p. 430. Wyke Dyve [Wicken], 1555, p. 440. The latter bequest occurs during Philip and Mary’s reign and thus represents part of the attempt to reinstate the pre-Reformation liturgy.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

Catherine was present in the Lady Chapel.<sup>430</sup> Neither was a light necessarily burnt to the exclusive honour of a single saint, since at Haselbech two testators refer to the light of Our Lady and St Michael. The latter saint was patron, so his image and the Virgin's must have been in the chancel where the light provision was shared between them.<sup>431</sup>

Among the more intriguing Marian bequests in the Northamptonshire wills is a reference in the 1535 will of T. Norman 'To our lady light in the pewe' at Bradden.<sup>432</sup> The precise meaning of 'in the pewe' may never be known, but invites speculation none the less. A light / image in a seating pew is improbable and may be discounted, which leaves two possibilities. The first is that 'pewe' is a derivative of the Old French *puie*, which means rampart, balustrade or enclosure, and that the Bradden reference may indicate an altar / image / light enclosed within parclose screens. The second possibility is that the reference indicates the iconography of a particular type of image of the Virgin – a copy of those in the chapels of Our Lady of the Pew at Westminster Abbey and Westminster Palace.<sup>433</sup>

The history of the chapel of Our Lady of the Pew in Westminster Abbey extends at least as far back as the late fourteenth century, and possibly further, but the relevant records are lost. Once erroneously thought to be the chapel of St Erasmus, the chapel is located in the north ambulatory. In 1385-6 the Marian image itself is described as 'in le Puwe'. In 1422-3 the reference is to '*ad ymaginem sancta marie de la Pywe*' [of the pew]. The image itself was alabaster, a 1377 bequest of Dame Mary of Saint-Pol, Countess of Pembroke and widow of Aymer de Valence, whose tomb is nearby. Dame Mary also left money for the painting of the vault above the image and for other items. Vault paintings of stars, a corbel and hooks all attest the location of the image on a north wall, and behind the corbel the outline of a

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<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>433</sup> This chapel was located between the College / Chapel of St Stephen and the privy palace. Refs. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry VI*, vol. 4, A. D. 1441 – 1446, London, 1908, p. 142, & vol. 6, 1452-1461, London, 1910, p. 163.

standing figure may be discerned.<sup>434</sup> This image may have been copied and the focus of a local cult at Bradden.

### **Chantry Certificates**

Useful adjuncts to other sources are the surviving chantry certificates, although the degree of relevant information they provide is necessarily compromised by their primary agenda, which was to value the chantries in order to facilitate the legalized plunder concomitant with the Reformation, the relevant legislation for which was provided in two Acts of Parliament, the first dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 1545.<sup>435</sup> This transferred to the Crown all colleges and hospitals, with such chantries, gilds and free chapels as were liable to pay tenths and first-fruits. However, the death of Henry VIII in January 1547 caused a short period of interregnum while Lord Somerset established complete control over the boy-king, Edward VI, and his realms, and it was a second Act, passed in December 1547 that had most impact. This reaffirmed the provisions of the first, but extended its scope by including all but a few named chantries.<sup>436</sup>

Commissioners were appointed and empowered under the terms of both Acts to enquire into the chantry foundations and it is their findings that make up the certificates, of which 75 rolls survive, including two for Northamptonshire, one for each Act. Unfortunately, 'the Northamptonshire rolls are not in the first class as regards interest or fullness of detail'.<sup>437</sup>

The size and prestige of the chantry foundations varied enormously in proportion to the importance of their founding patrons and their endowments. At one end of

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<sup>434</sup> Westlake, H. F., *Westminster Abbey*, vol. 2, London, 1923, pp. 351-2. An artistic interpretation of the chapel and image is given between pages 352 & 353.

<sup>435</sup> Medieval chantries of the county are discussed in Parsons, D., *Lost Chantries and Chapels of Medieval Northamptonshire*, 18<sup>th</sup> Brixworth Lecture, 2000, Brixworth Lectures, Second Series, No. 3, Leicester, 2003.

<sup>436</sup> The chantry certificates have been published in Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 87-178.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

the scale was the endowed service, founded to provide the means for a priest to sing mass at a particular altar in a church for the benefit of the founder and other specified persons. At the other were colleges, which were essentially chantry foundations, such as those of Irthlingborough, Higham Ferrers<sup>438</sup> and Fotheringhay. Sometimes, chantry priests serving various altars in a single church formed themselves into a college, as happened at All Saints' Northampton in 1459.<sup>439</sup>

Occasionally, the certificates specify that a particular chantry was of 'Our Lady', but since the dedication was usually a matter of complete indifference to the commissioners, a chantry might be identified by association with the name of the founder or not named at all. In instances where a Marian dedication is specified, the certificates may provide the only surviving documentary evidence of a Lady Chapel in a particular church and they usually mention whether the chantry altar was in a church or a detached building. Of the latter type, the certificates cite two examples for Northamptonshire, the chantry of Our Lady in the churchyard at Brixworth and that of Our Lady and St Anne in the chapel of St Anne in the churchyard at Bulwick. In addition the Northamptonshire wills cite examples of Lady Chapels detached from the main church at Woodford Halse, at Croughton, Cottingham, Oundle and Harringworth.<sup>440</sup> Further examples existed at Rothwell, and possibly Sibbertoft.<sup>441</sup>

## Dedications

The wills most commonly cite 'Our Lady' as the title of churches dedicated to St Mary, but exceptions occur, where the dedication is linked to specific Marian feast days. Bugbrooke, for example was formerly a church of the Assumption (now St Michael and all Angels). Everdon and Farthingstone were respectively dedicated in

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<sup>438</sup> Perhaps in anticipation of events, Higham Ferrers College surrendered its property to the king in 1542 and therefore does not appear in the rolls.

<sup>439</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>440</sup> Serjeantson and Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 437, 307, 303, 386 & 337 respectively.

<sup>441</sup> See below.

honour of the Annunciation and the Assumption, but became plain St Mary's. This must beg the question as to whether all the Marian churches were originally more specifically dedicated, and whether the common title 'Our Lady' in many cases represents a colloquial corruption or abbreviation over the passage of time and in some cases a deliberate rejection of dedications that were at odds with Reformation theology. Evidence in support of this hypothesis occurs at Long Buckby, where the dedication to Pope Gregory the Great was changed to St Lawrence, and occasional passing references by John Bridges the antiquary to the annual 'wakes' or 'feasts' kept in Northamptonshire towns and villages suggest that post-Reformation changes of dedication may have been more common than has hitherto been supposed. Local feasts were in most cases kept on or about the time of the feast day commensurate with the dedicatory title of the local church. The term 'wake' derives from the medieval practice of keeping an all-night vigil in the church on the eve of the patronal festival. The nomenclature survived long after the all-night ritual of the wake itself fell into abeyance, and examination of the times of traditional wakes and feasts as recorded by the antiquary reveal some interesting correlations between these and churches dedicated in honour of specific Marian feasts, though the evidence of wakes / feasts is not a reliable indicator of dedication without additional support. For example, Everdon was dedicated in honour of the Annunciation, but the wake was kept at the Assumption, perhaps because the Annunciation falls in Lent. No churches appear to have been dedicated to Our Lady of Pity, despite the popularity of that facet of Her cult (see below).

### **Locations**

It is clearly necessary to define precisely what constitutes a Lady Chapel in the lesser churches, which were the focus of religious experience for the majority of ordinary people. However, the subject of definition is highly problematic. In some cases, a specific chapel was provided for the purpose of offering the *hyperdulia* due to St Mary, which had its own integrity as a part of the main fabric of a smaller church, in the manner of Lady Chapels attached to the greater churches. In particular, chancel chapels, that is to say the chapels sometimes built adjoining the north and / or south sides of a chancel fit this category. In other cases, the Lady

Chapel was a detached building, usually but not always close to the main church. In many cases however, but particularly in the more modest buildings, an area without any clear architectural definition of its own, such as the east end of an aisle, might be utilised for the purpose. There is also evidence that in some smaller churches, particularly those dedicated to the Virgin, the chancel itself may sometimes have provided the main focus of Marian devotion, a logical arrangement in that as patron Her image and the high altar dedicated to Her were located therein; but there are also instances where churches dedicated to St Mary also had a Lady Chapel distinct from the chancel.<sup>442</sup>

The situation is complicated by the sheer scale of devotion to the Virgin. As with the major churches, the comparatively more modest examples might have multiple locations assigned to different aspects of Her cult, any or all of which might have altars or simply take the form of an image with a votive light. Broadly speaking, a Lady Chapel may be so designated by the location of the altar of *primary* Marian devotion in any given church, and that subsidiary Marian altars, images and lights may be regarded as *secondary* manifestations of Her cult, echoing the practice within major churches. For example, there are no known dedications of major Lady Chapels or Northamptonshire churches to Our Lady of Pity, so I would define this aspect of Her cult as secondary. This definition is of course a subjective one, and we shall see that it creates its own problems in disentangling the primary from the secondary, but it is nevertheless a vital working hypothesis as regards this chapter, the object of which is to examine the degree of Marian devotion within medieval Northamptonshire churches, as demonstrated in the surviving documentary and fabric evidence. This study will make it possible to reconstruct the locations of many Lady Chapels for the first time since the Reformation.

Unlike the greater churches, few chapels or parts of churches designated as such in the Middle Ages have been reassigned to this function since the Reformation and in cases where they have, the dedication may be erroneous, as for example at

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<sup>442</sup> E.g., Higham Ferrers. See below.

Staverton, where a north chancel chapel formerly dedicated in honour of St Catherine is currently used as a Lady Chapel.<sup>443</sup>

Fabric evidence alone is usually insufficient to permit the firm attribution of part of a church as a medieval Lady Chapel, but the documentary evidence of the Northamptonshire wills sometimes provides the necessary evidence for their location either alone or in conjunction with antiquarian evidence and / or surviving fabric. However, the evidence is inclined to be tantalizingly erratic. Some testators specify location, but most do not, though sometimes a request for burial in a particular chapel may pinpoint its location and thereby infer location of the Lady altar or that of some other dedication. For example at Addington Magna (Great Addington), the wills indicate two burials, respectively inside and outside the Lady Chapel, and both tombs survive, one within and the other without the north chapel. In this case, it is reasonable to conclude that the site of the medieval Lady Chapel in this church has been located. However, [in common with most methodologies] a degree of circumspection is essential. Tombs and monuments may have been moved during re-orderings of church interiors. A prerequisite must therefore be to establish that the evidence is relatively intact and *in situ*.

Of paramount interest is the possibility that the surviving cumulative evidence may indicate a preference for the location of Lady Chapels within Northamptonshire churches. Of a total of 69 chapels / primary Marian locations that it has been possible to locate, 31 occur on the north side<sup>444</sup> and 15 on the south,<sup>445</sup> the remainder elsewhere (discussed below). In terms of explanation these figures are highly problematic. The most logical conclusion is that the principal considerations

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<sup>443</sup> See below.

<sup>444</sup> Abington, Addington Magna, Alderton, Ashby St Ledger, Barby, Blakesley, Blatherwycke (Holy Trinity), Bowden Parva, Brackley (SS John & James), Brigstock, Broughton, East Carlton, Cogenhoe, Croughton, Denford, Glinton, Higham Ferrers, Irchester, Kettering, Maxey, Middleton Cheney, Milton Malsor, Northampton (St Giles), Peterborough Abbey, Polebrook, Potterspury, Rushden, Rushton (All Saints), Stamford (St Martin), Weekley and Wittering.

<sup>445</sup> Aldwinckle (All Saints), Aynho, Barnack, Great Billing, Blisworth, Brixworth (All Saints), Farthinghoe, Holdenby, Irthlingborough (Ss Peter & Paul), Lowick, Oundle, Paulerspury, Pipewell, Rothwell (Holy Trinity), and Towcester.

in terms of determining a location were the convenience and requirements of individual churches. Nevertheless, the numerous instances of a northern location in comparison to all others clearly invite hypotheses as to why this should be the case. I can offer four possible explanations, which may or may not be interconnected. Firstly, it is well known to architectural historians and archaeologists that where churches have been built in piecemeal fashion, the addition of a north aisle often preceded any similar addition to the south. The reasons for this were that externally the south side was the preferred site for burials and therefore fewer internments were disturbed by a northern addition than a southern one. Also, north aisles had far less impact on the amount of light entering the nave than southern ones and were therefore to be preferred.<sup>446</sup> The location of many Lady Chapels on the north side may therefore have been the simple result of practical expediency, that is to say that additional altar space was commonly available on the north side before the south, that the desirability of having a lady altar significantly increased the chances of a Marian dedication in preference to all others, and that once established, the northern location became the traditional one in many churches. Secondly, it is possible that there was a symbolic significance attached to the north side that was desirable, but not essential, that could therefore be overridden by more practical considerations. The symbolism behind northern locations that suggests itself to me is based on the iconographic correlation between Christ the Son and the sun, and Our Lady and the moon. That is to say that just as the moon has no light of its own and its glory is reflected from the sun, so the glory of Mary is reflected from Her divine Son, the one true light. Such symbolism could be emulated in a very real way in churches by the sun's rays entering through southern windows and effectively illuminating the north sides of church interiors.<sup>447</sup> The third possible explanation behind northern locations of Lady Chapels may be linked with the traditional position of artistic representations of Our Lady in connection with the

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<sup>446</sup> The desirability of admitting adequate light must have been particularly problematic until the architectural developments of the later Middle Ages when technical advances and greater prosperity permitted larger windows and the well attested addition of clerestoreys to lesser churches.

<sup>447</sup> The iconographic link between Our Lord and the sun / Our Lady and the moon is well known, but this new and unsubstantiated theory linking these symbols with light entering church buildings occurred to me after witnessing shafts of incense-filled light from a southern window falling dramatically onto a statue of Our Lady on the north side of Holy Cross Church, Daventry.

roods that dominated medieval church interiors, which was always at Christ's right hand, *i.e.*, the north side. Fourthly (and lastly), is a tradition that lasted in many churches until comparatively recently of segregating the sexes, women occupying the north side and men the south. There appears to have been a mixture of practical consideration and overlapping symbology that explains the northern location of a significant proportion of Lady Chapels that was governed by potent symbolic preference that yet stopped short of binding necessity where more significant local factors prevailed.

Iconographic references to the Virgin in all the usual media of paint, glass and sculpture were a ubiquitous feature of medieval churches and were not confined to Lady Chapels. Consequently, fragments of Marian iconography cannot alone be accounted sufficient evidence of the location of a Lady Chapel. Nevertheless, the point must be emphasised that the integrity of the respective north / south assignments is supported proportionately by such fragments of surviving medieval Marian iconography that are considered to be *in situ* – or those that are recorded in antiquarian testimony, with 24 northern examples and 11 southern ones.<sup>448</sup>

Of the 81 Marian church dedications (plus Fotheringhay's dual dedication and seven religious houses), testators give explicit evidence for a location of Marian devotion in only 26 cases: everyone knew where the chapels were located in the churches and specific references were usually unnecessary. Of these 26, 24 make specific reference to the chancel as *a* location of Marian devotion (but not necessarily the only one).<sup>449</sup> This high incidence of chancel references implies that either the existence of plural locations of Marian devotion in a single church made it necessary for testators to specify which area their bequest referred to, and the ubiquity of chancel images of the Virgin would certainly account for this, or perhaps more interestingly, that the chancels themselves sometimes served *as* the Lady Chapels. The latter hypothesis is an obvious and an attractive one for three

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<sup>448</sup> Details are recorded below in individual case studies.

<sup>449</sup> Addington Parva (Little Addington), Alderton, Badby, Benefield, Blakesley, Great Brington, Bugbrooke, Burton Latimer, Cold Higham, Dallington, Edgcote, Farthingstone, Fawsley, East Haddon, Houghton Parva (Little Houghton), Weedon, Raunds, Staverton, Stoke Bruerne, Wappenham, Warmington, Welford, Houghton Magna (Great Houghton), and Titchmarsh.

reasons. Firstly, churches with a Marian dedication would have an altar and image of the patron in the chancel as a matter of course. Secondly, a chancel location could avoid duplication of areas of Marian devotion in smaller churches where space for additional altars was necessarily restricted, and thirdly, the popular location of Lady Chapels on the eastern axis of many greater churches could be emulated in comparatively modest buildings without incurring the expense of building a separate eastern chapel and suitable aisles and ambulatory for access. Dr Parsons has suggested that the chancels themselves may have contained multiple altars, citing the well attested lengthening of chancels from the thirteenth century in support of this hypothesis.<sup>450</sup> The idea is a most attractive one; the lesser churches could thereby emulate major churches in a scaled-down manner without incurring the expense or need for additional aisles or ambulatories. Against the idea is that I cannot find a single, explicit documentary reference for more than one altar in a Northamptonshire chancel. There are however, 12 instances in which the chancel may have functioned as *the* Lady Chapel, and in every instance the dedication of the church was Marian, so the patronal altar is likely to have been a Lady altar anyway, with no necessity for duplication.<sup>451</sup> The point should also be stressed that according to the evidence of the major churches, the Marian liturgy did not necessarily have to be celebrated at a Lady altar, Salisbury being the example *par excellence*. However, in 11 of the 12 Northamptonshire examples, the evidence in each case is negative in the sense that the only surviving documentation refers to the chancel *only* as an area of Marian devotion, which is difficult to account for in churches dedicated in Her honour, given the ubiquity of Marian devotional accoutrements elsewhere. The only logical explanation is that the chancels (as stated) functioned as Lady Chapels. The exception to this ‘negative’ evidence is Great Brington where a surviving will bequeathes money ‘to the mayntenaunce of two tapers to brenne in two candilsticks at our lady masse that shall be saide in the chauncell’.<sup>452</sup> Nothing could be more explicit. The Lady mass was celebrated in the chancel of a church dedicated to Her; the chancel then, indubitably functioned as the Lady Chapel in a relatively modest parish church.

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<sup>450</sup> Parsons, D., *Lost Chantries*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>451</sup> Addington Parva (Little Addington), Great Brington, Badby, Benefield, Bugbrooke, Dallington, Farthingstone, Fawsley, Staverton, Tichmarsh, Wappenham and Welford.

<sup>452</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

The larger churches of Fotheringhay and All Saints', Northampton, had axial Lady Chapels attached to the east ends of their chancels, indicative of the desirability of this arrangement where means allowed. Three churches that are dedicated to Mary, but with Lady Chapels in specified locations other than the chancel, are Barby, Weekley and Woodford Halse, which have Marian locations in the body of the church, in the north aisle and in the churchyard, respectively. In addition, the wills make reference to 14 instances of Marian devotion in the chancels of churches that are not dedicated to Mary.<sup>453</sup> They specify lights and images of Our Lady in the chancels, but make no reference to Lady altars. In addition, there is evidence for a further 4 Lady Chapels in churchyards (belonging to churches with non-Marian dedications),<sup>454</sup> plus Woodford Halse (which does have a Marian dedication), and a further 5 on separate sites.<sup>455</sup> To summarise, the total number of Lady Chapel locations suggested by the available evidence is 70, consisting of 31 on the north side, 15 on the south, 12 in the chancel, 2 axial, 5 in the churchyard, and 5 on separate sites from the main church.

### **Liturgy, Furnishings and Charity**

Surviving inventories can provide fascinating glimpses into the liturgical equipment appertaining to particular Lady Chapels, and in the case of Great Addington the various fragments of information are cumulatively sufficient to facilitate a reasonably accurate reconstruction of fixtures, fittings and the use to which the chapel was put.

Records of vestments belonging specifically to Lady Chapels are rare, but those that do survive are highly indicative of the wealth of individual chapels and their uses. White vestments frequently occur, perfectly in accordance with the Marian liturgical colour, as do blue, which is also particularly associated with the Virgin.

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<sup>453</sup> Alderton, Arthingworth, Billing (Great), Brampton (Church), Cransley, Farthinghoe, Haselbech, Holdenby, Lamport, Naseby, Newbottle (Nobottle), Newnham, Quinton, and Radstone.

<sup>454</sup> Brixworth, Bulwick, Cottingham and Harringworth.

<sup>455</sup> Croughton, Daventry, Oundle, Rothwell and Sibbertoft.

In addition, black appears in accordance with the ubiquitous requiem masses frequently celebrated for the souls of founders and other specified persons. White vestments are specified in records pertaining to All Hallows, Great Addington, All Saints', Northampton, St John Baptist, Peterborough and All Hallows', Wellingborough. Blue is indicated at Great Addington, St John Baptist, Peterborough and All Hallows, Wellingborough (and previously noted non-specifically at Edgcote); green vestments at All Saints', Northampton, and St John Baptist, Peterborough, red at Great Addington and black at Great Addington and All Saints', Northampton. These colours suggest either that the full cycle of liturgical observances was made in Lady Chapels at parish level, or that various votive masses may have been celebrated on different days of the week and that their use was not therefore exclusively Marian.<sup>456</sup> It should also be noted that in Sarum Use, green or blue might be used on feria days, and therefore that in some Lady Chapels, the Marian association with blue would suggest its use in preference to green on such days.

A pair of coral and silver rosaries was formerly part of the inventory of the Gild of Our Lady at All Hallows', Wellingborough, which may have been provided for the use of the priest or for lay devotions within the chapel.<sup>457</sup> At Kettering a former priest bequeathed his surplice for the morrow-mass celebrant to wear for the service, reciting an *ave* and *paternoster* when he put it on. The same testator also provided money for a white silk cope or vestment [chasuble] and two shillings for the morrow-mass priest to recite a *de profundis* at *lavabo*<sup>458</sup> for the donor and for all Christian souls. If there was no morrow-mass priest, the money was to be given to the poor. In addition to the provision of services, lights and obits etcetera, charitable provisions were by definition part of the *raison d' être* of the religious

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<sup>456</sup> With reference to the Beauchamp Chantry / Lady Chapel at Warwick, Richard Beauchamp's will specified three masses daily: firstly, a sung Mass of Our Lady, secondly, a requiem, and thirdly a particular votive celebration for each day – Holy Trinity (Sunday), Holy Angels (Monday), St Thomas of Canterbury (Tuesday), The Holy Ghost (Wednesday), Corpus Christi (Thursday), The Holy Cross (Friday), The Annunciation (Saturday). These would require vestments of white, black and red.

<sup>457</sup> A bequest of W. Archer in 1534. The *aves* were coral, the *paternosters* silver.

<sup>458</sup> The ceremonial washing of the priest's hands during the celebration of mass.

gilds and chantries and evidence of this with reference to Lady Chapels survives in a number of places. At Aldwincle, All Saints, the chantry priest was charged with teaching six poor boys to spell and read and distribute 26s. 8*d.* in quarterly payments to the poor. At Farthinghoe, the chantry priest was to freely teach and instruct the children of the inhabitants, and at Northampton All Saints, notary Richard Greene bequeathed half his timber to the fraternity of Our Lady and provided for the master of the Lady Chapel to distribute two wagonloads of charcoal to the poor each year during the week preceding Christmas. At Oundle, wood was given to seven poor women living in the gild house and 2s. 6*d.* distributed annually to the poor. The chantry in the Lady Chapel at Towcester had two priests, one to preach and one to teach grammar freely, whilst at Wellingborough the founder charged the gild to exercise such charitable deeds as they deemed appropriate, and maintain the town bridge.

The degree of splendour exercised in the performance of the liturgy varied enormously from place to place according to means, but notice of a sacring bell<sup>459</sup> at Great Addington indicates that even in this small Lady Chapel the priest had at least one assistant when he celebrated mass. There were two priests serving in the Lady Chapel at Oundle, and as previously stated at Towcester. At Northampton, All Saints, which numbered such notables as William of Wykeham among its benefactors, the increase in the number of priests from one to three and the provision of a choir, which included boys and masters to teach them, is indicative of the growth of the gild and cult of Mary. Here there were several masses daily, including a high celebration, and each evening a full choral service was sung in the Virgin's honour.

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<sup>459</sup> A small bell, rung at the elevations of host and chalice at mass.

## **The Catalogue: Northamptonshire Case Studies**

### **Introduction and Key**

The general derivation of Marian information is largely that which it has been possible to extract from various sources, most notably medieval wills, chantry certificates, antiquarian evidence and surviving church fabrics. In the interest of brevity, the *basic* information is indicated hereafter by appropriate letters in bold type. Further references are not given except for burial requests within Lady Chapels, and in instances where the information is from another source, or where it has been possible to elaborate either from the same or from other sources. Words in bold type indicate the most probable locations of medieval Lady Chapels, but it should be noted that these are made in accordance with my own interpretation of the evidence and are therefore subjective. In addition, churches with no Marian evidence other than dedication are indicated. The key to the letters is as follows.

**C** – Indicates specific reference to a Lady Chapel

**A** – Lady altar

**L** - Light burnt in St Mary's honour

**I** - Marian image

**T** – Tabernacle (niche for Marian image)

**P** – Might refer to various types of pictures or the re-painting of sculpture

**Y** – Image of Our Lady of Pity

**G** – Marian guild

**B** - Named request for burial in a Lady Chapel, or before a Marian altar or image

**S** – Marian liturgical service or devotion

In addition, ground plans are included where most appropriate. These are indicated thus \* in the text, and are to be found with the illustrations.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> The source of the plans is RCHME, unpublished, but reproduced here by kind permission of Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.



described in the Bridges manuscripts as follows. 'In white marble upon a long slab, a man in armour upon a cushion, his face and head bare, a collar of SS joined with a rose upon his breast, a belt at his waist, a bayonet by his right side, hands in a praying posture joined, his feet upon a beast collared. Over ye arch in a modern hand marked upon a whited wall, this inscription now almost defaced. Here under lyeth ye body of Henry Vere . . .'<sup>467</sup> The first priest of the chantry was John Bloxham, whose will of 1518 requests burial '*extra ostium capelle beate [Marie]*'.<sup>468</sup> His tomb survives close to the north wall of the chancel.<sup>469</sup> Some commentators have suggested this location as evidence that this is now *ex situ*.<sup>470</sup> However, an elevation squint suggests the possibility that the North chapel previously extended further to the east than is presently the case, or that there was formerly an eastern vestry of the passage type, of which several examples survive in this part of the county. This evidence suggests that the Bloxham tomb may be *in situ*, and is located as requested, *extra ostium capelle*. The last chantry priest was Alan Clarke, whom the 1548 chantry certificate records as aged 57, 'meanly learned and hath no other Lyving'.<sup>471</sup>

The chancel, north chapel and linking arch are of c. 1300. The latter is filled with an early fifteenth-century screen.<sup>472</sup> A later fifteenth-century screen divides the west end of the chapel from the north aisle. Stained glass depicting the Vere arms and fragments that 'no doubt include part of the Virgin'<sup>473</sup> survive in the chapel, dated to c. 1490,<sup>474</sup> which strongly suggests a link with the 1493 bequest. Professor Marks notes that this glass is *ex situ* and may be part of the Virgin 'wth Our Saviour in her arms' and a text in English that included the name Baldwin noted by

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<sup>467</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E. 2, p. 29; NRO. MS. M. 313.

<sup>468</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

<sup>469</sup> The inscription reads, '*Orate pro aia magistri Johis Bloxham primi Capellani istius Cantarie beate marie qui obiit quinto die mensis decembris Anno xpi mittimo quingestesimo xix cuius anime propicietur deus amen. Henricus Veer erat fundator istius cantarie*'.

<sup>470</sup> VCH, vol. 3, p. 159 & Marks, R., *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi: Great Britain – Summary Catalogue 4: The Medieval Stained Glass of Northamptonshire*, Oxford, 1998, p. 80.

<sup>471</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>472</sup> VCH, *Northamptonshire*, vol. 3, p. 158.

<sup>473</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>474</sup> Pevsner, N., *op. cit.*, p. 228. Marks R., has 'late 15<sup>th</sup>-c', *op. cit.*, p. 80-1.

Bridges and Slyford in the east window of the south aisle along with other fragments.<sup>475</sup> There appears to be little evidence in support of Marks's hypothesis that the surviving fragments are the identical glass that the antiquaries recorded, but the supposition that he is right need not necessarily preclude their original location in the north chapel, and their re-setting in the south aisle subsequent to the truncation of the north chapel indicated by the squint (fig. 18).

In addition the chapel contains a projecting half-octagon piscina resting on clustered shafts and with an ogee-headed recess behind a bowl that is decorated with relief carvings of roses, a symbol of the Virgin. The bowl sits rather awkwardly with the recess, which may indicate that this feature was re-set; a necessity in order to accord with an altar position necessarily moved further to the west in the wake of the aforementioned alterations (fig. 19).

Taken individually, none of the foregoing pieces of documentary and fabric evidence can be accepted as conclusive proof that the north chapel was the site of the medieval Lady Chapel, but collectively the shreds of evidence add up to a convincing enough case to make the supposition extremely probable. The basic fabric of the chapel is almost two centuries older than the Vere chantry, the foundation of which is therefore likely to represent an endowment and refurbishment of the existing chapel to the benefit of the soul of Vere and the local parishioners.

By great good fortune, an inventory<sup>476</sup> of the goods within this Lady Chapel in 1528 / 9 has survived and provides an invaluable insight into the chapel and its workings during its late medieval heyday, made before the ubiquitous inventories concomitant with dismantlement and dissolution. Parts of the manuscript are exceedingly difficult to read and a full transcription has been made here for the first time. It is set out in the order in which it was first written.

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<sup>475</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E. 4, pp. 107-109; précis in Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 204. Several Baldwins occur in the De Vere line.

<sup>476</sup> NRO. MS. SS. 2334.

Ornaments belonging to Our Lady Chapel, belonging to our chantry.

In primis a chalice

a corporas [corporal] of white damask and a fine cloth to the same

a corporas of old landyon [linen?]

a coarse cloth

a vestment<sup>477</sup> of white damask

with the appurtenances<sup>478</sup>

a vestment of blue satin

with the appurtenances

a vestment of black satin

with the appurtenances

a vestment of red darnix<sup>479</sup>

with the appurtenances

a vestment of white diaper<sup>480</sup> fustian<sup>481</sup>

with the appurtenances

a coffer lock and key

a mass book

two cruets and a sacring bell

a pax and two altar cloths

a painted frontal

a table [retable] of alabaster

over that, four images

In the midst the trance

A wine bottle

Many of the items listed are self-explanatory, but others raise some interesting questions and require further elucidation and discussion. Clearly the chantry chapel was very well equipped with vestments and had a lockable coffer in which to store these and other portable accoutrements of the mass, but of greater importance are

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<sup>477</sup> The term 'vestment' almost invariably refers to the chasuble.

<sup>478</sup> The 'appurtenances' are the matching accessories of stole, maniple and possibly alb apparels.

<sup>479</sup> Fabric made from linen and wool in Tournai, Clabburn, C., *op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>480</sup> A pattern of lozenges woven diagonally into a fabric, *ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>481</sup> Difficult to identify as there were a large number of fabrics covered by this term, *ibid.*, p. 246.

those references that enable us to figuratively reconstruct the central focus of the chapel, the altar itself. The ‘painted frontal’ suggests a colourful wooden fixture to the front of the altar, behind the *mensa* of which was an alabaster retable / reredos supporting four images. Of potentially even greater interest is the penultimate line ‘In the mides [midst] the trance’, which as it stands makes no sense at all.<sup>482</sup>

Various dictionary definitions all interpret the word *trance* as meaning ‘passage’ and if this line is linked with the final one (the method of listing the vestments proves that the scribe habitually split linked items into two lines), then the document reads ‘in the midst of the *trance* [passage] a wine bottle’. This might be a reference to the aforementioned possibility of a passage-like vestry, or even the elevation squint itself as a *trance* wherein it was sometimes convenient to store the wine bottle from which the Mass vessels might be replenished. If the latter hypothesis is allowed, then the lost medieval word for what we now call a squint<sup>483</sup> has been recovered and the accepted nomenclature might accurately be adjusted accordingly to elevation *trance*.

Some of the liturgical equipment with which the chantry was furnished is also listed in a separate inventory of 1548, and includes a vestment of white damask, one of white fustian and one of black satin. Also a parchment mass book, a Latin Bible and altar cloths.<sup>484</sup>

**Addington Parva** (Little Addington): Our Lady      **T, I, L**<sup>485</sup>      **Chancel**

**Alderton:** St Margaret      **C, I, T, L, B**<sup>486</sup>      **North**

The 1492 will of Margaret Garnon requests burial ‘in the chapel of Our Lady by my husband on the left hand in the church . . . and an image of Our Lady standing

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<sup>482</sup> I have had the word checked by an experienced archivist / paleographer at the Northamptonshire Record Office and there is no doubt that the word in question is ‘trance’.

<sup>483</sup> Squint is an unsatisfactory term, coined in the nineteenth century along with the unwieldy *hagioscope* in lieu of the lost medieval original.

<sup>484</sup> NRO. MS. Misc. Photostat, No. 770.

<sup>485</sup> Tabernacle, image & light are all explicitly located in the chancel.

<sup>486</sup> Margaret Garnon, 1492.

in a tabernacle of alabaster price 13. 4. to be set in our Lady chapel there as the image of our Lady standeth'.<sup>487</sup> Since the usual custom was to inter a deceased wife on the left of her deceased spouse, the will reference to the 'left hand in the church' is more likely to refer to the location of the Lady Chapel than to Margaret Garnon's final resting place relative to that of her husband. The current fabric is of c. 1848, except for a late medieval west tower.

**Aldwincle: All Saints** **C, B<sup>488</sup>** **South chantry chapel**

The wills provide interesting evidence from the wishes of Elizabeth Chambre, as follows. 'Chantry Chapel: "I wyll that my husbands chauntre and myne be made suer according to lawe. I wyll that a chapell be made for the same chauntre in the churche of All Halowes of Aldwyncle and a house for the preste of the same chauntre" (She settles lands worth 10 marks on the chantry). "I wyll that xxvjs. vii. be made sure yerely for ij almesmen and a house that John Wever dwelleth in, to pray for the soule of William Aldwyncle Esquyer, William Chambre esquyer, and Elizabeth wife to them both": Elizabeth Chambre, 1489'.<sup>489</sup> This will explicitly legislates for the building of a chantry chapel, but does not indicate its location or dedication. However, the will of William Chambre, 1493, husband of Elizabeth requests burial in 'the church of Aldwincle, All Saints, "*in capella beate Marie Virginis*"'.<sup>490</sup> It is highly unlikely that William would request burial in a chapel other than his own chantry, so the cumulative evidence establishes the Chambre chapel as a Lady Chapel for which the two wills provide *terminus post* and *ante quem*. In addition, Elizabeth Chambre legislates accommodation for the chantry priest, to which a note in the Bridges manuscripts presumably refers. 'A chantry formerly in Mr Sparkes's yard near his stables, ruin lately pulled down. The chantry was erected by William Chambers [Chambre] and his wife Elizabeth'.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 45; NRO. M. 314. Serjeantson & Isham Longden give an abbreviated version, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

<sup>488</sup> Wm. Chambre, 1493.

<sup>489</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 269-70.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>491</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, F. 2, p. 49; NRO. MS. M. 315. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 115-6, 167, 170-76.

A transcription of the chantry certificate appears in the Bridges manuscripts, which in turn is copied from a transcription by Dugdale. This provides much valuable information on the setting up, maintenance and work of a chantry foundation and is worth quoting almost verbatim.

King Henry VII, by Letters Patent dated 26th November 1489, Anno Domini. Gives licence to William Chaumbre to erect a chantry at the altar of the Virgin Mary in the church of All Saints, Aldwincle, allowing one priest for the service who is to pray for the welfare of the said Henry VII, William Chaumbre & Elizabeth his wife, and the said chantry is to be called The Chantry of William Chambré & Elizabeth his wife. The said William Chaumbre by deed dated 8th November 1489 gives grants for the maintenance & support of John Selyman chaplain and his successors the manor of Armaston called Bythornes . . . the manor of Denford lake Wm Aldwyncles half a yard land & 3 acres in Aldwincle fields calld Pecokkys [Peacock's] land, half a yard land & 2 acres in Aldwincle aforesaid called Cotynghams, & also a close lying in Benefeld fields called Overleys. He also appoints the said chantry priest to teach six poor boys of the said town to be chosen by the said William Chaumbre & Elizabeth during their lives, & after their decease three by the chaplain and three by the Rector of the church of St Peter's Aldwincle to spell and read & that they the said boys every night shall say for the souls of the founders the psalm *De Profundis* with the prayers *Inclina Domini et filium* and that he the said chaplain every year shall give to two poor people of the said town 26s. 8d by 4 quarterly payments.<sup>492</sup> After the decease of the said William Chaumbre & Elizabeth the Abbot of Peterborough is to present the chaplain.<sup>493</sup>

An additional manuscript note records the following. 'By another deed, the said chantry is founded for the prosperity of King Henry & Elizabeth his consort, and also for the [welfare] of William Chaumbre and Elizabeth his wife while living and

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<sup>492</sup> The 1546 chantry certificate specifies two poor bedesmen of the almshouse in Aldwincle; Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>493</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 7, p. 207; NRO. MS. M. 314.

for their souls after their departure out of this world and also for the souls of William Aldwyncle, John Chambre father of William Chambre & Anne his wife, Baldwin Bold & Margaret his wife, Lady Margery [Maynard] & Richard Holt, Ralph Grene Esq, William [Hotot], Maud Fossebroke & Sir John Holand Kt & Elena his wife . . .<sup>494</sup>

The fabric of this now disused church includes a south chancel chapel that stylistically fits the 1480's foundation attested in the will. There are fifteenth-century arches between the chapel and chancel and between the chapel and south aisle. These have shields on their capitals carved with the Chambre arms. The east window of the chapel has a four-lights; the south side has two three-light windows that were originally a matching pair, the westernmost of which was truncated to facilitate the inclusion of a door. Externally the chapel is crenellated and has a pinnacle at the south-east angle (fig. 20). Internally, between the south windows there is a corbel carved with a female face and beneath the south-east window a piscina has an ogee arch with pierced cusps and a tympanum with stylised roses and crenellations. The east wall has two image brackets. That on the north side is carved with flowers, which may or may not be a Marian reference, and that on the south has flowers and a serpent that is indubitably a surviving fragment of Marian iconography (figs 21 & 22).<sup>495</sup> In addition the chapel windows contain white rose quarries datable to c. 1489-93 and *in situ*.<sup>496</sup> Professor Marks suggests that 'these would *appear* to allude to *some* connection [my italics] between the Chambre family and the House of York',<sup>497</sup> but why may not white roses be regarded as a Marian motif, when they are cited as such by Marks with reference to examples in other churches, e.g., Rushden,<sup>498</sup> particularly as there is no known connection between the Chambre family and the House of York?

The collective evidence indicates that the Chambre chantry chapel functioned as the Lady Chapel at Aldwincle, All Saints, at the end of the Middle Ages.

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<sup>494</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 7, pp. 207-208; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>495</sup> In her capacity as second Eve, the Virgin crushes the cause of the Fall.

<sup>496</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lv.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

**Aldwincle: St Peter**

In 1847, C. Winston recorded the Virgin from a Coronation of the Virgin in the tracery lights of the east window of the chancel. This fourteenth-century glass is now lost, but Winston's 1852 watercolour survives in the British Library.<sup>499</sup> It depicts a crowned and seated Virgin with quarries depicting roses beneath (fig. 23).

**Arthingworth: St Andrew**

**A, L**

In connection with this church there is a will reference which reads, '*Altaribus sancti Andree apostoli et beate Marie Virginis quinque ulnas linei panni*',<sup>500</sup> the interpretation of which is highly problematic. *Altaribus* is plural so two altars appear to be specified. Against this is the difficulty in dividing five linens between two altars, unless they shared a common stock, the solution that suggests itself as the most likely.

**Ashby St Ledgers:\* St Leodegarius**

**A, L,**

**North chantry chapel**

In 1460, a licence was granted by Henry VI to Sir William Catesby to found a chantry in this church 'at the altar of the Holy Trinity, or at the altar of Our Lady (Patent roll, 38 Henry VI, pt. I, m.3)'.<sup>501</sup> This chantry was dedicated in honour of the Trinity, the Salutation of the Virgin Mary and St Leger<sup>502</sup>. The transcription in the printed Patent Rolls is dated March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1460, Westminster, and reads as follows.

Licence for the king's knight, William Catesby, king's carver, and William his son to found a chantry of one chaplain to celebrate divine service daily in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Salutation of St Mary the Virgin, and St Leger, at the altar of the Holy Trinity or of St Mary within the church of St. Leger, Assheby Leger, in the diocese of Lincoln, for the souls of John Catesby,

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<sup>499</sup> BL. MS. Add. 35211, iii, f. 20. A reproduction appears in Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>500</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>501</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden. *op. cit.*, p. 271. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 127-129.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

esquire, and Margaret his wife, father and mother of the said William the father, and Philippa, sometime wife of the latter, and their ancestors, and for the good estate of the king and the said William and Joan his wife and all who endow the chantry and for their souls after death, and to celebrate an anniversary in the said church for the souls of the said John and Margaret, William the father and Joan and others aforesaid; to be called Catesby chantry, and the chaplain to be capable of pleading and of being impleaded in any court and of acquiring possessions in mortmain, not held in chief, to the value of 12 marks a year. Grant also to William the father that he may impark 300 acres of wood, land and pasture and a way between his land in Assheby Leger, now enclosed with a dyke and hay, so that he cause another way to be made on his land, and 1000 acres of wood, land and pasture in Lappeworth, co. Warwick, now likewise enclosed; so that none enter the said parks to chase or take anything thence without his licence.<sup>503</sup>

There is also a will request ‘ “To be buried at Asshby Legers afore the ymage of the Holy Trynite in my chapel . . . . I will that ij marbull stonys be bought . . . . the oon stone to be leyd on my fader and moder, and the other for to be a memoriall for me and for my wif” : George Catesby, esq. 1504.<sup>504</sup>

A piscina is sufficient evidence of a chapel location at the east end of the south aisle, in the floor of the north side of which, one of the ‘ij marbull stonys’ survives with brass intact commemorating George Catesby.<sup>505</sup> His wife is not depicted, but her remarriage may account for this omission.<sup>506</sup> Unfortunately, this memorial is partially obscured by the organ case, which fills most of the chapel, but if it is *in situ*, the surviving stone indicates the location of the chantry chapel with the triple dedication. However, the chantry licence clearly indicates that the church had a

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<sup>503</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry VI. vol. VI; A. D. 1452-1461, op. cit.*, pp. 551-2.

<sup>504</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>505</sup> The second stone ‘to be leyd on my fader and moder’ (William and Margaret Catesby), is inset with brasses and located beside the piscine in the south east corner of the chancel.

<sup>506</sup> To Sir Thos Lucie, Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 16. Baker G., *op. cit.*, records a brass plate on a nearby pew commemorating George and Elizabeth Catesby, vol. 1, p. 250.

Trinity altar *and* a Lady altar. Since the Catesby will specifies burial ‘afore the ymage of the Holy Trinite in my chapel’ and since the surviving memorial is on the north side of the chapel and is therefore situated before the most likely location of an image of the Trinity as primary patron of the chapel, it is reasonable to conjecture that this was the original Trinity Chapel, chosen as the site of the Catesby chantry and that the Lady altar / chapel was elsewhere. The north chancel chapel<sup>507</sup> offers itself as the most likely location of the latter, as an important part of the fabric, in a prime location that was formerly linked to the chancel by a two bay arcade. This chapel contains a piscina in the form of an engaged column, and nineteenth-century glass in the east window with a depiction of the Virgin in the central light – possibly evidence of antiquarian belief in this area as a medieval Lady Chapel for reasons now lost to us. The tracery of the chapel windows is dateable to the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>508</sup> Pevsner notes a fifteenth-century glass depiction of St John in the Church of St John Baptist, Northampton, which he asserts was formerly located in the Ashby St Ledgers chapel.<sup>509</sup> Professor Marks however, does not mention this.

The eighteenth-century antiquarian John Bridges records that the north aisle of the church was formerly the Trinity aisle and that the north chapel contained commemorations of several Catesby burials, but Baker notes that the ‘chapel is now appropriated for the burial place of the Arnold family, and has been entirely new paved’.<sup>510</sup> These testimonies appear to suggest that my former hypothesis, locating the Trinity chapel in the south aisle, is wrong [and so it may be], but the possibility of editorial error on the part of the antiquaries and their assistants must be allowed for. For example, Bridges was assisted in his research by local schoolmaster William Taylor, who seems to have acquired a reputation for making errors in orientation.<sup>511</sup> An instance of this occurs at Ashby St Ledgers itself,

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<sup>507</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, dates this chapel to the early fourteenth century, p. 89.

<sup>508</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. lxviii.

<sup>509</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>510</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 250.

<sup>511</sup> Noted by the Northamptonshire Record Society with reference to Daventry in Franklin, M. J., ed., *The Cartulary of Daventry Priory*, Northamptonshire Record Society vol. 35, Northampton, 1988, p. xxxii.

where in Bridges' published account the rood stair is described in these terms: 'At the upper end of the north aisle, are steps leading to the rood-loft'.<sup>512</sup> In fact, the rood stairs are on the south, and Taylor's manuscript notes accurately record this,<sup>513</sup> so the error is very definitely Bridges' own, or that of his editor, Whalley: Taylor is thereby vindicated. So far as the Lady Chapel is concerned, a final piece of evidence is provided by Baker, who writes 'North Chapel or Chantry. In this chapel, sometimes called St. Mary's chapel . . .'.<sup>514</sup> The evidence strongly suggests therefore that the north chancel chapel was the medieval Lady Chapel (fig. 24).

**Ashley: Our Lady**

**Aynho: St Michael Archangel**<sup>515</sup>                      **A, L**                      **South aisle**

There are bequests to a lady altar and a light. 'To our lady auter a stryke of barley': Richard Sparry, c. 1512. "I bequethe to fynde a light before our lady iijs. iiijd": Sir Edward Wollse, parson of Aynhoe, 1533.<sup>516</sup> Of the medieval fabric, only the tower survives, the rest being rebuilt 1723-5. However, Bridges notes ' . . . a burial place joining to the south ile',<sup>517</sup> to which Baker adds 'In Mrs Shakerley's will this is called the New Chapel, and in some court rolls Ladies Chapel'.<sup>518</sup>

**Badby: Our Lady**    **L**    **Chancel**

There is a bequest 'To the light of our lady in the chancell'.<sup>519</sup> Bridges gives the date of the annual parish wake as the 'Sunday after the nativity of the Virgin Mary, which falls on September 8<sup>th</sup>, commonly called the second Lady-day'.<sup>520</sup> This suggests that the original dedication of the church may have been to the Nativity of the Virgin. No medieval Marian iconography survives within the fabric, but

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<sup>512</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 17.

<sup>513</sup> BL. MS. Lansdowne 1042, W. Taylor's notes 1718-21, p. 185.

<sup>514</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 250.

<sup>515</sup> Body of medieval church rebuilt 1723-5.

<sup>516</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>517</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 17, p. 335.

<sup>518</sup> Baker, G., vol. 1, p. 553.

<sup>519</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>520</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 22.

antiquarian testimony records a small piece of Marian iconography in the clerestorey glass depicting 'Azure a heart gules pierced by a sword'.<sup>521</sup> This was probably *ex-situ*.

**Barby: Our Lady**

**L**

**North aisle**

Bridges notes that the wake was traditionally kept on the Sunday following 15<sup>th</sup> August,<sup>522</sup> suggesting that Assumption-tide marked the celebration of the patronal festival and the possibility of an Assumption dedication.

A will refers to 'our lades light in the body of the churche',<sup>523</sup> and a piscina incontrovertibly attests to an altar at the east end of the north aisle, which Treen suggests was dedicated to the Virgin,<sup>524</sup> but is he right? The east window of the north aisle contains an *in situ* Nativity dateable to c. 1300-10,<sup>525</sup> and writing at the end of the nineteenth century, Treen noted the fragmentary remains of some wall-paintings in this area of the church, which have since been lost. He describes on the north wall of the north aisle the remains of a scroll with black and red lettering in English, which he believed might have referred to the *Magnificat*. He also recorded a canopied image niche executed in paint to the north of the east window, containing the remains of two paintings, one over the other, 'as far as I can make them out, of a figure of some ecclesiastic in a cope', but 'much too dilapidated to make out with precision'.<sup>526</sup> He also noted 'on the south side of the east window of this aisle, immediately over the piscina, are designs of the lily in rows. These are in two shades of blue, accompanied with touches of red and black upon a pure

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<sup>521</sup> BL. MS. Egerton 3510, f.55v; W. Belcher's notes; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E1, ff.49r, 93v, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1614. For the iconography of this glass, see Horne, E, 'A Wings, Sword, and a Heart Badge', *Journal of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. 11, 1931, pp. 286-88. Also, Anderson, M. D., *The Imagery of British Churches*, London, 1955, p. 148.

<sup>522</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 26.

<sup>523</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>524</sup> Treen, A. E., 'Some Historical Notes on the Parish of Barby, Northamptonshire', AASRP, vol. 24, Lincoln, 1897-98, p. 5.

<sup>525</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>526</sup> Treen, A. E., *op. cit.*, p. 9, & NRO. MS. ROP. 2900.



(when viewed from the front), and Mary appeared in hers, but in which the latter also appeared as part of an Annunciation group as well as in the traditional position of the patron to whom the chapel was dedicated. This iconographic hypothesis would also dovetail with the symbolism of the cross that may have been present either on the altar itself as a crucifix or depicted on an altarpiece, reredos or window glass.

The testimony of Henry Syers slightly contradicts that of the VCH by seemingly interpreting the eagle as a dragon. With reference to these niches he says: 'On the east wall are two canopies, one of which contained a figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Holy Child (beneath them the dragon), now destroyed; the other a most remarkable and probably unique sculpture, illustrative of the accomplishment of the angel Gabriel's words . . .'<sup>533</sup> There is an element of mystery surrounding the Annunciation sculpture. The probability of its survival *in situ* and undamaged from medieval times is highly unlikely unless it was hidden. Moreover, though noticed by Syers and the *Victoria County History*, an earlier commentator writing in 1852 makes no mention of it, though he does describe the niches and the inscription (though he locates the latter on the south side).<sup>534</sup> It is possible therefore that the image was restored between 1852 and 1895.<sup>535</sup>

**Barnwell: All Saints**

**A, L, B**<sup>536</sup>

**Barnwell: St Andrew**

**A, L**

The east end of the south aisle has a trefoil lancet, flanked by image niches and a piscina. A window on the south side of the chancel contains an *in situ* roundel depicting intersecting triangles with a white rose in the centre, dated *c.* 1400-50.<sup>537</sup> This may be an iconographic allusion to the Trinity and St Mary.

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<sup>533</sup> Syers, H. S., 'The Building of Barnack Church', AASRP, vol. 23, Lincoln, 1895-96, p. 50.

<sup>534</sup> NRO. MS. Misc. Photostat No. 376/2, *Glynne's Church Notes*, 1852, pp. 11-12.

<sup>535</sup> Unfortunately, neither Bridges nor Baker surveyed this church, though an external view of the chapel appears in Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, (no page number).

<sup>536</sup> Philippa Holcote, 1522.

<sup>537</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 18 & photograph, p. 19.

**Benefield: Our Lady****P, L, Y****Chancel**

In accordance with the dedication, surviving wills strongly suggest the chancel as the principal focus of Marian devotion within this church. ‘ “To the peynting of our lady yn the chauncell xiijs. iijjd”’: W. Tayler, 1518. “To the light of our lady within the hye chauncell iijs. iijjd”’: Roger Alyn, 1521. “To our lady in the chauncell a pownd of waxe”’: John Johnson, c 1529’. In addition there was Our Lady of Pity somewhere within the church.<sup>538</sup>

Bridges notes that the wake was kept on the Sunday after the Assumption.<sup>539</sup> The church was rebuilt c. 1847, but the chancel may be on the medieval plan.

**Billing, Great: St Andrew****L, I, B<sup>540</sup>****South aisle**

The 1525 will of Edmund Freeman bequeathes wax to ‘our lady in the chauncell’ and requests burial ‘in the churche of Muche Byllyng before the ymage of our lady on the sowthe side’.<sup>541</sup> Two distinctive Marian references by a single testator suggest two locations. The south side is therefore the most likely location of a Lady Chapel.

The south aisle of the church is largely thirteenth century and in place of a window there survives a Decorated tripartite reredos.<sup>542</sup> This has a central niche with a crocketed ogee head and finial, flanked by two smaller but otherwise similar niches. The central niche once had a painted inscription, now lost, attested (though illegible) in 1849.<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>539</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 360.

<sup>540</sup> Edmund Freeman, 1525.

<sup>541</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

<sup>542</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>543</sup> Poole, G. A., *Architectural Notices of the Churches of the Archdeaconry of Northampton*, London, 1849, p. 253.

**Blakesley: Our Lady**<sup>544</sup>

**L, B**<sup>545</sup>

**North chancel chapel**

The will of William Saunders requests burial ‘*in insula beate Marie ex parte australi*’. This reference does not necessarily indicate the south side of the church, but may refer to the south side of an altar or image, as was the case regarding the will of Joan Nansicles who requested burial ‘in the south end of the awlter of Saynt Kateryn and off Seynt Margaret’ in the same church. In 1500, John Taylor bequeathed money ‘to the werks of the north side’, and the same year, William Saunders bequeathed money ‘*lego ad opus insule beate Marie*’. The most logical conclusion to draw from this information is that Saunders bequeathed his money to the chapel in which he hoped to be buried and that this chapel was on the north side. This solution accords with the fabric evidence of a substantial north chancel chapel and a much smaller south chancel chapel that we know from the evidence of a further will was dedicated to St Anne and was ‘new bylded’ c. 1535.<sup>546</sup> Bridges notes an Assumption wake.<sup>547</sup>

**Blatherwycke: Holy Trinity**

**C, B**<sup>548</sup>

**North**

A relatively large north chapel divided from the chancel by an arcade c. 1300 suggests itself as the most likely location of the Lady Chapel. There is no suggestion of the former existence of a south aisle / chapel.

**Blisworth:\* St John Baptist**

**C, L, I**

**South chantry chapel**

‘“Lands in Crowley and Chycheley co. Bucks to be sold to find a prest in perpetutye to sing for me my wife and my auncestrie in our lady chapell in

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<sup>544</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden give the dedication as ‘Our Lady’, but Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, notes that ‘The wake follows the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin’, vol. 1, p. 234. The wake was the day kept as the annual patronal festival and the survival into the eighteenth century of the feast of the Assumption as the patronal feast at Blakesley suggests this may have been the medieval dedication of the church.

<sup>545</sup> Wm Saunders, 1500.

<sup>546</sup> Will references, Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>547</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 234.

<sup>548</sup> Richard Lightfoot, 1514.

Blysworth”: Roger Wake, esq, 1503’.<sup>549</sup> The manuscript notes provide the additional information that ‘the said priest [was] to be a schoolmaster to tech a free school there’.<sup>550</sup> The 1546 chantry certificate stipulates that the priest had to be an Oxford graduate and had to run a free grammar school.<sup>551</sup> The name of the priest / schoolmaster in 1548 was John Curtes, aged 42, whom the commissioners described as ‘well lernyd, and hathe at this present xxx Schollers, and is very mete to serue Cure, and hathe no other Lyving’.<sup>552</sup>

The inscription on Wake’s monument in the south chapel was transcribed several times in the Bridges manuscripts. ‘Here lyeth Roger Wake Esquire, Lord of Blisworth in the county of Northampton, and Elizabeth his wife, which Roger deceased the ... day of March in the year of our Lord God 1503, on whose soul Jesu have mercy’.<sup>553</sup>

The will of William Water, 1526 legislates for the burning of tapers before the image of Our Lady in the chapel *and* before her image on a pillar in the north aisle. Clearly then, the Lady Chapel itself was not located in the north aisle.

The external walls of the south chapel have been substantially rebuilt,<sup>554</sup> but the medieval transverse arch dividing the chapel from the rest of the aisle survives, as does the Wake monument though the latter is *ex situ*. This was located before a wall recess in the same chapel until 1988 when it was moved to a central location within the chapel.<sup>555</sup> Bridges records that one of the two chapel windows contained the inscription ‘*Revertere Joachyme ad Coniugem tuam*’, referring to the father of

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<sup>549</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-8.

<sup>550</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 19, p. 118; NRO. MS. M. 342.

<sup>551</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>553</sup> BL. MS. Harley 6763, p. 24; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 2, p. 100; NRO. MS. M. 313; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, p. 73; NRO. MS. M. 314; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 55; NRO. MS. M. 314. Also, Gordon, P., *The Wakes of Northamptonshire*, Northampton, 1992, pp. 21-23.

<sup>554</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>555</sup> The plan of the church was recorded by RCHME before the 1988 re-siting of the Wake monument. This survey clearly demonstrates that its location prior to 1988 is unlikely to have been original, as it was placed very awkwardly before the wall recess. This location may have been part of an 1856 re-ordering by E. F. Law, or the 1926 rebuilding of the south aisle.

the Virgin.<sup>556</sup> There is also a blocked elevation squint. The cumulative evidence is that the south chapel was a Lady Chapel, which Roger Wake endowed with a chantry priest (fig. 25).

**Bowden Parva: St Nicholas**

**North aisle**

Testator, William Pope, whose will was proven in 1555, bequeathed five shillings 'To ye payvyng of our ladys ile'.<sup>557</sup> An illustration of the church appears in Bridges,<sup>558</sup> which clearly shows this church to have had a north aisle only, that presumably contained an altar and was therefore probably a Lady Chapel.

**Bozeat: Our Lady**

**Y**

A will records an image of Our Lady of Pity within the church,<sup>559</sup> but perhaps of greater interest is the testimony of Bridges. 'Several brass counters, with Ave Maria &c. inscribed in Saxon characters on one side, and a cross on the reverse, have been found here'.<sup>560</sup> He also notes an Assumption wake,<sup>561</sup> and a 'chancel screen with painted figures including a penitent praying to ye Virgin and the Virgin with a book'.<sup>562</sup>

**Brackley: Ss John & James**

**C, I, B<sup>563</sup>**

**North**

Formerly chapel of the hospital of Ss John & James, now the chapel of Magdalen College School. A will requests burial in the Lady Chapel of St James.<sup>564</sup> Pevsner suggests that there was formerly a short north aisle with a long chapel.<sup>565</sup> This may have been the Lady Chapel.

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<sup>556</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 337; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. C. 34, f. 115r.

<sup>557</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

<sup>558</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, between pp. 6 & 7.

<sup>559</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

<sup>560</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 161.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 176; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>562</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 175.

<sup>563</sup> T. Haulle, priest, 1533.

<sup>564</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

<sup>565</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 117.





access from the chancel to the north chapel as ‘by a narrow space at the foot of an altar tomb’, which he identifies as that of Sir John Spencer and dame Isobel [Isabell].<sup>580</sup> The cumulative evidence therefore suggests an image on the north side of the chancel (the normal location of a patronal image), which itself served as the Lady Chapel. In addition, Bridges notes an Assumption wake.<sup>581</sup>

**Brixworth:** All Saints

**C, I, Y**

**South**

Wills refer to a Lady Chapel in the church ‘in St. Catherine’s aisle’,<sup>582</sup> which may refer to the Verdun Chapel on the south side.<sup>583</sup>

**Brixworth:** Chapel of Our Lady<sup>584</sup> **L, B**<sup>585</sup>

**Churchyard**

Wills refer to a chantry chapel in the churchyard at Brixworth.<sup>586</sup> The site of the chapel may have been discovered by a dowsed survey. This chapel has been discussed previously, but additional evidence is given by the antiquarian, John Bridges, who mentions a chantry ‘in the chapel of the Virgin Mary . . . This chantry was in a chapel covered with lead in the churchyard’.<sup>587</sup> Bridges was and is a respected antiquarian. In asserting the presence of the chapel in the churchyard, he must have had confidence in its existence. The manuscript notes even profess to know the name of the founder, but do not give a date. ‘Chantry of Our Lady founded by William Curtis [Curtes] in a chapel situate in the churchyard there, covered with lead to the intent to find a priest to sing for ever’.<sup>588</sup>

A 1546 chantry certificate attests that ‘the saide Chauntre is no parishe Church. And there belongith to the sameone Chappell scituate in the parisshe Church Yard . . . The valewe of the Juells, ornamentes, and goodes belonging to the same

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<sup>580</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 94.

<sup>581</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 477.

<sup>582</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

<sup>583</sup> Parsons, D., *Lost Chantries*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>584</sup> Previously discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>585</sup> Wm de Bricksworth, 1367.

<sup>586</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>587</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 84.

<sup>588</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 19 & NRO. MS. M. 342.



To the image of our lady in the stepull j [stryke of barley]: Henry Hawke, 1517. To our lady in the stepull viiid”: W. Smyth, 1522. To our lady being in the stepull in the churchyarde of Bugbroke, iijs. Iiijd: Margaret Salwark, 1529. To our lady in the churchyard one ewe”: Stephen Tybbs, 1533.<sup>596</sup>

The first will makes specific reference to an image, and the third makes it clear that this was located externally on the tower of the church. On the south side of the tower is a single image niche, unrecorded by Pevsner or his antiquarian predecessors. This niche is located high enough to suggest an Assumption, but not too high for veneration from beneath (fig. 29). I think it extremely probable that it once contained an Assumption image (now lost), in accordance with the evidence of the wills and the medieval dedication of this church. The wills also imply a cult / votive status for the statue and that it was not regarded as simply decorative. However, the most intriguing question regarding these bequests is what was the money spent on? Maintenance of the figure, or lights perhaps, but if either of these, why did the testators not specify?

#### **Bulwick: Chapel of St Anne and Our Lady**

#### **Churchyard**

The Serjeantson and Isham Longden survey refers to a Chapel of St Anne within the Churchyard at Bulwick,<sup>597</sup> but Bridges notes ‘In the churchyard here was founded a chantry to the honour of St Anne *and* Our Lady, in one chapel covered with lead’.<sup>598</sup> Which chantry was ‘to have two priests to sing for ever in honour of Our Lady and St Anne’.<sup>599</sup> Bridges’ evidence for the dedication and location is corroborated by the 1546 and 1548 chantry certificates.<sup>600</sup> In addition, the latter certificate names the founder as Jeffrey Cope and records that Peter Stephins the priest ‘ys death [deaf] & can scantly here; vmete to serue A Cure, and hathe no other Lyuing’.

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<sup>596</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 290-1.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>598</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol.2, p. 290.

<sup>599</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 19, p. 109; NRO. MS. M. 342.

<sup>600</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 115 & 141-2. Also, Archer, M., ed, *The Register of Bishop Philip Repingdon 1405-1419*, III, Lincoln Record Society, vol. 74, 1981-2, Lincoln, 1982, p. 63.

**Bulwick: St Nicholas**

**L, Y, B<sup>601</sup>**

**Aisle**

**Burton Latimer: Our Lady**

**C, I, Y, G, B<sup>602</sup>**

Bridges notes that 'Here was formerly a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary'.<sup>603</sup>

The Bridges manuscripts note in an upper window of the north aisle 'Sca Maria misericordia domini...'.<sup>604</sup>

**Byfield: St Helen**

**A, L, B<sup>605</sup>**

**Carlton, East: St Peter<sup>606</sup>**

**C, B<sup>607</sup>**

**North side**

'To be buried "in capella beate Marie virginis in parte australi": Wm. Palmer, esq. 1484.<sup>608</sup> On the evidence of the above will, Professor Marks concludes that the south chapel was the site of the Lady Chapel in the medieval building.<sup>609</sup> The church was rebuilt in 1788, but fortunately the medieval fabric had been recorded by Bridges in c. 1720. He noted that 'the eastern part of the north aisle is divided by a screen of wood, and used as a place of sepulture. In the east window of this aisle are the following five coats of arms'.<sup>610</sup> He then describes the arms and inscriptions of six Palmers and their immediate families, including a William Palmer. Clearly, the east end of the north chapel was a traditional burial place for the Palmer family, and therefore suggests itself as the most likely location of the 'capella beate Marie virginis' of the will, the 'in parte australi' referring to the south side of the north chapel, not the south side of the church.

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<sup>601</sup> Robert Pedivire, 1530.

<sup>602</sup> W. Lucke, 1546 (in the Lady Chapel), & Wm. Wolston, 1527 (before the Pity image).

<sup>603</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 225. No other details or source are cited.

<sup>604</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 3, p. 253; NRO. MS. M. 313.

<sup>605</sup> Henry Ferndon, 1498.

<sup>606</sup> Church rebuilt 1788.

<sup>607</sup> Wm. Palmer, 1484.

<sup>608</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>609</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 59, n. 2.

<sup>610</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 292; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 4, p. 131 & drawings of armorial glass pp. 131-134.

**Castor:** Ss Kyneburga, Kyneswitha & Tibba     **A, G**

**Chacombe:** St Peter     **L**

**Charwelton:** Holy Trinity

No surviving wills contain Marian references, but there are several bequests in respect of an important chapel and altar of St Anne in which a chantry was founded under the terms of Thomas Andrewes' will in 1496.<sup>611</sup> This was located in a north chancel chapel, which eliminates this area as a Lady Chapel unless it formerly had a dual dedication. However, Taylor noted a now vanished Annunciation text in the east window of the south aisle, which read as follows. '*(Ave maria gr)atia plena d[omi]n[u]s tecum*' and '*(Ecce) ancilla domini (fi)a(t mihi secundum verbum tuum)*'.<sup>612</sup>

**Chipping Warden:** Ss Peter & Paul     **A, T, I, B**<sup>613</sup>

**Church Brampton:** St Botolph     **L** (in chancel)

**Clapton or Clopton:** St Peter<sup>614</sup>     **L**

Wills attest a Lady light, thus indicating an image / altar in the church.<sup>615</sup> In addition, antiquarian sources recorded part of an Annunciation scroll (now lost) in the glass of the north transept east window in addition to a figure of St Katherine.<sup>616</sup> The church was rebuilt c. 1863 by Richard Armstrong.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>611</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 297; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 20; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>612</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. C34, p.136; NRO. MS. M. 305.

<sup>613</sup> Thomas Mayow, 1530.

<sup>614</sup> Rebuilt 1863.

<sup>615</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>616</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 370; NPL, Dryden Collection. Rev. J. Pridden's late 18<sup>th</sup>-century notes and Dryden notes of 1862, no page numbers.

<sup>617</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 151.

**Claycoton: St Andrew**<sup>618</sup>

**A**

**Clipston: All Saints**

**A**

Bridges informs us that, 'within the parish church of Clipston was a chantry in honour of the Blessed Virgin, founded and endowed by Agnes the daughter of Adam de Clipston, in the episcopate of Rbt Grossthead, bishop of Lincoln'.<sup>619</sup> Chantry certificates corroborate Bridges by informing us that the masses were celebrated at the altar of Blessed Mary, and that 'in the second year of Edward VI it was called Pilkington's chantry'.<sup>620</sup> This church clearly had a Lady Chapel / altar, but there is no evidence to suggest its location.

**Cogenhoe: St Peter**

**A, L, C**

**North side**

Wills indicate a Lady altar, a Lady light and a Lady Chapel, but do not mention a location.<sup>621</sup> However, Bridges states that 'in this church was a chantry founded by William de Cogenho for one priest to sing for ever at our Lady's altar, . . . This chantry seems to have been situate on the north side of the chancel; as there are marks of a large arch, now filled up, thro' which was probably the entrance into the chantry chapel'.<sup>622</sup> The chantry of Our Lady is attested to by certificates.<sup>623</sup> A substantial chapel is located on the north side of the chancel, suggesting that Bridges' interpretation may be correct. The last priest was George Newdegate, aged 38, described by the 1548 commissioners as 'vnmete to serue Cure, and hathe no other lyving'.<sup>624</sup>

**Cold Higham: Our Lady (now St Luke)**

**L (chancel)**

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<sup>618</sup> Mostly rebuilt 1866.

<sup>619</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 23.

<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.* Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 124, 144-145, 177. Also, Davies, F. N., ed., *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste . . . Rotuli Henrici de Lexington, 1235-1253*, Lincoln Record Society, 11, Lincoln, 1914, p. 175.

<sup>621</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>622</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 19, p. 117; NRO. MS. M. 342; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 349-50.

<sup>623</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 158. Also, pp. 126 & 157.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*

**Collingtree: St Columba**

**A, I (south aisle)**

**Collyweston: St Andrew**

The Bridges manuscripts record a piece of Marian iconography that is particularly interesting in respect to its location. The reference is to an Annunciation ‘in the window of the tower an angel and over him on a label this. *Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum*’.<sup>625</sup> This glass is now lost, but its recording provides a salutary reminder that the Angelic Salutation or *Angelus* was rung several times each day from church towers on the so-called ‘*Ave*’ bell. Coincidentally, one of only two surviving wills that make bequests to this church is that of Richard Dyx, 1515, who gives 2s. ‘to the new bell’.<sup>626</sup>

**Cosgrove: St Peter**

**L, A, B<sup>627</sup>**

**Cottesbrooke: All Hallows**

**L, B<sup>628</sup>**

**Aisle**

The will of Wm Rayne, 1521, requests burial ‘in our lady yle’.<sup>629</sup> However, ‘Rayne’ should probably be substituted with Payne since Taylor’s manuscript notes record several Payne burials within the church, though he does not state where.<sup>630</sup>

**Cottingham: Chapel of Our Lady**

**A, C, G, B<sup>631</sup>**

**Churchyard**

There are no Marian bequests made to the main church building at Cottingham, the medieval dedication of which is uncertain. However, several testators bequeathe goods to the Chapel of Our Lady, and the will requesting burial explicitly refers to the location of this chapel in the churchyard. It seems reasonable to suppose therefore that the latter building was the Lady Chapel.

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<sup>625</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, p. 270; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>626</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>627</sup> Robert Maye, 1540.

<sup>628</sup> Wm. Rayne, 1521.

<sup>629</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

<sup>630</sup> BL. MS. Lansdowne 1042, pp. 142-3.

<sup>631</sup> T. Cam, 1553.

<b>Cranford:</b> St Andrew	<b>G</b>	
<b>Cranford:</b> St John	<b>G</b>	
<b>Cransley:</b> St Andrew	<b>I</b> (chancel), <b>L</b> , <b>Y</b> (S. aisle), <b>G</b> , <b>B</b> <sup>632</sup>	
<b>Creaton:</b> St Michael	<b>L</b>	
<b>Crick:</b> St Margaret	<b>L</b> , 'Ave bell' <sup>633</sup>	
<b>Croughton:</b> All Saints	<b>C</b> , <b>L</b>	<b>North aisle</b>

'Our Lady. "To our Lady chapell a shepe": W. Cusam, 1522. "To our lady light in the north yle": J. Kynton, 1525.'<sup>634</sup>

There was clearly a chapel at the east end of the north aisle, evidenced by a piscina and wooden screens to the south and west sides, which incorporate rose carvings (fig. 30). The chapel contains a substantial image corbel on the north wall and another on the northern embrasure of the east window.

This church famously contains a remarkable series of wall paintings, mainly in the north and south aisles, and dating from the early fourteenth century. Those to the south depict scenes from the life of the Virgin, and those to the north mainly depict the Passion except for two important scenes – the Angelic Salutation and St Anne teaching the Virgin to read. These are located at the eastern end of the north wall and their inclusion at this location, which is out of sequence with the other scenes from the life of the Virgin, may be regarded as additional evidence for the location of the Lady Chapel, which cumulatively and convincingly suggests was situated at the east end of the north aisle.

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<sup>632</sup> Thomas Dexter, 1528.

<sup>633</sup> Probable reference to the ringing of the Angelus, Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>634</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

The paintings themselves have a remarkable vitality and attest to a high degree of sophistication, which would parallel that of the finest manuscript illustrations of the period, but for their faded, damaged and fragmentary state, that unfortunately is ubiquitous in surviving examples of this genre. St Anne is depicted with a blue nimbus. She wears a crespine type of headdress commensurate with the date of the paintings, a red robe and a cloak fastened with a round morse in the manner of a cope. She holds an open book, before which the diminutive form of the young Virgin is depicted with a light coloured nimbus. Her blonde hair appears to be worn loose in allusion to Her virginity and she is wearing a light dress that contrasts with a greyish tinted background.

In accordance with its importance, the Salutation is allotted three times more space than the previous scene and in a better state of preservation would be a sublime work of art. Gabriel wears a red robe with a loose white mantle over. The index finger of his right hand points to the Virgin, and from his left a scroll hangs to the ground. Undoubtedly this once bore the words *Ave Maria gratia plena dominus tecum*. His right wing hangs to the ground, but his left is at right angles to his torso, pointing to the Virgin, and between his wing tip and Her head the Holy Ghost is depicted as a white dove outlined in red pigment. St Mary is again depicted with long blonde hair, but this time Her nimbus is red and She wears an ochre coloured cloak over a lighter dress. Her right hand is held palm upwards in the traditional posture of adoration and acceptance. The rest of Her body has been lost. Between the two figures is the outline of a stem of lilies that must formerly have issued from a pot in the traditional manner.<sup>635</sup>

**Croughton:** Chapel of Our Lady In the Wood

**Detached**

“To the reparacon of our Ladys chapell standing in a wod in the parish of Croughton xiijs. iijjd”: Sir Edward Harbotell, 1526.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> See also, Tristram, E. W., & James, M. R., ‘Wall-Paintings in Croughton Church, Northamptonshire’, in *Archaeologia, or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, Society of Antiquaries of London, Second Series, vol. 26, Oxford, 1927, pp. 179-204, & plate 46, between pp. 196-197.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307

Bridges states: ‘Not far from the watermill in a field called Chapel-close stood formerly a small chapel’. He also testifies that ‘The walls of it were still standing within the memory of persons living in the neighbourhood’.<sup>637</sup>

**Culworth:** Our Lady

**L**

**Dallington:** Our Lady

**L, N, G, B**<sup>638</sup>

**Chancel**

**Daventry:** Holy Cross, Ss Helen & Augustine **C, A, L, Y, I, P**

‘Our Lady of Bedlem [Bethlehem / gesyn] over ye vestre dore’<sup>639</sup>

The medieval fabric was demolished and a new church built 1752-8. The old building had been shared between the parishioners and the monks of Daventry Priory until 1526, when Cardinal Wolsey dissolved the house in order to provide part of the endowment for Cardinal College, Oxford. The details as to how the arrangement between monks and townsfolk worked in practice have been much speculated upon,<sup>640</sup> but little is known for certain except that the parish part of the church was specifically dedicated to The Holy Cross and St Helen, and the monastic part was dedicated to St Augustine of the English (Augustine of Canterbury).<sup>641</sup> Wills make it clear that there was a Lady altar.<sup>642</sup> A Lady Chapel and explicit references to Marian liturgical practice are to be found in the priory cartulary. One, of c. 1300 legislates for Robert of Heringdon and his heirs to give 1*d.* every Assumption day for a light in the chapel of the Virgin in Daventry.<sup>643</sup> Of greater significance, the cartulary records a mid twelfth-century grant of land ‘to provide a light on the altar of the Virgin and to fund a *weekly* Mass to Her on Saturday, or any other day’. By the early thirteenth century, a reference to rent arrears orders that ‘he [the debtor] will be liable to 2*d.* to fund a candle at the mass

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<sup>637</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 162. Also, Smith, D. M., ed., *The Acta of Hugh of Wells, Bishop of Lincoln, 1209 – 1235*, Lincolnshire Record Society, 88, 2000.

<sup>638</sup> Thomas Sandrys, 1501.

<sup>639</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>640</sup> Franklin, M. J., ed, *The Cartulary of Daventry Priory, op. cit.*, pp. xxx-xxxvi.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid*, pp. xxxiv and 100.

<sup>642</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-10.

<sup>643</sup> Franklin, M. J., *op. cit.*, p. 85.

of the Virgin *every day*', and in 1427 John Brygge was ordered to pay twelve years arrears for failing to pay 12*d* annually 'to keep a candle burning in the chapel of the Virgin, Daventry'.<sup>644</sup> These cartulary entries are very much of an incidental nature - records of daily life and parish business. The last example indicates that not everyone was enthusiastic about Marian observance, a fact that should not be forgotten amid all the evidence to the contrary, but more importantly, the cartulary entries provide us with a fascinating insight into the escalation of Marian liturgical observance in a particular place. We learn that Mass of Our Lady was celebrated weekly, on Saturday if possible, but that the observance was flexible if convenience dictated a different day. We are also able to date the change from a weekly to a daily Lady Mass sometime between *c.* 1150 and *c.* 1200.

**Daventry Chapel: St Mary**

**Detached**

This chapel is known to have existed in the mid twelfth century and was located at the north-west corner of the high street.<sup>645</sup>

**Daventry Chapel: The Trinity**

**I, Y**

**Deene: St Peter**

**A, Y**

**Deeping Gate: Chapel of Our Lady, Maxey (now in Cambs).** **G**

A will records a guild in this chapel.<sup>646</sup> Bridges tells us it was situated about a mile from the parish church and was founded by John Anable, his wife Beatrice, their son John, a clerk, and William Jackson at an unspecified date.<sup>647</sup> The chapel must have been fairly substantial since he also says that it had a steeple with three bells in it. It is probable that this chantry is one that is referred to in the chantry certificates as located at Maxey.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 291, 325.

<sup>645</sup> Greenall, R. L., *Daventry Past*, Chichester, 1999, p. 18.

<sup>646</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

<sup>647</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 525.

<sup>648</sup> Parsons, D., *Lost Chantries*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27 & 30. Also Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 122 & 161.

**Denford:** Holy Trinity

**B**<sup>649</sup>

**North aisle**

The 1528 will of Sir Roger Rayne, priest, requests burial 'in the yle of our Lady'.<sup>650</sup> Evidence that this 'yle' was probably the north aisle is provided by the antiquarian record of glass,<sup>651</sup> which gains in iconographic significance from west to east. Thus 'In the lower [most westward] window of the north aisle a broken portrait with flower doe Lis [fleur-de-lys]. In the next window some broken portraits and [there follows a small drawing of a crowned W].<sup>652</sup> At the top of the next window an angel kneeling and out of his mouth a label thereon this [inscribed]. *Ave gratia plena*'. All this glass is now lost. The manuscript also notes the upper parts of the north and south aisles separated by screens 'like chantry chapels'.<sup>653</sup> The location of the Lady altar cannot be proven, but the testimony of a substantial amount of Marian iconography, executed in expensive glass suggests the north aisle is the most likely place for it.

**Denton or Doddington Parva:** St Mary

**L**

**Desborough:** St Giles

**L**

**Dodford:** Our Lady

**Duddington:** St Mary

**Duston:** Our Lady

**Easton Maudit:** St Peter

**C, L, B**<sup>654</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Sir Roger Rayne, 1528.

<sup>650</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

<sup>651</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E 8, p. 337; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>652</sup> It seems likely that these were crowned M's, re-set incorrectly. Professor Marks notes that in surviving medieval glass 'common conditions are weak leading, unleaded breaks, and glass displayed inside out (with the main painted surface exposed to the elements) or upside down', Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. lxi.

<sup>653</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E 8, p. 337; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>654</sup> '... Aspley', 1512.

**Easton Neston:** Our Lady

Bridges records glass in the east window of the north aisle depicting a praying woman with an inscription coming from her mouth saying '*Sancta Virgo Virginum Ora pro nobis*'.<sup>655</sup> A drawing appears in the Bridges manuscripts.<sup>656</sup>

**Ecton:** St Mary Magdalene                      **C, L, B**<sup>657</sup>

**Edgcote:** Our Lady                                      **L** (chancel), **B**,<sup>658</sup> **Y** (S. aisle)<sup>659</sup>

**Etton:** St Stephen                                      **L**

**Everdon:** Annunciation of Our Lady

**Eydon:** St Nicholas                                      **L**

**Eye:** St Matthew                                      **C**

**Farndon:** St John the Baptist                      **Bx2** (aisle),<sup>660</sup> **I, C**      **Aisle**

**Farthinghoe:\*** All Hallows                      **A, L**                      **South**

Wills make reference to a Lady altar, and a Lady light at the high altar.<sup>661</sup>

Bridges notes that 'Part of the south ile is inclosed, and through it you pass to the chapel abovementioned called the chappel of our Lady'. He also notes inscriptions written 'round the inclosure', including Marian ones. 'On the east end, *Hac non vade via, nisi dicas Ave Maria, Semper erit fine re qui michi dicit Ave*. On the north side in the ile, Evere tyme thow goste this way, *Ave Maria* look thow say;

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<sup>655</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 3, p. 32; NRO, MS. M. 313; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 292.

<sup>656</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 3, p. 24; NRO, MS. M. 313.

<sup>657</sup> Thos. Aynesworth, 1497.

<sup>658</sup> Richard Samuel, 1518.

<sup>659</sup> 'in the sowthe yle . . . be twyxt the ymage of our lady of Pytye & the dore of the yle'

<sup>660</sup> Wm. Westron, 1500, & W. Maydwell, 1511.

<sup>661</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

Nor he shall never wyll oss woo [?], That saythe an *Ave* as he goo'.<sup>662</sup> Baker notes that the Lady Chapel 'has now no communication with the church, and is converted into a school-room'.<sup>663</sup> Such use was in the spirit of the founder's intentions, since Baker also notes that 'A chantry was founded here for a priest to teach and instruct freely the children of the inhabitants'.<sup>664</sup>

Pevsner notes a late Perpendicular chapel, east of and raised above the south aisle,<sup>665</sup> but there is no evidence to suggest that the room in question ever communicated with the chancel. There is a piscina in the usual place at the east end of the south aisle, so it may be that the Lady Chapel was located here, to the east of which was the schoolroom of a chantry founded for educational purposes in the sixteenth century (fig. 31).

Bridges informs us that the chantry priest had use of a house, an orchard, a garden and an annual pension of vi l. xiiis. ivd., paid to him by the Mercers' Company in London.<sup>666</sup>

**Farthingstone:** The Assumption

**I, B**<sup>667</sup>

**Chancel**

Wills attest an Assumption dedication, and one example refers to 'our lady of farthingston', suggesting the possibility of a cult image in this church.<sup>668</sup> There is no reference to any other saint. Bridges notes that the wake follows this feast.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, p. 11; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 170.

<sup>663</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 624.

<sup>664</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 625, & Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120, 152-153.

<sup>665</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>666</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 171.

<sup>667</sup> George Hallywell, 1532.

<sup>668</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>669</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 64.

**Fawsley:** Our Lady

**B,**<sup>670</sup> **I**

**Chancel**

The will of Sir Richard Knightley requests 'To be buried in the chauncell of Faullesley before the ymage of our blissid lady according to my degree'.<sup>671</sup> Baker records the relevant monument on the south side of the nave,<sup>672</sup> but since the chancel was rebuilt in 1690,<sup>673</sup> it is probably not *in-situ*.

**Finedon:** Our Lady

**B,**<sup>674</sup> **I, L, G**

Unsurprisingly in respect of this church's dedication, there are a number of Marian will references to Our Lady, including a burial request '*coram imagine beate Marie*', and bequests to 'our lady lyght' and to a Lady guild.<sup>675</sup> There is also antiquarian reference to a glass inscription in the south-east window of the north transept, since lost, which read '*Sanctus Nicholas ora sancta virgo virginum sancta Maria ora pro nobis sancta virgo virginum*'.<sup>676</sup>

**Flore:** All Saints

**L**

**Fotheringhay:** Annunciation & All Saints

**A**

**Eastern axial**

There is a will reference to a Lady altar<sup>677</sup> and the statutes of this collegiate church legislate for a master, twelve chaplains or fellows, eight clerks and thirteen choristers. They also make specific reference to a Lady Chapel in article 44. 'Three masses to be sung daily, together with the chapter mass (when it happens) after the Sarum use: the first, the mass of Our Lady, to be sung in the Lady chapel with the choristers; the second without note, a mass of requiem for Richard II, Henry IV,

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<sup>670</sup> Sir Richard Knightley, 1528.

<sup>671</sup> Proven 1528, Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>672</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 390.

<sup>673</sup> Pevsner, N., *op. cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>674</sup> Wm. Lythyll, 1492.

<sup>675</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>676</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 7, p. 7; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>677</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

Edmund and Isabel, children of Edward the founder, and all faithful souls; the third, a sung mass of the day according to the use of Sarum'.<sup>678</sup>

The statutes of the college prescribed that boy choristers who knew plainsong should not be admitted to the choir over the age of nine, but that 'perfectly informed' candidates might be admitted up to the age of twelve.<sup>679</sup> This statute clearly indicates the degree of skill required for the polyphonic music of the Marian liturgy and the esteem in which such skill was held.

Also of interest is the survival of the sacrist's accounts from Michaelmas 1536 to Michaelmas 1548. In 1537, the oblations received on the feast of Purification amounted to 8s. 7 ½ d. The Easter Day oblation was 8s. 4d, plus 1s. 6d. for the Easter adoration. In comparison, the oblations for the feast days of St John Baptist, Michaelmas and Christmas amounted to 3s. 4d., 1s. 10d., and 2s. 0d. respectively.<sup>680</sup> On the evidence of these accounts, the Purification clearly ranked very high indeed in terms of popular piety and attests to the enormous attraction of the Marian cult.

In addition an inventory cited by Cox lists 'Item in our Ladyes chappell one standerd with v braunches of laten' and 'Item ij payre of croches typped with siluer'.<sup>681</sup> The latter were probably the staves of the rulers of the choir. The same page of the inventory also lists a frontal for the high altar depicting the Assumption on a blue velvet ground, and sacrist's expenses for 1537-8 indicate a payment of 4d for cleaning the Lady Chapel candlesticks and two candlesticks and lectern in the choir.<sup>682</sup>

The church contains a plan drawn by P.G.M. Dickinson that indicates an axial Lady Chapel at the extreme east end of the church (the collegiate choir and

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<sup>678</sup> Cox, J. C., 'The College of Fotheringhay', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 61, London, 1904, p. 248. These arrangements resemble those of the Beauchamp Chapel, Warwick; see below.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

ancillary buildings were demolished following dissolution), but no excavations have ever been carried out on this part of the site and consequently the Dickinson interpretation must be regarded as conjectural. However, there is evidence that at least attests a Lady Chapel that was distinct from other parts of the church. This is contained in the accounts detailing the demolition and sale of the buildings east of the nave, which value the roofs as follows: Chancel, £6.13s. 4d. Lady Chapel and one long roof at 23s. 4d each, and two small roofs at 13s. 4d.<sup>683</sup>

The chancel at Tansor contains misericords from Fotheringhay that are carved with the Marian devices of the rose and the serpent. It is possible that these came from the Lady Chapel.<sup>684</sup>

**Gayton: Our Lady** **L, A, L** ('at St Nicholas altar')

Bridges notes the wake as following the Nativity of Mary.<sup>685</sup>

**Glaphorn: St Leonard** **L**<sup>686</sup>

This church has a thirteenth-century north chancel chapel, the east window of which contains bar tracery that clearly corresponds with an arch connecting the chapel with the chancel. There is also a thirteenth-century pillar piscina and 'there are many traces of wall painting in the north chapel and aisle – a border of foliage round the arches, and a diaper of roses on the wall, with traces of figure subjects'.<sup>687</sup> These are considered to be mainly thirteenth century.<sup>688</sup>

**Glinton: St Benedict (Now in Cambs)** **C, L, B**<sup>689</sup> **North chancel chapel**

Wills of W. and M. Harbe request burial 'in our ladys chapell' and 'att our Lady's chapell door'.<sup>690</sup> Bridges notes 'Within this church was a chapel of the Blessed

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<sup>683</sup> RCHME, unpublished.

<sup>684</sup> Drawings in the Bridges' manuscript, Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 7, p. 143; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>685</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 265.

<sup>686</sup> 'To the lampe in oure lady quere', Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

<sup>687</sup> VCH, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 579.

<sup>688</sup> RCHME, unpublished.

<sup>689</sup> Margaret Harbe, 1511. 'att our Lady's Chapell door beseyd my husband'.

<sup>690</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

Virgin'.<sup>691</sup> A north chancel chapel suggests itself as the most likely location. It has a Decorated piscina and an entrance in the east wall, which may equate with the door in the will.

**Grafton Regis:** Our Lady

Bridges notes that the wake follows the Assumption.<sup>692</sup>

**Grafton Underwood:** Our Lady

**Green's Norton:** St. Lawrence            **L**

**Grendon:** Our Lady                        **Y, G**

**Gullesborough:** St Wilfrid                **I, L, G**

**Haddon, East:** Our Lady                    **L** (chancel)

In addition to the chancel light, one will refers to 'Our Lady in St Nicholas Aisle'.<sup>693</sup>

**Haddon, West:** All Saints                 **A, L, B**<sup>694</sup>

**Hanging Houghton:** Our Lady            **C, P, I**

Wills contain several Marian bequests, including a '*picturam ymaginis*', lights in the chancel, '*beate Marie in fenestra*'<sup>695</sup> and an image 'called lyttyl Mary' that had a 'little Mary light'.<sup>696</sup> Bridges notes lands 'in Hanging Houghton; formerly belonging to the guardians of the chapel here, but by the statute of the first of Edw. VI., upon the dissolution of chauntries, forfeited to the crown'. He also states that 'Here was antiently a chapel, out of the ruins of which the manor-house, now also

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<sup>691</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 578.

<sup>692</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 3, p. 39; NRO. MS. M. 313; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 302.

<sup>693</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

<sup>694</sup> J. Heire, 1533.

<sup>695</sup> This may refer to glass, or the main chancel image, set up in a window jamb.

<sup>696</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p.332.

in ruins, is said to have been built'.<sup>697</sup> According to Sir Giles Isham, the chapel was demolished in 1570 by Sir Edward Montagu.<sup>698</sup>

**Hardingstone:** St Edmund                    **C, B,<sup>699</sup> L**

**Hargrave:** All Hallows                    **L**

**Harleston:** St Andrew                    **L, A, G**

**Harpole:** All Saints                    **B,<sup>700</sup> L,**

**Harringworth:** St John Baptist, All Saints, Our Lady                    **L, I    Churchyard**

Wills make reference at Harringworth to the Church of St John the Baptist, and separate chapels of All Saints, and Our Lady. The church had an image of Mary and a light.<sup>701</sup> It is not known where the image and light were situated, but the presence of a Decorated piscina and sedilia at the east end of the south aisle suggest an important chapel.

The chapels of All Saints and Our Lady no longer exist, but Bridges notes the ruins of All Saints 'Eastward from the church', and 'Southward from the church are three or four poor houses, named the chapel houses, in memory of a chapel formerly standing there. Heads and window places are still remaining'.<sup>702</sup> The dedication is not mentioned, but since St John the Baptist and All Saints are accounted for, it seems likely that the chapel houses where 'heads and window places are still remaining' may mark the site and contain fabric of the chapel of Our Lady attested in three wills, including a bequest 'To the bryge betwixt our

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<sup>697</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 116-7.

<sup>698</sup> Isham, G., *All Hallows Church, Lamport*, Kettering, p. 7 (no date given). Also, Davies, F. N., ed., *Rotuli Richardi Gravesend, 1258 – 1279*, Lincoln Record Society, 20, Lincoln, 1925, p. 113.

<sup>699</sup> Wm. Porter, c. 1512.

<sup>700</sup> Gye Breten, 1528.

<sup>701</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-7.

<sup>702</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 120.



Marian references in the wills include a Lady Chapel, an image tabernacle, an image of Our Lady of Pity, a light and a burial in the Lady Chapel. These are detailed as follows.

Our Lady. “To be buried in the chapel of our Lady in the parish church of Higham Ferrers”: Maryon Thorpe, 1506. “To the gyldyng of our lades tabernacle xxd”: James Basford, 1521. “To our lady light iij pownd of wax and a halfe”: Robert Pipewell, 1521. “To the gyldyng of the tabernacle of our Ladye in our Lady chappell xxd”: Roger Ashburne, 1529.

Our Lady of Pity. “To be buryed beffor the ymage of our Lady of Petye”: W. Hardyman, 1529.<sup>710</sup>

In addition, a transcription of the salient points of William Thorpe’s 1504 will appears in the Bridges manuscripts, as follows: ‘Wm Thorpe of Higham Ferrers, bequeath my body to be buried in the chapel of Our Lady St Mary within the parish church of Higham beforesaid’,<sup>711</sup> and he charges his executors ‘to cause a marble stone to be laid upon his grave to be made with a picture’.<sup>712</sup>

The north chancel chapel dates from 1325-30,<sup>713</sup> the eastern eight feet of which is screened off to form a passage-like vestry area (fig. 33). The west side of the screen served as a reredos to the altar, attested by an ogee arched piscina in the south wall of the chapel.

Brasses to William Thorpe and his wife Marion survive and occupy a location immediately west of the altar area (fig. 34). However, there is evidence to suggest that these are not *in situ*; a break across the stone in which the brasses are set is cracked and the Serjeantson and Isham Longdon wills survey contains a footnote in which the location is given as the south-east of the Lady Chapel.<sup>714</sup>

Nevertheless, since the Thorpe will requested burial in the Lady Chapel it seems

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<sup>710</sup> VCH, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 341.

<sup>711</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 61; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>713</sup> VCH, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 272.

<sup>714</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

likely that they are in or close to their original position. The brasses themselves include a crowned Virgin, above and between figures of the Thorpes.

The Marian liturgy of Candlemas was the occasion of a disturbance at Higham Ferrers in 1401 and was the subject of a case heard on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Plaintiffs Thomas and Joan Paryell claimed that during the Candlemas procession through the churchyard Robert Wych had pulled off Joan's cloak and hood and 'committed other enormities against her', for which crime they claimed 20s. Wych denied the charge and requested an enquiry by jury. The case was heard on May 6<sup>th</sup>, judgement being given for the defendant.<sup>715</sup>

**Hinton-In-The-Hedges: Holy Trinity**

The church contains glass from two tracery openings depicting the Coronation of the Virgin (fig. 35). These are in the International Gothic style, white with yellow stain and dateable to c. 1400-30. They are *ex situ*.<sup>716</sup>

**Holdenby: All Saints**

**C, B,<sup>717</sup> L, I**

**South aisle**

In a will proven in 1546, William Hatton requested 'To be buried in the chappell of our Ladye wthin the church of Holdenbye before the image of Seynt Katerin ther'.<sup>718</sup> Further wills attest to Our Lady in the chancel, and Our Lady at the chancel door.<sup>719</sup> Bridges says:

Under an arch in the south ile is a wooden statue of a man in a buttoned gown, with an iron sword and head-piece laid by him, but without any inscription. At a small distance upon a raised pavement is a black marble, on which was the effigies [sic] of a man in brass, with a coat of arms on each side his head, and a brass tablet at his feet, but the whole is now gone. Upon a brass plate near to the above; here lyethe William Hatton sonne of John Hatton sonne of

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<sup>715</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., 'The Court Rolls of Higham Ferrers', AASRP, vol. 33, Lincoln, 1913, p. 43.

<sup>716</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 106-107.

<sup>717</sup> Wm Hatton, 1546.

<sup>718</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*



**Irthlingborough:**\* Ss Peter & Paul C, Bx2,<sup>726</sup> Y

**South chapel**<sup>727</sup>

The parish church served as a chapel for a college founded by the widow of John Pyel in 1388. John Pyel had obtained a royal licence to found the college in 1375, but had died before he was able to complete the arrangements.<sup>728</sup> Wills make reference to a Lady Chapel in which two people request burial, an image of Our Lady of Pity, and some legislation concerning the Marian liturgy. The details are as follows.

Our Lady. “To be buried in the college church in the chapell of our Lady there afore my wyfes pewe: and over my grave I wolde have sett for remembrauns of me, & my soule an honest tombe of marbull stone alabaster or freestone if it may there conveniently be sett, orells a faire grete marbull stone one the grounde, with the Image of me to be made of coper with a scripture of the same specifyinge the day and yere of my deth, as myn executors shall seme best”: Sir Thomas Cheyne, kt. 1513. “To be buried in the chapell of our Lady the Virgyn in the churche of Sent Peter of Irtlyngborough”: John Ward, 1522.<sup>729</sup>

There is also, a request for a priest to celebrate Lady Mass daily and all the college priests to sing *Salve Regina* daily before an image of the Virgin in the church.<sup>730</sup>

There is no trace of the burial of John Ward, but there is a tomb that is a strong candidate as that of Sir Thomas Cheyne,<sup>731</sup> which ought to indicate the location of the Lady Chapel (fig. 36). It is a blue marble tomb chest with a canopy of pendant arches supported on colonnettes and there are indents of lost brasses on the back

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<sup>726</sup> Sir Tho. Cheyne, 1513, & John Ward, 1522.

<sup>727</sup> Subject to the Cheyne monument having remained *in situ*.

<sup>728</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 237. He cites ref. Fin. Anno II Ric. II. M. 2. & Mon. Angl. III. Tom. Pt. 2. p. 108.

<sup>729</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-8.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>731</sup> There is a record of Thomas Cheyne of Irthlingborough doing homage to the Abbot of Peterborough c. 1513 for the lands he held of the abbot in Cranford. Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 4, p. 106.

wall. Unfortunately, this monument has been re-set. It is situated in the south chancel chapel, occupying the site of the medieval altar, in front of a blocked window. On the right side, the front colonnette is detached, but on the left there is an infill panel between front and rear, indicating that the left side previously abutted a wall.<sup>732</sup> Bridges testifies that in 1720's, the monument was 'Against the south-east wall of the south chantry'<sup>733</sup> and this assertion certainly accords with the design of the monument itself. Plate xiii in Hyett's *Sepulchral Remains* depicts the monument in its former position, from which it was apparently removed c. 1839 (fig. 37).<sup>734</sup>

The evidence therefore suggests the south chapel as the most likely location of the medieval Lady Chapel. Whatever the dedication, this chapel must have once contained a most interesting grouping of sculpture in its north-east corner, where three image brackets survive, one on the north wall and two on the east, one of the latter being set lower down and of much larger size than average.<sup>735</sup> There is also a cinquefoliate arched elevation squint to the high altar.

**Isham:** Ss Peter & Paul

**A, Y**

**Islip:** St Nicholas

**L**

A thirteenth-century charter grant of Henry, son of Walter de Draiton [Drayton] to Henry, son of William, presbyter of Yslape [Islip], bestows 20 shillings in silver and land, in return for which Henry, son of Walter, will maintain a '*lampade ardentio (ardentare) cora altare beate marie in ecclesia beate Nicholay de Yslepe*'. The charter (noted previously) legislates that the lamp should burn in all celebrations of Mass, at Vespers, vigils of the Blessed Virgin, and at night.<sup>736</sup> This

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<sup>732</sup> According to Pevsner, the colonnettes are C19 replacements. Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire*, *op. cit.*, 268.

<sup>733</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 238.

<sup>734</sup> Hyett, W. H., *Sepulchral Memorials*, London, 1817, p. 34, & Poole, G. A., *Architectural Notices of the Churches of the Archdeaconry of Northampton*, London, 1849, p. 125.

<sup>735</sup> Illustrated, *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>736</sup> NRO. MS. SS. 2066.

hitherto unnoticed, but small and beautifully written charter is the single, but incontrovertible piece of documentary evidence for a Lady altar in this church.

**Kettering:**\* Ss Peter & Paul            C,<sup>737</sup> A, B,<sup>738</sup> T, G, L            North chapel

Bridges records that ‘In this church was a chantry, founded and maintained partly by the devotion of the inhabitants, and partly by the revenues of certain lands and tenements, given by copy of court-roll, to find a stipendiary priest, called the morrow-mass priest, to sing there for ever’.<sup>739</sup> The evidence of the wills makes it clear that there was a Lady Chapel and a Lady gild. Bequests include money for gilding and painting Our Lady’s tabernacle. Donations for general gild funds and light maintenance include money and the gift of a hive. Of greater interest, the wills provide more detailed evidence of the use and running of the Lady Chapel, as follows:

To the chapel of our Lady & to the church a cope or a vestment of white silke as thei shall thinke best, the price x marks or vijli. Item my surplesse to our ladys chapell in Kettering for the morrowe masse preest to weare att service tyme & he to say when he dooth on a pater noster & an ave, or ells at the lest to say God have mercy on his soule: Sir Richard Tailor, priest, 1535.<sup>740</sup> The same priest also bequeaths ‘ijs. To the morrowe masse preste & he to say de profundis att the levitory for my soule & all christen soules: & yff ther be no morrowe masse preeste than the said ijs. To be guyven to the poore people of Ketrying’.<sup>741</sup> The domestic needs of the Morrow Mass / Lady Chapel priest are also provided for. ‘Also I bequeth for ewer to ende for the maintenance of a morrowe masse preest att Kettering after the decease of my son Sir Edward the house att Millane cross, etc: J. Oswestyr, 1529.<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> There is a bequest ‘To the chapel of our Lady & to the church a cope or a vestment of white silke’ & ‘my surplesse to our ladys chapell in Kettering for the morrowe masse preest to weare . . .’ Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

<sup>738</sup> Robert Whytlyng, 1493.

<sup>739</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 244. Chantry also recorded in Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 127, 166.

<sup>740</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 351-2.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.*

It is abundantly clear that the Lady Chapel of Kettering Parish Church was a thriving centre of local piety and patronage. The maintenance of the chapel was financially well provided for by endowments and the generosity of gild members, and provision was made for a priest whose ministry was not exclusive to that gild, but extended to the important function of offering the Morrow Mass; and since one priest could normally celebrate just one per day, the Morrow Mass of the parish must have been votive of Our Lady, celebrated in Her Chapel. It is also clear that this mass was sung, not said, that vestments used were the traditional Marian colour of white, and that the chapel image was housed in a gilded and painted tabernacle. Also, that the priest was to offer prayers for the departed other than those prescribed in the liturgy, at vesting, and at the lavabo during mass.

The most likely location for this important Lady altar is either one of the two chapels flanking the chancel, or the chancel itself (fig. 38). Interestingly, with reference to the latter, there is a will requesting a trental at 'seynt Paul's awter'.<sup>743</sup> This begs the question as to whether Sts Peter and Paul as patrons each had separate altars in the chancel, or whether the will reference is a simple abbreviation. If the hypothesis of separate altars could be established, the location of the Lady altar was almost certainly in one of the chancel chapels, but which one? In addition to the gild of Our Lady, this church had important gilds dedicated to St John the Baptist, St Catherine, and the sepulchre. Those of St Catherine and John the Baptist certainly had altars. Antiquarian opinion favours the north chancel chapel as the location of the Morrow Mass<sup>744</sup> and implicitly thereby pinpoints the Lady Chapel since we know that it was the duty of the Morrow Mass priest to celebrate in the Lady Chapel. A piscina attests an altar and the east window of the north chancel chapel is flanked by two image niches. In addition, antiquarian testimony provides further clues. Bridges records a screen dividing the chancel from the north chapel, on the back of which (by 'back' he presumably means the chapel side) he notes an inscription, 'who so redis mi name shal have godys blyssing and our lady,

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<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>744</sup> Billings, R. W., *Architectural Illustrations & Descriptions of Kettering Parish Church, Northants*, London, 1869, p. 12. Also, Bull, F. W., *A Sketch of the History of the Town of Kettering*, London & Kettering, 1891, pp. 84-85.



*Sancte Marie*’ is noticed by Serjeantson and translated as ‘the land of the light of our lady’, an incidental boundary reference.<sup>752</sup>

Wills attest to a Lady Chapel in this church.<sup>753</sup> Bridges records a chantry founded in the eleventh year of the reign of Edward IV by one John Bacon, ‘to the intent that a priest might sing for ever at Our Lady’s altar’,<sup>754</sup> indicating that the Lady altar preceded the chantry foundation. Bacon endowed the chantry with lands in Kingsthorpe, the income from which was valued at £4 in *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, 1535, when John Howell was chantry priest. The chantry return of 1548 supplies the following details:

Bacons Chauntre founded to finde one preste and to have for his stipend the Revenues of the londes apperteining to ye same. The same chauntre ys wtin the p’yshe church of Kyngisthrop’. The same document notes the priest’s stipend of 70 s. 4 d. and the value of the ornaments at 3 s. 4 d.<sup>755</sup>

Kingsthorpe was among those places that attempted to resist the confiscation of corporate property during the Reformation by claiming that their chantry was copyhold.<sup>756</sup> The ensuing litigation provides additional details such as the duties of the chantry priest, who was ‘to celebrate the divine service and to assist in the choir of the same church’.<sup>757</sup>

**Kislingbury:** Ss Peter & Paul            C, L, Y

**Lampport:** All Hallows                L (chancel), A

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<sup>752</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., *A History of the Church of St Peter, Northampton, Together with the Chapels of Kingsthorpe and Upton*, Northampton, 1904, p. 161.

<sup>753</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

<sup>754</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 415. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>755</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., *A History of the Church of St Peter*, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 112-114, 139-141.

<sup>756</sup> This claim was noted by the chantry commissioners in 1548, *ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>757</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., *A History of the Church of St Peter*, *op. cit.*, p. 166. This author cites full details of this case, pp. 166-168.

<b>Laxton:</b> All Hallows	<b>L</b>
<b>Lilbourne:</b> All Hallows	<b>B,</b> <sup>758</sup> <b>A, L</b>
<b>Litchborough:</b> St Martin	<b>A, L</b>
<b>Loddington:</b> St Leonard	<b>C</b>
<b>Long Buckby:</b> St Gregory (Now St Laurence)	<b>C, L, A, S, B</b> <sup>759</sup>

Wills strongly attest a Lady Chapel in the church, but make no mention of other chapels. Bridges notes a chantry,<sup>760</sup> and the number and variety of bequests suggests that this chantry may have been located in the Lady Chapel. Testators bequeath a vestment, a tablecloth, a ‘kerchyffe’, six sheep and one cow to the chapel, as well as the usual monetary contributions towards maintenance of lights. In addition, Nicholas Lyne, 1532 bequeaths ‘To the town of Bugbye to mayntean our lady service the halfe acre of arrabull land I dyd bye of Wm Kentt’.<sup>761</sup> The priest at this time may have been one Thomas Oworm, who is known to have been in post in 1535.<sup>762</sup> Of greater interest however, is that when Edward VI’s Commissioners valued the chantry, the townsmen pleaded that the revenues were used for bridge repairs or other necessities, and ‘That they never applied them for the constant support of a chauntry, but occasionally hired a priest to sing, when the town was not otherwise charged’;<sup>763</sup> clearly an attempt not to give up valuable revenues if their loss could be avoided.

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<sup>758</sup> Thomas Hyllys, 1519.

<sup>759</sup> Sir Thos. Julyans, 1532.

<sup>760</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 548. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp.131-132, 155-156.

<sup>761</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

<sup>762</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 548. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *ibid.*

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*

Unfortunately it has not been possible to establish the location of the Lady Chapel / chantry, except to note that the south aisle is unusually spacious, its floor dimensions mirroring those of the nave.

**Lowick:**\* Ss Peter & Paul

**C, Bx2**<sup>764</sup>

**South transept**<sup>765</sup>

(Now St Peter)

A chantry chapel dedicated to St Mary was in existence in the parish church in 1317.<sup>766</sup> However, most of the standing fabric dates from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, paid for by the Greene family.

Our Lady. “To be beryed in the chyrche of Lofewyke in the chapell of our lady”: Margaret Grene, 1475. Also, “To be buried within the church of Saint Peter in Lufwicke in our Lady ile by my grautfader Grene, & I wil that myne executours cause a convenient tombe to be made for me”: Edward, earl of Wiltshire, 1498.<sup>767</sup> Bridges records ‘In the church of Lufwick was a chantry for two priests founded in 1498 by the last will of Edward earl of Wiltshire .<sup>768</sup>

The requests for burial cited previously were complied with. Margaret Greene had been pre-deceased by her husband Henry in 1467 and their joint tomb is located in the south transeptal chapel. That of Edward Stafford, second Earl of Wiltshire is also located in the south chapel (fig. 39). If they are *in situ*<sup>769</sup> (there is no reason to suppose otherwise), then this was the late medieval Lady Chapel; a chantry served by two priests.

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<sup>764</sup> Margaret Grene, 1475, & Edward, Earl of Wiltshire, 1498.

<sup>765</sup> Wills mention a ‘chapell of our lady’ & ‘oure Lady ile’ Pevsner mentions 16 figures from a Jesse window c. 1310-30 in the north aisle.

<sup>766</sup> VCH, *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 240; Also, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward II, 1317-1321*, London, 1903, p. 27.

<sup>767</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

<sup>768</sup> NRO. MS. SS. 4137; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, pp. 31-34; NRO. MS. M. 314; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 248. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115, 167, 170-76.

<sup>769</sup> The Bridges manuscripts attest to their location here in the early eighteenth century. Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E.2, pp. 79-80; NRO. MS. M. 313.

The tracery of the south window in the south transeptal chapel matches that of the windows in the aisles of the church, indicating a similar date. However, the east window of the chapel is finer, with a four-petalled flower motif. The north aisle windows contain sixteen re-set panels of coloured glass from a Tree of Jesse window. These have been dated to c. 1310-30,<sup>770</sup> and 1310-40<sup>771</sup> respectively. The Tree of Jesse is an iconographic motif particularly associated with St Mary and I believe it is not unreasonable to speculate that this glass may once have graced the original Lady Chapel, known to be in the church in 1317.

Letters patent, dated 18<sup>th</sup> December 1546 authorize the seizure of this chantry (and that of Aldwinckle, All Saints) to the King's use,<sup>772</sup> and the commissioners' certificate of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1546 provides these details. The following transcription (rendered into modern English) attests to the extreme thoroughness and legal formula with which the chantries were dissolved.

To the King our Sovereign Lord, into his most honourable Court of Chancery. Certify unto your most excellent Majesty, William Dudley Esquire, John Molesworth and Henry Freeman, gentlemen, Commissioners by virtue of your graces commission to them and other directed for the entry and seizing into your graces hands and possession of the perpetual chantry of two perpetual chaplains in the parish church of Saint Peter of Lowick in your county of Northampton, called the chantry of Edward, Earl of Wiltshire in the parish church of Saint Peter aforesaid, and into another perpetual chantry of one perpetual chaplain in the church of All saints of Aldwinckle in your said county of Northampton, called the chantry of William Aldwinckle, William Chambers and Elizabeth their wife in the church of Aldwinckle aforesaid with the appurtenances in the same chantries in your said county of Northampton and elsewhere within your realm of England, according to the Act of Parliament in that behalf provided; That we, the said William Didley, John Molesworth and Henry Freeman have entered and seized by virtue of your graces said

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<sup>770</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>771</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, pp. lxxviii and 130.

<sup>772</sup> The Latin text is printed in full in Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 170-174.

commission to Your Majesty's hands and possession the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of December in the thirty-eighth year of your most gracious reign, The chief house and mansion of the said chantry of Lowick, called the chantry house in Lowick in your said county of Northampton, and of the same mansion house with the appurtenances in Your Grace's name have taken real possession and seized therein in the name of all other manors, lands, tenements, rents, tythes, reparations, services and all other promotions, dignities, rights, jurisdictions, franchises, liberties, privileges, possessions and heredities whatsoever as well spiritual as temporal, of what kind, nature or condition whatsoever they be, to the said chantry of Lowick belonging or appertaining within the said county of Northampton and Bedford or elsewhere within the realm of England.

The foregoing formula is repeated with reference to the Aldwinkle chantry.<sup>773</sup>

**Lois Weedon: Our Lady** **I, L** (chancel)

In addition to the chancel light, wills make reference to 'our Lady in Saynt Katryn yile', and 'our Lady on Sante Catheryn aulter'.<sup>774</sup>

**Luddington-in-the-Brook: St Andrew** **L**

**Maidwell, St Peter and Maidwell, Our Lady** **L**

In the Middle Ages Maidwell had two churches; that of St Peter no longer exists, but a 1521 will bequeathes 'To our Lady a Shyppe'.<sup>775</sup> The church of Our Lady survives and wills record a Lady light.<sup>776</sup> Bridges notes that the wake was kept on the Sunday after the Conception of the Virgin, which may have implications on the dedication.<sup>777</sup>

**Marholm: Our Lady**

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<sup>773</sup> A complete transcription in original language is printed in Hamilton Thompson, A., *ibid.*, pp. 174-176.

<sup>774</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>777</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 50.

**Marston:** St Lawrence: Y

**Marston Trussell:** St Peter A, Y

(Now St Nicholas)

A chantry to the honour of the Blessed Virgin and provided for two chaplains or stipendiary priests, the earliest record of appointment being 1282. The last priests are named as William Atkins, 61, and Thomas Phillips, 24. Both were considered unfit to serve a cure by the commissioners in 1548.<sup>778</sup> The 1548 inventory of chantry possessions lists a vestment and altar clothes among its appertences.<sup>779</sup>

**Maxey:** Ss Peter & Paul (now Cambs) C, B,<sup>780</sup> L North chapel

The will of William Mychell, 1503, requests burial 'in capella beate Marie infra ecclesiam de Makesey'.<sup>781</sup> Bridges tells us that 'In the chapel of the Blessed Virgin within the church of Makesey, was a chantry, founded in the forty-first of Edw. III. By Sir Robert de Thorp, and endowed with three messuages . . .'<sup>782</sup> William Brughe, aged 59 is named as the priest in 1548 and is described as 'unlernyd'.<sup>783</sup> The VCH refers to a 'north or Lady Chapel' of the late thirteenth century, in which there is a cinquefoiled piscina and in the eastern [chapel] window fourteenth-century glass depicting two small figures under canopies.<sup>784</sup> Bridges' record of the latter feature is more specific:

In the east window of the north chancel [chapel], is the salutation of the Virgin, and on a label proceeding from the mouth of a figure [prob. Gabriel],

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<sup>778</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 152. Also, Hill, R. M. T., ed., *Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton 1280-1299*, II, Lincoln Record Society, 43, 1946 / 50, pp. 23-24, 33-34.

<sup>779</sup> NRO. Misc. Photostat, No. 770.

<sup>780</sup> Wm. Mychell, 1503.

<sup>781</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>782</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 524. Also, Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122, 160.

<sup>783</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *ibid.*

<sup>784</sup> VCH, *Northamptonshire*, vol. 2, p. 505-6.

*Ave Maria gracia plena.* In small panels at the top, is the portrait of St Peter, and of another Saint' (probably Paul).<sup>785</sup>

The manuscript sources record a freestone monument on the ground of the chapel. Most of the inscription was missing or indecipherable even in the early eighteenth century, but what was legible was recorded thus: 'Rude Gothick characters . . . *hic jacet Willus . . . . millus ccc...*'.<sup>786</sup> That the 'Willus' of the monument is the William Mychell of the will, must remain a matter of conjecture, but it is not impossible that such is the case. In any event, the cumulative evidence supports the north-eastern chapel as the location of the Lady altar.

**Mears Ashby:** All Saints

There is a bequest of wax to Our Lady, but other details have been lost.<sup>787</sup>

**Middleton Cheney:** All Hallows L, Y, I

**North**

Two separate wills refer to 'Our Lady' on the north side of this church, including that of Agnes Crofts, who made separate bequests to Our Lady of Pity and 'Our Lady on the north side',<sup>788</sup> suggesting that the former was elsewhere and that the primary Marian location was on the north side.

**Milton Malsor:**\* Holy Cross (formerly St Helen) A, L North chapel

Wills referring to Milton Malsor indicate a Lady altar, but do not specify its position. They also specify altars to St Catherine, St Nicholas and the rood. The medieval dedication of this church was to St Helen (now Holy Cross), so the high altar was almost certainly hers. This means there were at least five altars in a church of relatively modest dimensions. The church has north and south chancel chapels (fig. 40). These and the chancel are each equipped with a piscina. Clearly the high altar was in the chancel and the rood altar must have been in the vicinity of the chancel arch or before the rood in the north aisle. The Decorated east

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<sup>785</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, F. 2, p. 70; NRO. MS. M. 315; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 523-4.

He also gives the church dedication as The Blessed Virgin.

<sup>786</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E.5, p. 35; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>787</sup> Apparently torn from the manuscript. Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>788</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

window of the south aisle has ‘an inscribed wheel of radially set two-light arches’,<sup>789</sup> which may be regarded as a reference to St Catherine. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the south chapel was the position of Catherine’s altar. This accounts for the location of three altars, leaving two – St Mary and St Nicholas. The latter was popular, but in terms of the ranking of saints, St Mary was leagues ahead of him and her altar probably occupied a more prestigious position than his, but where? The north chapel is the obvious location, but leaves St Nicholas unaccounted for. However, several stone plugs in the two piers of the south arcade immediately east of the south door, and corresponding plugs in the south wall of the south aisle indicate the former presence of parclose screens. This suggests itself as the most likely site of the St Nicholas Chapel, appropriately located close to the font in that saint’s capacity as patron of children. This accounts for the five altars in the most obvious locations presented by the evidence of the fabric, and although it is not impossible that altars had dual dedications, in this case the wills make specific reference to specific altars and their lights. Therefore, the probable site of the Lady Chapel was the north chancel chapel. Wills also attest that this chapel had its own rood.<sup>790</sup>

**Moreton Pinkney: Our Lady      P, Y**

The Bridges manuscripts note that the wake follows the Assumption.<sup>791</sup>

**Moulton: Ss Peter & Paul      C, B,<sup>792</sup> A, L, Y**

The 1479 will of William Porter, vicar, requests burial ‘*in capella beate Marie*’.<sup>793</sup>

The location of the chapel is a matter of speculation, but chancel chapels survive north and south, both with piscinas, that to the north also has two remnants of image brackets in the sill of the east window.

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<sup>789</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>790</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-8.

<sup>791</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, F. 2, p. 105; NRO. MS. M. 315.

<sup>792</sup> Wm. Porter, 1479.

<sup>793</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

**Naseby:** All Hallows                      L, I (chancel), Y, L

In addition to the more usual items listed above, there is a bequest in respect of 'Our Lady of Grace'.<sup>794</sup>

**Nassington:** Our Lady

**Newbottle:** St John Baptist            T, I (chancel), I (nave)

Sir Thomas Thelwell bequeathed two sawn boards for a tabernacle housing an image of the Virgin in the chancel.<sup>795</sup>

**Newnham:** St Michael                    L, Y, A

The evidence of testators suggests that the medieval dedication of this church was to St Michael.<sup>796</sup> However, Bridges notes that 'in an ancient record, I find the town called Newenham Marie, which I suppose took that name from the patron saint of the church'.<sup>797</sup> Unfortunately, he does not specify which ancient record. He notes that the wake is kept at Michaelmas, but in ignorance of the proper dedication. The wills provide evidence of Our Lady in the chancel, in the church, and two bequests to Our Lady of Pity and St Michael. In addition there is a cloth 'with blue worke that hangeth on the spyer everyhighe daie'.<sup>798</sup> Newnham is located close to Bugbrooke, which, as previously noted had a Marian dedication, later changed to St Michael, and it is not inconceivable that a similar change occurred at Newnham, which would account for the ancient name cited by Bridges.

**Newton Bromswold:** Our Lady?

A single will suggests 'Our Lady' as the dedication of this church,<sup>799</sup> but Bridges states St Peter,<sup>800</sup> which is the current dedication.<sup>801</sup>

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<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>795</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>796</sup> Nicholas Sumerfeyld, 1510, T. Goodman, 1515, & T. Smyth, 1533. Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

<sup>797</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 22.

<sup>798</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-70.

<sup>799</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>800</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 184.

**Northampton: The County Town** (fig. 41)

Knowledge of the history of the county town would be the poorer without the ‘memorandums of the antiquities of the town of Northampton and of several remarkable things acted in this kingdom of England collected by Henry Lee in the eighty sixth year of his age, who served ye Corporation of Northampton in the office of Town Clerk fifty and three years till August 1715’. This first-hand testimony has been preserved in the manuscripts of Bridges *et al.*<sup>802</sup> Lee lists fifteen churches in the town.<sup>803</sup>

1. All Saints
2. St Giles
3. St Sepulchre
4. St Peter
5. St Gregory, ‘now ye free school’
6. St Mary
7. St George, ‘in ye castle’
8. St James
9. St Laurence ‘generally called lawless church, at which church they did often marry without licence’.
10. St Catherine
11. St Miles
12. St Edmund
13. St Leonard’s chapel in the leper’s hospital
14. Lady Grace [Our Lady of Grace]
15. Delapre Abbey

In addition, the evidence of wills suggests the following.<sup>804</sup>

16. St Margaret
17. St Martin
18. St Michael

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<sup>801</sup> Pevsner, N., *op. cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>802</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 9, p. 89; NRO, MS. M. 341.

<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>804</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 379-382.

19. Chapel on the west bridge
20. St Thomas's Chapel in Cotton
21. St Andrew
22. St Francis
23. Chapel of Our Lady in St John's Hospital
24. Chapel of St Thomas in hospital of St Thomas of Canterbury

Bridges notes eight fairs annually in the town, as follows. 9 Feb., 25 March, 23 April, 25 July, 15 Aug., 8 Sept., 17 Nov, 8 Dec. Four of the eight are Marian. These had been affirmed when the town charter was renewed in 1598.

**Northampton: All Saints**<sup>805</sup>                      **C,**<sup>806</sup> **A, G, B**<sup>807</sup>                      **Eastern axial**

In addition to the above, wills also make reference to 'Our Lady of Comfort', 'Our Lady of Grace', and 'Our Lady in the south of church'.<sup>808</sup>

All Saints was and is the civic church of Northampton. Most of the medieval fabric was destroyed in the conflagration known as the Fire of Northampton on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1675,<sup>809</sup> but happily its importance is attested in the survival of more documentary evidence than is generally the case at parochial level. In particular, the wills attest to multiple chapels / altars, including that of the Virgin. In addition, Lee's record provides a first-hand account of the medieval church of All Saints, including information on the Lady Chapel and Guild of St Mary, and a certificate

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<sup>805</sup> Rebuilt 1676-80.

<sup>806</sup> There is a bequest for a vestment for the Lady Chapel, 1455.

<sup>807</sup> Simon Brafield, 1492.

<sup>808</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

<sup>809</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. C. 9; NRO. MS. M. 341, p. 119. According to Lee's testimony this fire burnt down the greater part of the town in half a day, including All Saints, the principal church of the town. He states that the day in question was a windy one and that the fire was begun by a woman carrying live coals on a shovel from a neighbour's house to her own in order to warm her dinner. The wind had blown burning cinders onto the thatched roof of her cottage, which had been set ablaze.

return of the Gild of St Mary of the Lady Chapel of All Saints, dated 1388, survives in the Public Record Office.<sup>810</sup>

Wills attest to a Lady Chapel, Our Lady of Comfort [Pity], Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady in the south of the church and a Gild of Our Lady.<sup>811</sup> Bridges mentions a gild to the honour of the Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded c. 1393,<sup>812</sup> but not one of the many surviving wills referring to this church makes any reference to a joint dedication of Our Lady and the Trinity, they refer to distinctly separate foundations. However, the evidence of the 1388 certificate cannot be ignored and is given further weight in a 1547 chantry certificate<sup>813</sup> and a 1548 inventory of chantry goods,<sup>814</sup> both of which make specific reference to the fraternity of the Trinity and Our Lady. There were at least eight gilds at All Saints',<sup>815</sup> which high number may have caused confusion and account for the discrepancy, particularly since they did not restrict their worship exclusively to the honour of their own namesake. Thus in the regulations of the Corpus Christi fraternity we read of '*devotionem quod in honore Dei Omnipotentis gloriose Virginis Marie*'.<sup>816</sup> A second possibility however, is that the gilds of St Mary and the Trinity shared the eastern chapel, an arrangement of impeccable precedent at

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<sup>810</sup> Certificates of Gilds, Chancery, No. 383. A full transcription is given as Appendix E. in Serjeantson, R. M., *A History of the Church of All Saints, Northampton*, Northampton, 1901, p. 333-335.

<sup>811</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-2.

<sup>812</sup> 'In the sixteenth of Ric. II. Henry Bukyngham, Roger Lincoln, John Geytington, Henry Caysho and others', Bridges, J., *op-cit*, Vol. 1, p. 458. He cites ref. Rot. Fin. Anno Ric. II. M. 6. & m. 15. However, the published account appears to contradict the manuscript notes, which attest to 'the fraternity of the Trinity and Our Lady here, founded by Thomas Vyne and John Atwell to maintain four priests to sing and pray for ever for the souls of the said Thomas and John and their ancestors and for all the brethren and sisters of the same fraternity for ever'. Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. C. 19; NRO. MS. M. 342, p. 104.

<sup>813</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 134-136.

<sup>814</sup> NRO. MS. Misc. Photostat, No. 770.

<sup>815</sup> Attested by wills from 1455-1538, Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 374. The various gilds at All Saints were formed into a college in 1459-60 according to the *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1452-61*, *op. cit*, p. 601, & Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>816</sup> Quoted from full Latin text published as appendix in Serjeantson, R. M., *All Saints, Northampton*, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

the home of the Sarum liturgy itself, Salisbury Cathedral, where as previously noted, the eastern axial chapel served as the Lady Chapel from the outset, but had an altar dedicated to the Trinity and All Saints from the 1225 consecration.

In any case, if the testimony of the 1388 certificate is reliable, ‘the Gild [of St Mary] was founded beyond the memory of man’, whereas the founders of the Gild of The Trinity and Our Lady are named in the aforementioned chantry certificate. What is clear is that the latter was an important organisation, endowed by important people such as William of Wykeham, who gave the foundation lands and tenements to the annual value of forty shillings, which together with other benefactions enabled this fraternity to flourish, employing a staff of masters, clergy and choir, and which also had grades of membership. Bequests are made to ‘the hede maister’, an ‘under maister’, clerks and children,<sup>817</sup> thus attesting to a full choir, complete with masters to administer the education of its members, and one testator bequeathes ‘xxs to be admitted a full brother of the same fraternite.’<sup>818</sup> ‘By the survey of its possessions made in the second year of the reign of Edward VI, the annual revenues, clear of all deductions in rents resolute, and salaries of priests and singing-men, amounted to xxx l. xis. vid’,<sup>819</sup> and a 1548 inventory lists altar clothes of white and vestments of white, black and green in the possession of the fraternity of the Trinity and Our Lady.<sup>820</sup>

The 1388 certificate return records an increase of chaplains from one to three, evidence of the growth and status of the gild. The second chaplain appeared during the reign of Edward I and the third during the reign of Edward II. In comparison, only the gild of The Holy Trinity was larger, with four chaplains;<sup>821</sup> Corpus Christi and St John Baptist each had two, and St George one. The certificate

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<sup>817</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 373-4.

<sup>818</sup> John Bowre, 1501, cited by Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 373-4.

<sup>819</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 458.

<sup>820</sup> NRO. MS. Misc. Photostat, No. 770.

<sup>821</sup> The 1548 chantry certificate records that the Gild of The Trinity and Our Lady was founded to maintain four priests, which number may indicate an amalgamation of gilds of Our Lady and The Trinity respectively, or that the named founders re-endowed the gild of Our Lady, added the Trinity dedication and provided for an extra priest. See Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 134.

comprehensively cites the liturgical arrangements of the Gild / Lady Chapel. One chaplain was to celebrate the dawn / Morrow Mass, for the king, the queen, all of high estate in the kingdom, and the convenience of those wishing to hear Mass before travelling. This celebration was to begin with a memorial of the Holy Ghost and end with one of the Virgin. The second chaplain was to celebrate 'Le Prime Messe', that is at the hour of Prime, which Office was presumably sung simultaneously elsewhere in the church. The third chaplain sung the third Mass between nine and eleven. This was the most solemn celebration of the day, the other two chaplains assisting as deacon and subdeacon. At sunset each day a full choral service of hymns and prayers with organ accompaniment was offered in honour of the Virgin, usually attended by a large congregation. *Placebo* (Office of the Dead) was said on the eve of Marian feast days, and *Dirige* or Dirge (also from the Office of the Dead) and a requiem took place on the morrow. Only five Marian feasts are specified, that of the Visitation being instituted in 1389, the year after the certificate was written.<sup>822</sup>

Charitable provisions were by definition part of the *raison d'être* of the religious guilds and the 1504 will of Richard Greene, notary, provides important evidence of this. He requests burial in the chapel of Our Lady in All Saints'. He also bequeathes half his timber to the fraternity of Our Lady and several bequests to the chapel [of Our Lady] charging 'that the master of the same chapel shall yearly forever distribute and deal two wagonloads of charcoal every year within eight days before Christmas to poor people most needing fire within the said town of Northampton'.<sup>823</sup>

The 1548 chantry certificate provides notably more detailed information than is generally the case, itself a testament to the importance of this organisation, and the salient points of which are as follows. We learn that the founders were Thomas Pyrrye and John Atwell 'too mainteine iiij preestis too sing and praye for euer for the soles of the seyd Thomas and John and ther Auncetoris, and for all the Bretherne and Systers of the same Fraternitie for ever'. Three priests are named

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<sup>822</sup> These details appear in Serjeantson, R. M., *All Saints, Northampton, op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>823</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 53.

and their ages indicated; William Sinton, 51, Richard Wattis, 54 and John Harvyne, 57. These men were considered 'vnmete' to serve cure. Other named staff of the chantry are William Wood, 40, whose occupation is unspecified and who may be the fourth priest, organist and choirmaster William Cockin, 54, and singing men John Brightwey, 62, Edmund Kinwelmershe, 44 and Thomas Chatton, 48. Also mentioned is sexton / sacristan, Simon Charelton, 48, whose inclusion clearly indicates that members were cared for by the gild up to and including burial. The sum of 16s 2d was expended annually on the poor and a special weekly payment of 8d was made 'Too Annes prentice, wydow, verye pore, Sumtyme A syster of the same Brotherhed'.<sup>824</sup>

This evidence clearly demonstrates the development of the Marian cult in the most important parish church in Northamptonshire during the later Middle Ages, attesting a gild that attracted benefactions from important people and which grew wealthy enough to support an increasing number of its own staff including three priests and a choir in what must have been a substantial Lady Chapel, located (according to Lee's first-hand testimony) on the main axis, at the east end of the church.<sup>825</sup> It had its own vestry<sup>826</sup> and housed the town records from October 1553 'in a presse to be lokked with iij lokkes and to have iij keys thereto'<sup>827</sup> During Elizabeth's reign, the chapel was appropriated as a mausoleum. Thus we read that in 1585 'Mr Samual's tomb [was] built and ye vault under it for a burying place. That place ys called ye Lady Chappell in ye Chancell belonging to All Hallows church'.<sup>828</sup> Lee's testimony explicitly informs us that the seventeenth-century church was built on the foundations of the medieval chancel. If this was the case, the likelihood is that the seventeenth-century chancel was built on the foundations of the medieval Lady Chapel, in support of which hypothesis the following evidence may be considered.

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<sup>824</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>825</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 9, p. 97; NRO. MS. M. 341; Serjeantson, R. M., *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>826</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., *All Saints, Northampton, op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>828</sup> Henry Lee, cited by Serjeantson, R. M., *All Saints, Northampton, op. cit.*, p. 246.

During the seventeenth century the fabric of the Lady Chapel, for which the post-Reformation Church no longer had a use, was clearly draining parish resources to an unacceptable degree, and at a vestry meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1658, it was 'ordered that the present churchwardens doe take and weigh the lead that came off the chappell of the lady Mary and other the materials thereof except the walls and what else may be useful for the church and make sale of them to the best advantage to the parishe'.<sup>829</sup> It is clear then that the walls and therefore the foundations were extant to within at least seventeen years of and most probably up to the time of the 1675 fire. In addition a medieval crypt survives beneath the western bay of the present chancel, which may be thirteenth-century.<sup>830</sup> This feature was thoroughly examined by Sir Henry Dryden in 1886,<sup>831</sup> who was able to confirm that the north and south walls of the chancel were built upon the old foundations / crypt walls. Evidence of angle buttresses at the junctions of these walls with that to the east, and two blocked windows indicate that the eastern wall of the chapel was approximately sixteen feet short of the present east end. Dryden gives the original internal dimensions of the crypt as 22 feet 10 inches square, which suggests that the internal dimensions of the chapel above were probably around 24 feet, allowing for thinner walls above crypt / foundation level.

The 1495 will of John Golwir makes reference to 'Our Lady in the south of the church',<sup>832</sup> and that of Richard Flowre in 1493 bequeathed 3 s. 4 d. 'to the fraternities of the Blessed Trinity, Corpus Christi, and Our Lady in the south of the church'.<sup>833</sup> The specific references to location suggest an area of Marian devotion in the church other than that of the St Mary guild, and probably refer to one or more of the images cited earlier.

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<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>830</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 317.

<sup>831</sup> Northampton Architectural Society's Report, 1887, cited in Serjeantson, R. M., *All Saints, Northampton, op. cit.*, p. 240-242.

<sup>832</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 372; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 22; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>833</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 12. NRO. MS. M. 314.

The 1495 will of Dame Lucy Chauntrell requests burial 'within the chapell of oure Lady . . . before the ymage of the said Lady in the said chapell'.<sup>835</sup> The 1521 will of William Chauntrell requested burial 'in the churche of Seynt Gile in the chapelle of our Lady att the sowthe end of the awter afore the ymage of the blessed Virgyn Sent Kateryne',<sup>836</sup> whilst that of his wife Elizabeth (1526) specifies 'that a prest sing for me, my husbände, and all Our frends, and for all christen soules, in Our Lady Chapell in Saint Giles' Church in Northampton, the space of oon yere. Also I will that a nobill of quit rent going out of the George in Northampton be made sure as it may be devised to cause an obite to be doon yerely for me, my husband, my father, and mother, and all christen soules within saint Giles Churche in Northampton perpetually'.<sup>837</sup>

Another interesting bequest is that of Jane Brafield in 1522, who in addition to requesting burial in the Lady Chapel gives 'a pair of tires<sup>838</sup> of myne of gold perlid,<sup>839</sup> and to put certaine of my curalle perls apone it, to ye Aulter of Our lady in ye chyrch of Saynt Gyle, to be made by my sone for a corperasse case [burse] for ye said aluter, to ye honour of God, and Our Lady, as long as it will serve or last'.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>834</sup> Dame Luce Chauntrell, 1495, & Wm. Chauntrell, 1521.

<sup>835</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 377; Bodl . MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 16; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>836</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

<sup>837</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., *A History of the Church of St Giles, Northampton*, Northampton, 1911, p.24.

<sup>838</sup> An archaic word for headdress.

<sup>839</sup> It is unclear what is meant by 'perlid', but the word may be a corruption of paned, which was fabric made from joining narrow strips of different coloured cloths together, popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Clabburn, P, *op. cit.*, p. 250. Alternatively the term may refer to pearl decoration.

<sup>840</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 378; Serjeantson, R. M., *St Giles, Northampton, op. cit.*, p. 26.

A 1512 allusion to ‘the new work in our Lady Chapel’<sup>841</sup> seems to refer to the windows of the north chancel chapel, in support of the traditionally held view that this was the location of the Lady Chapel.

**Northampton: St Gregory**            **C, B,**<sup>842</sup> **L**

This church no longer exists, but a 1527 will,<sup>843</sup> and the evidence of antiquary William Burton to heraldry ‘*in capella virginis Maria*’<sup>844</sup> attest to a Lady Chapel.

**Northampton: St Mary**

**Northampton: St Michael**            **I, B**<sup>845</sup>

**Northampton: St Peter**            **A, B**<sup>846</sup>

**Northampton: St Sepulchre**            **L, B,**<sup>847</sup> **A**

**Northborough: St Andrew**            ‘Our Lady of Bethlehem’

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<sup>841</sup> Serjeantson, R. M., *St Giles, Northampton, op. cit.*, p. 128. Serjeantson does not cite his source for this information, but Pevsner corroborates the 1512 date of the windows, *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>842</sup> Christian Butler, 1527.

<sup>843</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

<sup>844</sup> BL. MS. Egerton 3510, p. 60. This manuscript contains notes by William Burton, c. 1620, partly copied from other antiquaries whose names are listed on a page glued into the book dated 1879. These are H. Pursley 1566, R. Cooke 1569, W. Smith 1597, N. Charles 1605, W. Burton 1620, Thomas, Lord Brudenell 1635, William Dugdale 1634-39, William Dawson 1590-1623, William Witley, R. Scarlet, T. Ingram and W. Belcher (no dates given for last four).

<sup>845</sup> John Cobbe, 1515.

<sup>846</sup> The wills do not specify an altar or a burial request, but these details appeared in Serjeantson, R. M., *A History of the Church of St Peter, op. cit.*, p. 63. The details are as follows. ‘Ralph West [4<sup>th</sup> December, 1475] wished to be buried in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the church of St Peter, Northampton. To the repairs of the said chapel he left vis. viiid. Richard Harpoll, of Northampton, tanner, [1487] bequeathed xiid. to the altar of St Mary’. BL. MS. Lansdowne. 1025-29.

<sup>847</sup> Rich. Hawred, 1538.

**Oakley Parva: St Peter**

A single will makes an unspecified bequest to 'Our Lady'.<sup>848</sup>

**Orlingbury: Our Lady**

C<sup>849</sup>, A

**Oundle: Ss Peter & Paul**

A, C, A, G

**South chapel**

A gild to the honour of the Blessed Virgin, St John and St George was founded c. 1465,<sup>850</sup> with sufficient endowment to maintain two priests.<sup>851</sup> The will evidence dates from 1494-1531 and refers to a Marian foundation, without mention of Ss John or George. Neither do any surviving wills attest separate fraternities of the latter two saints. It appears therefore that their part in the arrangements was gradually eclipsed by a growing Marian cult. The gild had a Lady Chapel in the church, to which members made a variety of bequests, including sheets, dishes and spoons, which might be sold in payment of their outstanding dues. There was also a 1514 request for post-mortem membership.<sup>852</sup> The last two priests (1549) were Thomas Butler and William Ireland, aged seventy and seventy-eight respectively. By the time of dissolution William Ireland had been a teacher in Oundle for forty years. Neither priest held livings elsewhere.<sup>853</sup> According to the VCH, the chancel was lengthened and flanked by new chapels during the first half of the thirteenth century, 'that on the south being the Lady Chapel . . . Also known later as the Gild Chapel from the Gild of Our Lady founded by Robert Wyatt'.<sup>854</sup>

The 1546 chantry certificate records 4s expended on 2 loads of wood given to 7 poor women dwelling in the guild house, and an annual distribution of 2s 6d to the

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<sup>848</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

<sup>849</sup> Bequest 'To the chapell of our lady a masse booke, price iiijs. Vijjd'. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>850</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 131. There is some doubt about the date as there is evidence to suggest that Bridges confused the Oundle gild with one at Windsor; Serjeantson, R. M., 'The Church of Oundle', AASRP, vol. 30, Lincoln, 1907-1922, pp. 121-140, footnote, p. 131.

<sup>851</sup> Founded by Joan Wyatt, widow of Robert Wyatt, Bridges, vol. 2, p. 410. The 1546 chantry certificate says 'To finde certen prestes or one preste at the pleasoure of thaldermen and bretheren', Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>852</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-5.

<sup>853</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 410; Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 164-5.

<sup>854</sup> VCH, *Northamptonshire*, vol. 3, p. 95. Wyatt's will is also noticed in Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 13; NRO. MS. M. 314.

poor. It also records that the vicar was unable to serve the cure adequately without the help of the guild priests.<sup>855</sup> The aforementioned house was noted by Leland in the following extract:

One Robert Viate, of Oundle, and Joan his wife [presumably the Robert and Joan Wyatt of the foundation], made the goodly sowthe porche . . . They made also on the south side of that Chirche yarde a praty almose house of squarid stone. And a goodly large haule over it for the Bretherhodde [guild] of the Chirch.<sup>856</sup> At the west ende of the chirche yarde, they made lodgings for too cantuarie Pretes, founded there by them. The scripture in brasse on the Almose house doore berith the date of the yere of Owr Lord, 1485, as I remembre.<sup>857</sup>

**Oundle:** St Thomas / Our Lady

**Detached**

Wills down to 1529 refer to a chapel of St Thomas, but Leland notices ‘another chirch or chapelle of S. Thomas, now of our Ladie, as I entered Oundale toune’.<sup>858</sup>

**Overstone:** St Nicholas

**A**

The medieval fabric was demolished in 1803.<sup>859</sup>

**Passenham:** St Guthlac

**A**

**Paston:** All Hallows

**C**

**Pattishall:** The Invention of the Holy Cross **P, A, C, L, Y**

A bequest to ‘payntyng of our Lady’ also bequeaths money ‘to helpe to make the window at her altar ende’ (1513), and another will refers to painting the wall behind ‘Our Lady of the Nativity’.<sup>860</sup>

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<sup>855</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>856</sup> Leland, J., in Toulmin Smith, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>857</sup> The date indicated by Leland ties in with a c.1465 foundation.

<sup>858</sup> Toulmin Smith, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 4. This part of Leland’s tour was commenced c. 1538. He had travelled from Barnwell.

<sup>859</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 60.

<sup>860</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

**Paulerspury: St James**

**C, A, L**

**South side**<sup>861</sup>

‘ To our lady chappel on the sowthe side a stryke of berley & another stryke of berley to our lady & Senct John aulter’’: T. Sturgeis, alias Cok, 1532.<sup>862</sup> The latter bequest suggests an altar before the rood in addition to or in place of an altar dedicated to Jesus or the Holy Cross. More importantly, the former bequest clearly indicates the location of the Lady Chapel.

The body of this church was rebuilt with old materials in 1843-4 and has been further restored since.<sup>863</sup> However, antiquarian evidence records a chantry chapel with a piscina at the east end of the south aisle,<sup>864</sup> which evidence corroborates that of the will.

**Peakirk: All Hallows**

**L**

**Peterborough: St John Baptist** **L, G**

Wills make reference to a light and a guild of Our Lady.<sup>865</sup> Additional information may be derived from an inventory taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1552, which lists the following. ‘Itm vestments for or Ladye alter one of blewe damaske wth all necessaryes one of Rede brydys<sup>866</sup> satten laking necessaryes one of grene brydys satten wt all necessaryes & one of white fustian wt all necessaryes....Itm for hanging at the alter side . . ij for or Lady alter one of tapstere worcke thother paynted’.<sup>867</sup>

Vestments in colours other than the liturgical Marian colour of white indicate that masses offered at the Lady altar of this church followed a multiplicity of

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<sup>861</sup> One will refers to ‘our lady & Senct John aulter . . . 1532’.

<sup>862</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

<sup>863</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 371.

<sup>864</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 312.

<sup>865</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

<sup>866</sup> ‘Brydys’ or Bridge refers to satin made in Bruges from the sixteenth century at the latest.

Clabburn, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254.

<sup>867</sup> Sweeting, W. D., *op. cit.*, p. 27-28.





The church was remodelled in 1801.<sup>877</sup>

**Radstone:** St Lawrence                      L (chancel)

**Raunds:** Our Lady                      B (chancel),<sup>878</sup> I (chancel), T, L

The wills provide evidence of many bequests to this church, but only three Marian ones. One refers to a light, one a chancel image, and another to a chancel tabernacle.<sup>879</sup> In addition, eighteenth-century antiquarian evidence attests an Annunciation in a north aisle window described as follows: ‘Some pieces of painted glass and ye broken figure of the V. Mary with this broken inscription on a label in her left hand, *plena dominus tecum*’.<sup>880</sup> The same source also notes some female saints in the north aisle that are fragments of a Visitation. St Elizabeth is depicted in white glass with yellow stain and the label ‘*sc[anct]a elizab[e]t*’. Professor Marks dates the latter fragments to the fifteenth century and considers them to be *in situ*.<sup>881</sup>

**Ravensthorpe:** St Denys                      L, T

**Ringstead:** Our Lady (chapel to Denford)      I, P, C

The 1512 will of Alice Moles makes reference to an image of the Virgin Mary in the chapel.<sup>882</sup> This church has a north chancel chapel, the east end of which is screened off to form a passage-like vestry. This church was formerly a chapel to Denford, and was dedicated to Our Lady, so it is not clear whether the will refers to the chapel itself or a Lady Chapel within it. The vestry area formerly contained a wall painting depicting a particularly graceful female figure, nimbed and kneeling, surrounded by circles containing the sacred monogram I. H. C. This may have

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<sup>877</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 380.

<sup>878</sup> John Idlefyld, 1483.

<sup>879</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

<sup>880</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E5, p. 343. This glass is now lost.

<sup>881</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>882</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 399.



This chapel was the subject of a special enquiry by F. M. Bull.<sup>892</sup> He notes ‘that the glass was painted and full of images,<sup>893</sup> and that ‘in the first year of her reign, Queen Elizabeth made a Free School of the Ancient Chappell situate in Rothwell, called St Mary’s . . .’ and that from ‘evidences of it [unspecified], which have from time to time come to light, there is no doubt that the present National School occupies its site’.<sup>894</sup>

**Rushden:** Our Lady                    C, B,<sup>895</sup> L, G,<sup>896</sup> Y, B<sup>897</sup>                    North chancel chapel

Wills contain two relevant requests for burial here; one ‘ “To be buried in the chappell of our Lady”: J. Gurre, 1522’, and one ‘ “To be buried . . . .in the chaple before our Lady of Pittye”: William Pemberton, esq. 1536’. There are also bequests to a gild of Our Lady and St Catherine,<sup>898</sup> which suggests that the two saints may have shared a chapel. Bridges notes that the wake was kept on the Sunday after the eighth of September,<sup>899</sup> which indicates that the Nativity of Our Lady may have been the original dedication.

There is no longer any trace of either burial in the church, but the north chancel chapel does contain two Jacobean monuments to members of the Pemberton family (Robert and Mary Pemberton, 1608-9 on the site of the medieval altar, and Goddard Pemberton on the north wall, 1616), which suggests that this was the traditional burial location of the family, including the William Pemberton of the will, and therefore that this chapel was the medieval Lady Chapel.

Additional evidence is a stone screen forming a vestry area between altar and east wall for which a precedent was set in the Lady Chapel at nearby Higham Ferrers,

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<sup>892</sup> Bull, F. M., ‘St Mary’s Chapel, Rothwell’ in Markham, C. A., ed., *Northamptonshire Notes And Queries*, New Series, vol. 1, Northampton, 1905-7, pp. 48-50.

<sup>893</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>895</sup> J. Gurre, 1522.

<sup>896</sup> Wills refer to ‘our Ladys light & Seynt Katerynes’, & the ‘Gild of Our Lady And St. Catherine’.

<sup>897</sup> William Pemberton, 1536.

<sup>898</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

<sup>899</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 194.

and also some surviving fragments of glass dated 1400-30 and *in situ*.<sup>900</sup> These fragments include two clear Marian monograms (*MR*) and roses. In addition, the east window of the chapel contains a Virgin and Child (both crowned), and flanked by censing angels. These are executed in white glass with yellow stain and are located in the central tracery at the apex of the window. Inexplicably, this figural glass escapes the notice of Professor Marks.<sup>901</sup> Externally this same chapel has flower carvings below the parapet and in the hollow of the east window hood-mould.

**Rushton: All Saints**

**C, B,<sup>902</sup> L**

**North chancel chapel**

One surviving will makes reference to a Lady Chapel in this church.<sup>903</sup> Bridges attests to 'a chantry to the honour of the Virgin Mary, founded in 1267',<sup>904</sup> and the 1546 chantry certificate records one priest.<sup>905</sup>

A north chancel chapel of *c.* 1300 is higher than the north aisle and contains a late thirteenth-century effigy of a knight, executed in Purbeck marble, which 'may be that of the founder'.<sup>906</sup> The chapel was used as a school house from the Reformation until the mid-nineteenth century.

**Rushton: St Peter**

**I, C**

Serjeantson and Isham Longden record the demolition of this church in 1785,<sup>907</sup> but there is a crude drawing of the ruins by G. Flesher in the British Library.<sup>908</sup>

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<sup>900</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 169.

<sup>901</sup> Inexplicable because in the interests of clarity, Marks's descriptive formula normally records post-medieval insertions, restorations and repairs when contained within groups of medieval glass.

<sup>902</sup> Thomas Bishoptre, 1504.

<sup>903</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

<sup>904</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 71.

<sup>905</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 125. Also, Davies, F. N., *Rotuli Richardi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112; Hill, R. M. T., *Oliver Sutton, 1280-1299, II*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>906</sup> RCHME, unpublished.

<sup>907</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

<sup>908</sup> BL, MS. Add. 37412, No. 131, Flesher, G., *Sketches of Northamptonshire Churches 1807-12*, in three vols, numbered 37411-13.



'the Salutation, with these words between the angel and the virgin, *Ave Maria Gratia Plena*'.<sup>912</sup>

**Spratton:** St Andrew

**L**

**Stamford:** St Martin (now Lincs)

**North aisle**

There are no surviving Marian will bequests, but antiquarian evidence attests to a significant proportion of Marian iconography in the north aisle, detailed as follows:

At the top of this window is the head of a person like the Virgin Mary. In the same window a Saxon king and his queen and a person with a sword. In the next window below this<sup>913</sup> seems to have been painted the Resurrection. In one panel is the broken picture of our Saviour in the clouds with angels behind him. In another panel remain heads of saints with Glory at their heads. Also St Martin. In another panel is beautifully depicted tho somewhat defaced the portraiture of the Salutation and Isaiah prophesying and in labels near the pictures these following inscriptions.

*Ecce virgo concipiet et par,ct filium  
tui conceptus.*

*Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum.*

*Natus ex Maria virgine*

*Ecce ancilla Domini fiat . . . secundum verbum tuum.*

*Hic est filius dilectus in quo sum bene...*

In another panel the portraiture of the Virgin Mary clothed in a rich robe of blue lined with crimson and enriched with jewels. Below her is another picture of her with a book in her hand, two virgins meeting her and saluting her, on one of their robes *sal oir*, on the V. Mary's, *Maria*.<sup>914</sup>

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<sup>912</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 7, p. 123-124; NRO. MS. M. 314; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 471.

<sup>913</sup> The interpretation of the phrase 'In the next window below this' is somewhat ambiguous. It may simply refer to the panel of glass below the one previously described, or it might refer to the next window, *i.e.*, the north-east. Since the text tends to discriminate between the terms panel and window, the latter is the more probable.

<sup>914</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, pp. 283-284; NRO. MS. M. 314.

In addition to the Marian inscriptions, the Virgin's portrait appears four times (if the evidence 'like the Virgin Mary' is admissible) at the east end of the north aisle. The manuscript notes also attest to scenes from the life of St John the Baptist in the east window of the south aisle<sup>915</sup>, which appear to complement the scenes from the life of the Virgin. The cumulative evidence of the glass is therefore strongly suggestive of chapels dedicated to St John the Baptist and Our Lady in the south and north aisles respectively.<sup>916</sup>

**Stanford: St Nicholas C, B,<sup>917</sup> A**

Clement Cave's 1534 will requests burial in the Lady Chapel of this church.<sup>918</sup> Bridges records the brass, its inscription<sup>919</sup> and a drawing, but gives its location as 'In the middle ile'.<sup>920</sup> Either the testator's wishes were not complied with, or the monument has been moved. Since this church is very much a mausoleum of the Cave family (sited adjacent to Stanford Hall), and later monuments are of the bulkier type, it seems plausible to suggest that Clement may have been moved to make way for one or more of his descendants.

Additional evidence for the site of the Lady Chapel is sparse. The east window of the north aisle formerly contained glass depicting St Anne teaching the Virgin to read, dateable to c. 1330-50.<sup>921</sup> Though it is possible that this glass was in the location of the Lady Chapel it should be noted that there are several medieval glass

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<sup>915</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E. 5, p. 286; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>916</sup> The arrangement of glass cited by the antiquarian record was severely disrupted 1759-60 by the insertion of fifteenth-century glass from Tattershall and Snape Castle in Yorkshire. Pevsner, N., *Lincolnshire*, p. 692.

<sup>917</sup> Clement Cave, 1534.

<sup>918</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

<sup>919</sup> BL. MS. Lansdowne 1042, p. 11. 'Of your charity pray for the souls of Clement cave Esquire . . . November Ano, 1534, on whose souls Jhu have mercy'.

<sup>920</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 30, p. 212; NRO. MS. M. 305; Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 582.

<sup>921</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 247 and plate 24. The glass was moved by Barley Studio to the south side of the church as part of a restoration and reordering scheme during the 1990's.



**Sulgrave:** All Saints

**A, L**

**Sutton Bassett:** St Mary (chapel to Weston-by-Welland)

**Syresham:** St Nicholas

**A**

In addition to a Lady altar there is a will reference to Our Lady at St Catherine's Altar.<sup>929</sup>

**Sywell:** Ss Peter & Paul

**L**

**Tansor:** Our Lady

**L**

**Thenford:** Assumption of Our Lady **L**

One will attest to an Assumption dedication, but three others simply give 'Our Lady'.<sup>930</sup> A Bridges reference to an Assumption wake adds weight to the single testator,<sup>931</sup> and the manuscript's record 'in the east window of this aisle [north] the entire portraits of a saint and the V. Mary, an angel holding before her a book . . .'<sup>932</sup> This glass survives, and clearly represents St Anne teaching the Virgin to read (fig. 47). Marks, dates the panel to c. 1400-28 and suggests it is probably *in situ*. On stylistic grounds he attributes it and a St Christopher in the same window to Thomas Glazier of Oxford (responsible for work in Winchester Cathedral and Winchester College Chapel), and considers these panels to 'rank amongst the finest examples of medieval glass-painting in Northamptonshire'.<sup>933</sup>

**Thornhaugh:** St Andrew

'In the 16<sup>th</sup> year of Edw. II. Nicholas de Semarc, lord of the manor, founded in this church a chantry, to the honour of the Virgin Mary, for a chaplain to celebrate daily divine service for the souls of the said Nicholas, his ancestors, and of all

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<sup>929</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

<sup>931</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 206.

<sup>932</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, p. 243; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>933</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 275-276.

faithful people;’ This extract is from Bridges, who also records that there were sixteen chantry priests between 1326 and 1443 – the last recorded institution.<sup>934</sup>

**Thorpe Mandeville:** St John the Baptist **L**

There is a bequest of wax to Our Lady Of Bethlehem.<sup>935</sup>

**Thrapston:** St James **A**

**Tichmarsh:** Our Lady **L, I** (chancel), **Y** (‘in the church’) **Chancel**

Three bequests to a chancel image and the church’s dedication indicate the chancel as the primary Marian focus, notwithstanding Our Lady of Pity in the church.

**Tiffield:** St John **L**

**Towcester:\*** St Lawrence **L, A, G, B**<sup>936</sup> **South side**

*‘To Be buried “in capella beate Marie de Towcester intra sepulturam magistri Willelmi halle primi prepositi cantarie ejusdem, et tumbam magistri Willelmi Spone fundatoris ibidem”*: Hugh Melyng “*Christi sacerdos*”: 1531.<sup>937</sup>

William Sponne was archdeacon of Norfolk and rector of Towcester. He founded a college & a chantry (licensed in 1449, the year after his death) in the existing Lady Chapel at the east end of the south aisle of the church, for two priests, ‘the one a preacher, the other a teacher of grammar’.<sup>938</sup> Baker notes that the south aisle was ‘originally called the chapel of St Mary’.<sup>939</sup> The founder’s terms expressly forbade the chantry priests to hold any additional livings, a regulation breached by John Goderich, who was instituted to the rectory of Middleton Cheney on 7<sup>th</sup> November

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<sup>934</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 598.

<sup>935</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

<sup>936</sup> Hugh Melyng, ‘Christi sacerdos’, 1531. Chantry founder William Sponne’s tomb also survives in the church. Pevsner, N., notes Sponne arms in the east window of the south aisle, *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 434.

<sup>937</sup> Serjeantson and Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

<sup>938</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 19, p. 116; NRO. MS. M. 342.

<sup>939</sup> Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 329.

1509<sup>940</sup> and was consequently accused of perjury.<sup>941</sup> The matter was settled by Pope Julius II, who granted indulgence and license to Goderich to continue to hold the two benefices of ‘*Middilton Cheynedyt*’ and ‘*Capellano Sponnes Chantry* . . . *in parrochiali ecclsia de Towestre*’ in 1510.<sup>942</sup>

Sponne’s impressive *transi* tomb is located between chapel and chancel (fig. 48). The east window of the chapel contains a Sponne shield and incomplete inscription, ‘Willim Sponne’, both *ex situ*, and dateable to c. 1448-51.<sup>943</sup> The south wall has a niche with a wall painting of the Pelican in her Piety, a favourite motif of Sponne. Seventeenth-century antiquarian notes record both these motifs in many locations within the church,<sup>944</sup> but notwithstanding this proliferation there can be no doubt that the south chantry chapel was the medieval Lady Chapel.

The 1548 chantry certificate corroborates that one priest was to preach and the other to teach grammar and names the last pair as William Reignoldis, 53 (preacher with no other living), and William Symondis, 45 ‘*Schole master, well learnyd, . . . & teachith Dayly frely, & hathe no other lyving*’.<sup>945</sup>

**Twywell:** St Nicholas                      **L, A, B**<sup>946</sup>

**Wakerley:** St John Baptist              **A, B**<sup>947</sup>

**Walgrave:** St Peter                        **L, I**

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<sup>940</sup> Reg. Joh. Gynwell, Ep. Linc, cited by Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 186.

<sup>941</sup> Goderich had already resigned a fellowship of Oriel College, Oxford, in order to take the living of Middleton Cheney. Ref. Baker, G., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 654.

<sup>942</sup> BL, Add. Stowe ch. 583, Dat. At Ravenna, vii, kal. Apr. 8. Jul II [21<sup>st</sup> March] 1510, Endorsed, Johannes Tames, nomine Johannis Goderich. A transcription appears in Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 12; NRO. MS. M. 342, p. 291. Baker, G., gives details of the chantry, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 333.

<sup>943</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>944</sup> BL. MS. Egerton 3510, f.52v; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E1, f.87r.

<sup>945</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp 113 & 155.

<sup>946</sup> W. Antony, 1557.

<sup>947</sup> Sir Anthony Bretyne, clerk, 1538.



**Weedon Pinkney: Our Lady**

Bridges notes the wake follows the Assumption.<sup>959</sup>

**Weekley: Our Lady**

**A, G**

**North aisle**

The 1522 will of J. Lawforth makes reference to 'the aulter of our Lady in the northe yll'.<sup>960</sup> Additional evidence occurs in a Marian monogram (MR) and two roses depicted in roundels of white glass and yellow stain set within the east window of the north aisle. Marks suggests these are 'Probably *in situ*'.<sup>961</sup>

**Weldon: Our Lady**

**L**

**Welford: Our Lady**

**I, T, L**

**chancel**

Surviving wills attest to an image of Mary in a tabernacle in the chancel.<sup>962</sup> There are no references to a separate Lady Chapel, or Marian accoutrements other than in the chancel. Bridges notes 'a fair every year beginning on the eve of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and continuing the two following days'.<sup>963</sup> He also states that the wake is kept on the Sunday after the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.<sup>964</sup> Our Lady was clearly venerated and celebrated in Welford and the chancel seems to have been the most important focus of Her cult in the church.

**Wellingborough: All Hallows** **C, A, G, Bx3**<sup>965</sup>

A gild to the honour of the Virgin Mary was founded in the church c. 1493, by William Topping, Robert Fitzdieu, William Spencer and John Waldegrave. They endowed the guild with revenues in the lordship of Wellingborough,<sup>966</sup> 'to do such

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<sup>958</sup> Symon Campion, 1499.

<sup>959</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 258.

<sup>960</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

<sup>961</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>962</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 428-9.

<sup>963</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 591.

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 596.

<sup>965</sup> Wm. Bukland, 1513, Wm. Fisher, 1518, & Sir W. Ellys, clerk, 1544.

<sup>966</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E1, pp. 5 & 8. Also, Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 152.

deeds of charity as should seem to the masters of the same brotherhood most meete',<sup>967</sup> and 'to maintain certain obits, lights, lamps and such like'.<sup>968</sup> In addition to requesting burial in the Lady Chapel at Higham Ferrers, the 1504 will of William Thorpe left money 'to the building of the chapel of Our Lady in Wellingborough'.<sup>969</sup> Wills from 1518-34, and from 1513-44 also respectively attest to the existence of the gild and Lady Chapel at Wellingborough.<sup>970</sup> One testator bequeaths '“To our ladys fraternity a pair of beads of corral with paternosters of silver & a ring of silver, & so to have remitted iijs. Iiid. of the vis. viiid. I do owe to the sayd gulde”': W. Archer, 1534'.<sup>971</sup> This bequest is of special interest for two reasons. Firstly, we have evidence of an appropriate personal item (a rosary) becoming an accoutrement of the chapel, either as an adornment or for the use of gild members, and secondly, the bequest provides evidence of the belief that undischarged debts would detain a soul in purgatory, and that a soul in this condition might torment the living until such time as their debts were paid.<sup>972</sup> This was one manifestation of belief in the necessity of dying in charity as well as faith and hope. The Wellingborough gild of Mary also provides evidence of charitable good works to the wider benefit, in that gild income was yearly expended on the maintenance of town bridges,<sup>973</sup> a source of income that was not to be surrendered lightly. The latter information appears in the 1548 chantry certificate, which also contains a memorandum that implicitly suggests that the chantry had educational responsibilities, the imminent demise of which required counter legislation. The details are these:

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<sup>967</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, C. 19, p. 112; NRO. MS. M. 342.

<sup>968</sup> Sweeting, W. D., 'The Guild of Our Lady at Wellingborough', *Northamptonshire Notes and Queries*, vol. 1, Northampton, 1886, p. 172-3.

<sup>969</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 62; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>970</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 429-30.

<sup>971</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>972</sup> Duffy, E., *op. cit.*, p. 355-6.

<sup>973</sup> 'By the commissioner's survey in the second of Edw. VI. the possessions of this gild were valued at vi. Vis. xd. Ob. Yearly, expended by the brotherhood in the repairs of the bridges belonging to the town; which would be much impoverished unless the king should permit the said township to enjoy these revenues.' Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 152.

Memorandum: yt is to be consyderyd that the Townshipe of wenlingbrughe ys A very pretty merkt Towe and the kingis Towe; and to thentent yt might please the kingis maistie to eret there a free Scole, apoynting the same Landis towardis the same, The vicar there ys contentyd to charge his benefyce for euer with xls a yere towarde the same; and the Townshipe offerith to purchas as muche more lande as shalbe conuenyent for the ereccion therof.<sup>974</sup>

An inventory of 1548 lists one white damask cope and a ‘vestment of blewe’ among the possessions of the gild of Our Lady in Wellingborough.<sup>975</sup>

**Welton:** St Martin

**L**

**Werrington:** St Edmund (chapel to Paston) **A**

**Weston By Welland:** Our Lady

‘The wake is observed on the second Sunday in September’, close to the Nativity of the Virgin.<sup>976</sup>

**Weston Favell:** St Peter

**A, L**

The medieval fabric comprised a nave, a chancel, a tower and south porch, yet in 1499 Symkyn Gunne made bequests to ‘our Lady awter’ and ‘Seynt Thomas awter’.<sup>977</sup> The altar sites are unknown, but probably flanked the chancel arch. Of perhaps greater interest is evidence that during the reign of Henry III, one Sir Hugh Favell gave ‘rent-charge of viii.d. per annum lying in Northampton for the supply of a light, called St Mary’s light, in the church of Weston’.<sup>978</sup> The 1521 will of Lawrence Praty bequeathes one strike of barley ‘To our Lady lyght’, which suggests that the Lady light in this church is likely to have burned for c. 300 years or more until extinguished by the chill wind of change in the sixteenth-century Reformation.

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<sup>974</sup> Hamilton Thompson, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>975</sup> NRO. MS. Misc. Photostat, No. 770.

<sup>976</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 360.

<sup>977</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

<sup>978</sup> Poole, G. A., *op. cit.*, p. 256.



This church is extremely small and consists of nave, chancel, north aisle and north chancel chapel. It is difficult to imagine that the Lady Chapel could have been located anywhere but in the latter.

**Wold** or Old: St Andrew                      **C, L, B**<sup>985</sup> (aisle), **G**

**Wollaston:** Our Lady                      **L**

**Woodford:** All Hallows (Now St Mary)

There are no surviving Marian bequests in wills, but antiquarian evidence records glass depicting the Virgin flanked by angels playing musical instruments in the east window of the north aisle.<sup>986</sup> The adjacent window in the aisle now contains all the surviving medieval glass in the church, including a white rose roundel and the head of a crowned female saint, both in white with yellow stain, and dateable to *c.* 1425-50.<sup>987</sup>

**Woodford Halse:** Our Lady   **L**                      **C, Bx2**<sup>988</sup>                      **Churchyard**

Six wills make reference to a Lady Chapel in the churchyard,<sup>989</sup> two of which are burial requests, which suggests that this chapel was a building of substance that was expected to be permanent. Bridges makes no reference to any such chapel, which suggests its disappearance without living memory. He also notes that the wake follows the Assumption.<sup>990</sup>

**Wootton:** St George                      **C, L**

Wills refer to a Lady Chapel and Our Lady in St John's Chapel.<sup>991</sup> Bridges notes chantry chapels at the *west* end of each aisle.<sup>992</sup>

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<sup>985</sup> John Garrad, 1522.

<sup>986</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E5, p. 139, Slyford's notes.

<sup>987</sup> Marks, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 295-8.

<sup>988</sup> Agnes Norton, 1525, & Agnes Mayow, 1528.

<sup>989</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, pp. 437-8.

<sup>990</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 132.

<sup>991</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

<sup>992</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 392.

**Wothorpe:** Our Lady<sup>993</sup> (chapel to St Martin's Stamford)

**Wyke Dyve:** St John Evangelist      **A, I, B<sup>994</sup>, G**

**Yardley Hastings:** St Andrew      **L, Y**

**Yelvertoft:** All Saints / Holy Trinity      **A**

### **Religious Houses:**

**Canons Ashby Priory:** St Mary (Austin canons)

**Catesby Priory:** Our Lady (Cistercian nuns)      **I**

**Daventry Priory** See under Daventry Church (Cluniac monks)

**Delapre Abbey:** St Mary      **N**

**Fineshade Priory:** St Mary (Austin canons)      **I**

**Northampton :** St Andrew's Priory (Cluniac monks)      **C<sup>995</sup>**

According to the evidence of a will the Lady Chapel of this priory carried the right of sanctuary since on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1377 John Philpot availed himself of this privilege '*in capella sancta Marie monasterii predicti*'.<sup>996</sup> The 1492 will of

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<sup>993</sup> Will refers to mass of the day, e.g., 'Saturday of our blessyd Lady'.

<sup>994</sup> Thomas Jebbes, 1507.

<sup>995</sup> 'John Philpot took sanctuary "In capella sancta Marie", Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

<sup>996</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 444.

Thomas Brayfield of Northampton also attests to a Lady Chapel in the priory in his bequest to '*capla BMV in ecclesia St Andrew, Northampton*'.<sup>997</sup>

**Northampton:** Abbey Of St James: (Austin canons) C

In addition to a chapel, there is a will reference to 'Our Lady in the body of the chyrche'.<sup>998</sup>

**Northampton:** (Austin friars) C, B,<sup>999</sup> A,<sup>1000</sup> I<sup>1001</sup>

In addition to an explicit Lady Chapel reference, wills refer to 'the dore' & 'the autre' of Our Lady of Grace. There are five references to the latter dedication, including 'my best gyrdel gilte', a 'best ring', and 'a sponne of silver & gilt with a fork at thende'. In common with the Austin friars at Norwich, this church carried the *Scala Coeli* indulgence cited earlier, and the 1502 accounts of Elizabeth of York record an offering of 2/6. These bequests suggest that Our Lady of Grace was an important cult image in the town.

**Northampton:** (Black friars or Dominicans) A, I, Bx2<sup>1002</sup>

**Northampton:** St Mary<sup>1003</sup> (White friars) C, I

**Northampton:** St John's (or St John Baptist's) Hospital C, A

The 1504 will of Anne Wake attests to the dedication of the hospital chapel to Our Lady by requesting burial therein.<sup>1004</sup> In addition, the 1492 will of Thomas Brayfield made a bequest to the fraternity of the Blessed Virgin here.<sup>1005</sup>

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<sup>997</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 7; NRO. MS. M. 314. This will was not noticed by Serjeantson & Isham Longden.

<sup>998</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

<sup>999</sup> Wm. Whitfield, 1528.

<sup>1000</sup> This altar was dedicated to *Scala Coeli*, and stood 'before our lady of grace'.

<sup>1001</sup> Wills refer to 'the dore' & 'the autre' of Our lady of Grace, so this may be the dedication of the Lady Chapel.

<sup>1002</sup> Sir Everard Fielding, Kt. 1515, & Dame Gyllys Fielding, 1529.

<sup>1003</sup> According to Serjeantson, R. M., 'The White Friars of Northampton', AASRP, vol. 30, Lincoln, 1909-10, pp. 147-162.

<sup>1004</sup> Serjeantson & Isham Longden, *op. cit.*, p. 448; Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 59.

**Peterborough Abbey:** (Benedictine monks) **C, B**<sup>1006</sup> **East of north transept**

Ss Peter & Paul (now the cathedral)

Discussed previously (chapter 2).

**Pipewell, Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady**<sup>1007</sup> **C** **South**

‘Of the Cistercian abbey nothing is preserved’,<sup>1008</sup> but the Bridges manuscripts contain the following item of interest: ‘In a close near ye ruins a figure found in the hollow broken, supposed to be of the V. Mary’.<sup>1009</sup> A pencil drawing accompanying the text depicts a seated Virgin with elaborately carved drapery and the Christ Child on her left knee, very much in the thirteenth-century manner. Both heads, both of Christ’s arms and the Virgin’s right arm are missing (fig. 50). The piece now appears to be lost.

Nineteenth-century excavations revealed that the plan accorded with Cistercian custom; it was cruciform with altars to the east side of each transept and across the eastern termination of the choir, in addition to the high altar.<sup>1010</sup> An inventory corroborates this plan,<sup>1011</sup> the compiler of which appears to have followed the traditional processional route in making his notes, from which it has been possible to reconstruct the dedications of the various altars.<sup>1012</sup> Those of Marian interest are St Stephen’s (north transept), noted as having a reredos of alabaster and an image of Our Lady of Pity. In the south transept, St Peter’s altar is recorded as containing a table [retable?] of alabaster and a small image of Our Lady.<sup>1013</sup>

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<sup>1005</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 8, p. 8; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>1006</sup> Sir Robert Marchaunt, 1546.

<sup>1007</sup> Pipewell is noticed by Leland. See Tourmin Smith, L, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>1008</sup> Pevsner, N., *Northamptonshire, op. cit.*, p. 373.

<sup>1009</sup> Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, p. 119; NRO. MS. M. 314.

<sup>1010</sup> Brakspear, H., ‘Pipewell Abbey, Northamptonshire’, AASRP, vols 29, 1908-9, pp. 299-314.

<sup>1011</sup> PRO Augmentation Office. Misc. Book 172, ff. 83-92.

<sup>1012</sup> Brakspear, H., *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>1013</sup> The implicit suggestion is that the images were alabaster too.

A Lady altar was located at the east end of the south aisle of the presbytery. It contained some old images (unspecified), a table of alabaster and an alabaster image of St John and two little iron candlesticks in the wall.

**Sewardsley:** Our Lady (Cistercian nunnery)

Founded by Richard de Lestre in the reign of Henry II.<sup>1014</sup> Bridges records that the foundations of the nun's chapel 'not many years ago were dug up to build a barn. By the footsteps of it which are left, it appears to have been forty six foot long, and twenty four foot eight inches broad, when measured on the outside, and to have been round at the east end'.<sup>1015</sup>

**Sulby Abbey:** Our Lady (Premonstratensian canons)

## Conclusions

Churches and chapels dedicated in honour of Our Lady occur throughout Christendom, but the incidence of particular liturgical areas devoted to her veneration were especially ubiquitous in Mary's Dower of England – a fact that is incontrovertibly attested by the archaeological evidence of surviving fabric and documentary records of all kinds. However, identifying and accounting for the reasons behind this phenomenon and identifying many of the areas of churches that have been utilized or provided for the exercise of Marian devotion have proved much more elusive to scholarship, due largely to the disparate and fragmentary nature of the evidence. Most reductionist hypotheses have sought to examine and assess the Lady Chapel as a fully formed architectural and artistic entity without adequate consideration of preceding arrangements and the evolutionary process through which such chapels came into being. Without such an attention to the evidence, all such hypotheses are likely to be flawed and their interpretations misleading. In attempting to examine, explain and account for Lady Chapels and the manifestation of devotion to Our Lady in medieval England, it is necessary to

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<sup>1014</sup> Bridges, J., *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 295.

<sup>1015</sup> *Ibid.*

avoid these pitfalls by research and evaluation of the process of development. Only through such careful scrutiny is it possible to understand and evaluate the evidence in its proper context. This thesis has endeavoured to provide an holistic picture. It does not claim to be an absolutely comprehensive survey, and quite apart from the fact that such a survey would have been impossible given the necessarily confined space of a doctoral thesis, it may well be the case that a lengthier and even more detailed analysis would have diluted the evidence to a degree that would obscure or underemphasize some of the most salient points and preclude the conclusions that a more considered and selective approach has facilitated.

However, there is a particular form of development that deserves a few words of clarification since erroneous views have been expressed.<sup>1016</sup> The subject of early apsidal terminations dedicated to Mary has been discussed, but the later incidence of Lady Chapels with polygonal eastern terminations has not. The round east end was extremely common in Romanesque architecture and the evidence clearly indicates that Lady Chapels constructed during the succeeding stylistic periods squared their shoulders in compliance with the common practice of church architecture in general. The square east end for Lady Chapels was retained throughout the Gothic centuries except in rare circumstances where polygonal terminations were constructed in response to the choices offered by the Decorated and Perpendicular repertoire of architectural motifs. They most famously occur at Wells and Lichfield Cathedrals, Westminster Abbey and, at parish level, Patrington. That there was no particular Marian iconographic or iconological significance attached to these examples may be confidently inferred from their relative rarity, and also from those examples that had no Marian connection such as St Michael's, Coventry, where the eastern chancel termination is polygonal and is adjoined by a former Lady Chapel on the north side, which has a square termination.

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<sup>1016</sup> E. g., Maddison, J., 'The Architectural Development of Patrington Church and its Place in the Evolution of the Decorated Style in Yorkshire', in Wilson, C., ed., BAA, *Medieval Art & Architecture in the East Riding of Yorkshire*, Leeds, 1989, pp. 140-141.

The findings of this study clearly signal that the English liturgy – that unique synthesis of selective custom and practice, experiment and innovation, and in particular the English love of liturgical movement - was in large part the catalyst in the evolution of particular areas devoted to *hyperdulia* within English churches. This thesis has offered convincing reasons for the origins and use of Lady Chapels by tracing the development and changes in liturgical practice that have had most impact on them. The extensive extraction of Marian references from liturgical calendars and other prescriptive documents has drawn the individual strands of evidence together and explained them in order to facilitate a fuller understanding and interpretation than has hitherto been possible.

It is also important, however, to acknowledge that the medieval liturgy could theoretically be as adequately celebrated in a barn or a field as it could in a church and it is this latter point that indicates an inextricable connection with those constants of human nature – aspiration and the perpetual quest for improvement - to which the art historical record of Christianity has clearly not been immune or indifferent. In the context of Lady Chapels, this has meant that innovation, fashion and patronage have all played their part in architectural provision, but that however desirable purpose-built, high status buildings might be, they were not essential, as the evidence presented in respect of some of the more lowly churches clearly indicates.

Nevertheless, I have demonstrated that the history of liturgical development in England resulted in a unique expression of worship and piety that encompassed all that was most apposite in the splendour of words and ritual choreography, celebrated in what must always have been a colourful setting. It has been possible to demonstrate that processions that had their origins in the simple movement between the altars of detached churches were continued and developed into liturgical expressions within the additive church, and that convenience, practicality and decorum accounted for the choice of location of some Lady Chapels at particular times in particular places. It has been demonstrated, for example, that Anglo-Saxon sites containing multiple churches tended to favour an axial arrangement for those churches, and that where dedications are known, the

easternmost churches were often Marian and that there is evidence for this trend continuing within the additive church.

Liturgical regulations such as the *Regularis Concordia* and the *Decreta* of Archbishop Lanfranc correlate with the archaeological record and prove that buildings could be and were designed with such rubrics in mind. This is particularly evident in the case-study of Christ Church, Canterbury, where the western axial oratory of St Mary accorded with the *Concordia*, but later designs were made in order to comply with the *Decreta*. These latter arrangements concur with those of other Anglo-Norman Benedictine houses, which not only proves the significance of the liturgy, but may also be a useful starting point in identifying the probable locations of Lady altars in the Benedictine churches where a dearth of surviving documentation has hitherto precluded any such identification. One example of this is Peterborough Abbey, where the seventeenth-century desecration of the church was extended to include almost all its documents and the site of the Lady Chapel that preceded the previously discussed thirteenth-century building has hitherto remained a mystery. Using the evidence of known examples, it is now not unreasonable to hypothesise that the earlier arrangements were probably located on the south side of the church, that side being nearest to the cloister and sleeping accommodation of the monks.

The evidence indicates that the later trend for the well known, magnificent and architecturally distinct Lady Chapels, whilst obviously owing their existence to a potent mixture of piety, patronage and aspiration were nevertheless also made in response to changing liturgical requirements, in particular the development of a daily Lady Mass, celebrated ever more splendidly owing to the improving techniques and more widespread use of polyphony that, ideally, required an appropriate architectural setting. It therefore becomes apparent that the major Lady Chapels represented the zenith of Marian liturgical and artistic expression, and should be interpreted as such, rather than in isolation from the history of the churches that contain them or to which they are appended. These earthly palaces of the heavenly queen were not a sudden phenomenon that began in the late twelfth century, but represented the apex of a complex continuum of development.

The case-studies also serve to highlight the fact that tradition could be an important factor, one that is particularly evident in the arrangements at Glastonbury (also a Benedictine House), where the principal focus of Marian devotion was always centred in or on the site of the *vetusta ecclesia*, and this example also indicates that part of the genius of liturgical evolution was a significant degree of adaptability that facilitated alternative locations where tradition, the sanctity of a particular site or simple practical necessity were overriding considerations. These factors appear to have been the criteria applied to centres of Marian pilgrimage, as indicated by the arrangements, so far as they may be ascertained at Walsingham. The whole subject area of Marian pilgrimage is deserving of further study, though the task is likely to prove a somewhat daunting and frustrating one given that all centres of pilgrimage were the particular targets of the sixteenth-century reformers and that almost all the evidence was systematically destroyed. It is a sobering thought that without the testimony of Erasmus, surviving almost by default (in that his account was not intended as an historical record), our understanding of Walsingham, which is sparse enough as it is, would be much the poorer - the foundation ballad might have been dismissed as pure fantasy and the archaeology have proved much more difficult to interpret. Walsingham then, has fared comparatively well in contrast to the many other sites of Marian pilgrimage that existed in medieval England.

Liturgical modification is also a factor in understanding and interpreting the arrangements made for the veneration of Our Lady in smaller churches. Bishop Poore clearly defined the Sarum customs in great detail with Salisbury Cathedral in mind, but their adaptability rendered them compatible for smaller churches, not merely in terms of what might be said and done at altars, but also in procession: this flexibility was undoubtedly a factor in the rite's unprecedented success. Hitherto, the consideration of Lady Chapels in parish churches has been largely ignored except for a few well-known and well-documented examples. The study of a particular county has proven that some sort of provision for honouring and venerating St Mary was as necessary in the lesser churches as it was in the greater ones, and that although such provision might be relatively much more modest in material terms, the fervency of the cult was every bit as pronounced in the lesser churches, particularly with regard to multiple areas devoted to veneration of Our Lady, even in comparatively small buildings.

The problems inherent in researching the extent of Marian devotion in lesser churches by a county survey have been previously highlighted, and these obstacles, in particular the relative lack of documentation, the difficulties inherent in identifying and interpreting the fabric evidence within the surviving architectural spaces and the loss of all the attested churchyard / detached chapels are factors that may in part account for the absence of any previous large-scale surveys. These particular problems have necessitated the painstaking collection, assessment and contextual placing of each fragment of documentary and fabric evidence simply in order to locate as many of the Lady Chapels as possible – a task that may be compared to fitting together and making sense of a jig-saw puzzle in which most of the pieces are missing and are unlikely ever to be found. Nevertheless, the detective work has facilitated the gathering together of a significant amount of information that in common with the findings of the major church case-studies, has enabled some fascinating insights into Marian veneration in smaller churches, both in general terms and in individual cases. In addition, the Northamptonshire study certainly indicates that surveys of smaller churches in other areas might profitably be made, in order to augment our knowledge of those areas and the individual churches within them, but also to facilitate comparative studies with Northamptonshire. It would be fascinating to know how far the evidence of other counties would correlate with or contradict my findings for Northamptonshire. It is also possible that future comparative surveys could shed further light on issues such as the possibility of multiple altar provision in chancels where the evidence has proved inconclusive.

It is apparent that in common with the situation in the greater churches, Our Lady was venerated at parish level in a variety of her more common guises, and also occasionally her less common ones. The unusual reference (in a Northamptonshire context) to ‘our lady light in the pewe’ at Bradden has been commented on. The rarer titles of cult images have fallen largely outside the scope of this thesis, except with regard to Walsingham, but the Bradden example invites speculation into the extent and location of these rare or unique titles that are known to have existed in various parts of the country. Some are evidently nothing to do with Marian hagiography or iconography, but have clearly been distinctively labelled simply to

identify particular images in particular places such as 'Our Lady of the oak' at St Martin's, Norwich, located in an oak tree in the churchyard; 'Our Lady in the rock' at Dover, which conjures up in imagination an image set in the cleft of a rock in the manner of Our Lady of Lourdes, and 'Our Lady over the red ark' standing guard over the offerings box in York Minster. Other titles may be explained with reference to ownership, as was the case for example with regard to 'Our Lady Barking', who resided in a Lady Chapel on the north side of All Hallows by the Tower that once belonged to Barking Convent. Questions, however, remain unanswered regarding the extent and ways in which external cult images such as Our Lady of the oak, Our Lady in the rock and the previously discussed Northamptonshire example of Our Lady in the steeple at Bugbrooke were venerated, and further research may yet pay dividends in these and other fields of interest.

The Northamptonshire study has also shed some fresh light on the question regarding the degree of access that the laity enjoyed to parts of churches other than the nave. The evidence garnered from the medieval wills makes it abundantly clear that chancels and chapels were particular foci of benefaction and contained much of the material fabric associated with veneration. This evidence therefore suggests that the laity is likely to have had reasonably free access to these areas of the church. If access had been severely restricted, or proscribed altogether, it follows that veneration would necessarily have had to be conducted from a distance that would preclude intimacy and that the bulk of lay bequests would reflect this by favouring devotional areas in more accessible parts of the churches.

The same question of lay access is relevant to the greater churches, in particular with reference to the choir, and again Marian references may add to our overall knowledge. For example, the famous images of Our Lady at Worcester Cathedral and at York Minster were each located in the vicinity of the high altars of their respective churches and it is difficult to envisage how they could have been such famed and venerated cult images unless the laity had reasonable access to them.

The evidence presented in this thesis makes it abundantly clear that devotion to St Mary was endemic in medieval England and that it encompassed everything that

could conceivably be employed in its expression from the highest levels of art and architecture in their broadest sense and grades of quality, to the quite ordinary and mundane. The holistic picture demonstrates an organic quality in the sense that it was never still, but perpetually evolving, being improved upon, added to, replaced or renovated and, moreover, that Our Lady was for everyone. The churches were not just the province of clerics where the laity were granted admittance as spectators of the liturgy; neither was their role confined to occasional participation in worship. It is clear that they had a real and active share in the 'ownership' of the outward material trappings of their faith and culture, and that such ownership transcended the barriers of class, status and wealth. At one end of the scale the various agenda and patronage of kings, bishops and nobles and the most advanced and skilful resources that the designers and artisans of art and architecture could offer were responsible for providing the best possible expressions of Marian devotion – the Lady Chapels of the greater churches. Alternatively the nobility might provide and endow chantries such as the breathtaking Beauchamp / Lady Chapel at Warwick, a most spectacular expression of mortuary piety where no expense was spared in art, architecture, vestments, glass, staff or music, and where the surviving tomb effigy of Richard Beauchamp lies with his head slightly raised and his hands in the *orans* position of eternal adoration towards an Annunciation reredos that would have achieved a real and literal dimension three times each day when the mass was celebrated beneath it and the priest triumphantly elevated the transubstantiated eucharistic species containing the incarnate God.

Those of slightly more modest means could also endow chantries that might serve as Lady Chapels either within existing architectural frameworks or purpose built, as for example at Aldwinckle, All Saints. Neither were the relatively poorer members of society excluded, but shared in the corporate ownership by gild membership, use and familiarity with their particular favourite areas and objects of devotion, and (except for the very lowest orders), by making bequests of goods as diverse as clothing textiles and 'a cow named Pinnie'. It is not only refreshing to engage with an important aspect of the lives of ordinary people, which in terms of medieval history has so often been a story of princes and prelates, but it is also the case that their contribution to this study has been invaluable; it is the evidence of their collective input that has permitted the fleshing out of many of the bare bones

of Lady Chapels, particularly parish ones in terms of understanding where they were located and how they were furnished and used. It is substantially their contribution that has permitted a degree of reconstruction to be made and which therefore opens windows through which we may glimpse important aspects of the lives, beliefs and preoccupations of our medieval forebears, particularly with regard to 'their' churches, wherein they sought and found the Trinitarian God, His saints, and His bride, the Queen of Heaven and Mother of all.

It must also have been the case that the ordinary people of medieval England lost the most during the sweeping changes of the sixteenth-century Dissolution and Reformation. They could not afford to participate in the great sell-off of monastic lands by which so many of the wealthier classes profited, and as the votive lights were gradually extinguished in the churches, the devotional imagery removed and with it much of the depth and mystery of the medieval liturgy, the people were deprived not only of many of the facets of the faith that had helped to sustain them in their often difficult lives, but they lost much of their access to art, to colour, to light and to music as the churches were gradually denuded of their pre-Reformation splendour and the aesthetic riches that were once corporately enjoyed vanished, or became the exclusive province of the more privileged.

Lady altars and Lady Chapels became redundant at the Reformation. Most simply vanished within the fabrics of the churches, some even losing the corbels and brackets on which the images had stood, according to the degree of reformist zeal in particular locations or dioceses. Some of the Lady Chapels were adapted to alternative uses such as schoolrooms or mortuary chapels, or were eventually stripped of any remaining assets of any value and demolished as a means of eliminating a drain on financial resources. We will never know when the last Lady Mass of the long medieval period was celebrated in the Lady Chapel of an English Church, but Bishop Bonner of London certainly encouraged this and other votive masses in St Paul's Cathedral beyond the introduction of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI in 1549, and furthermore stipulated that the masses should be celebrated in their respective chapels, not in the choir. The King's Council was swift to retaliate. The Lady and other votive masses taking place in the cathedral chapels were suppressed and it was ordered that the communion service must be

held in the choir. Bonner was ordered to celebrate in the cathedral according to the new rite and then preach a sermon, after which he was immediately denounced. Following trial he was imprisoned and deprived of his see.<sup>1017</sup> The revival of traditional religion during the reign of Mary I was a brief one. Many churches struggled even to provide the basic necessities of the liturgy at high altars, where the daily parish Mass was celebrated, and many additional chapels remained unequipped and without staff. The emphasis was now directed more firmly onto Christ and His saving Passion.<sup>1018</sup> These events effectively signalled the end of the cults of the saints and their primary role as intercessors as far as the English Church was concerned and Our Lady was not excepted.

Finally, and entirely appropriately, given the multi-faceted nature of this study, it must be stressed that in accordance with the original brief concerning the subject matter and parameters of research, this thesis is multidisciplinary. Consequently, it cannot be regarded specifically as a work of architectural history, art history, local history, paleography or any other particular field, but is one that encompasses, embraces and crosses the boundaries between distinctive academic specialisms wherever appropriate. It may perhaps be best described as a study in social archaeology, and although (as previously acknowledged) it cannot be regarded as a complete survey except in its own terms, it does provide a sound basis for further study in respect of major churches, important Marian shrines and more particularly in the more neglected area of studies at parish level.

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<sup>1017</sup> Procter, F, & Frere, W. H., *A New History of The Book of Common Prayer*, London, 1908, pp. 58-59.

<sup>1018</sup> Duffy, E., *op. cit.*, p. 564.

## Illustrations



Fig. 1. Saint-Riquier, the monastery before A.D. 1100.

Source: Parsons, D., *Liturgy and Architecture in the Middle Ages*, op. cit., p. 3.

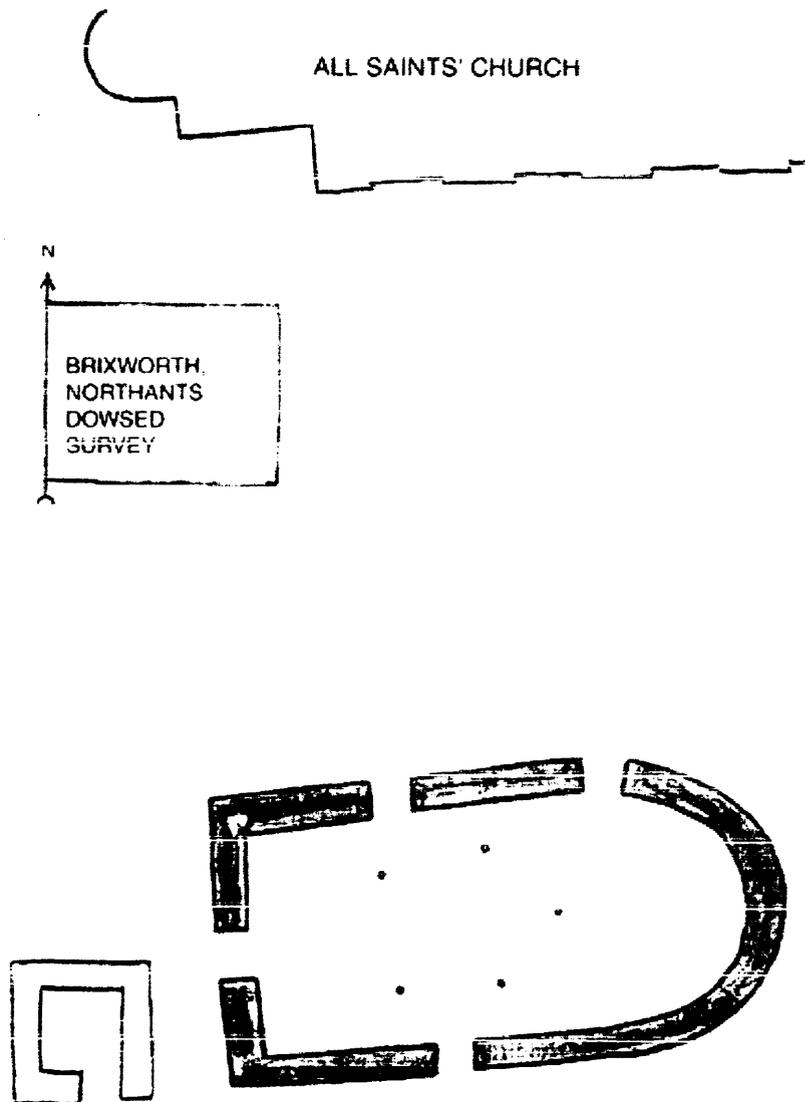


Fig. 2. Brixworth, Northamptonshire, plan showing the extant church of All Saints and two of the structures discovered by dowsing. The linking wall foundations have not been included.

Source: This plan has been kindly provided by Dr David Parsons.

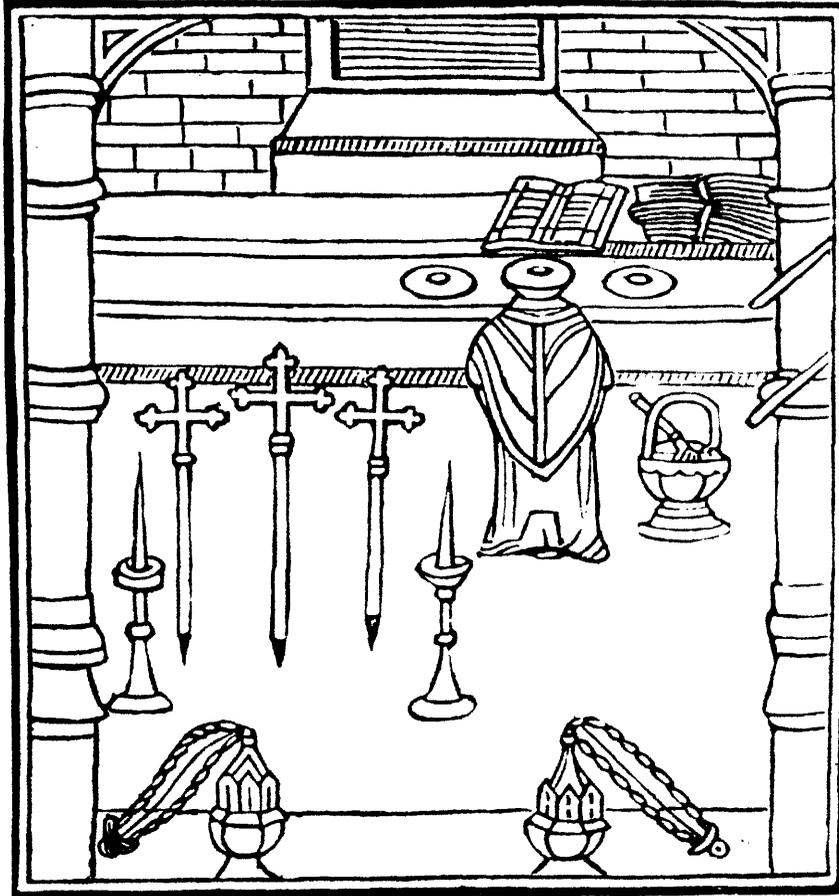


Fig. 3. The blessing of candles on the feast of Purification. This woodcut first appeared in the *Sarum Processionale* of 1508. The candles and book are on the step before the altar, in front of which stands the celebrant, flanked by deacon and subdeacon (represented by their tonsures). The bearer of the vat of holy water stands close at hand for the aspersion of the candles, and three crucifers, two acolytes and two thurifers (represented by their appropriate liturgical accoutrements) are also in attendance for the procession.

Source: Henderson, W. G., *op. cit.*, p. 140.

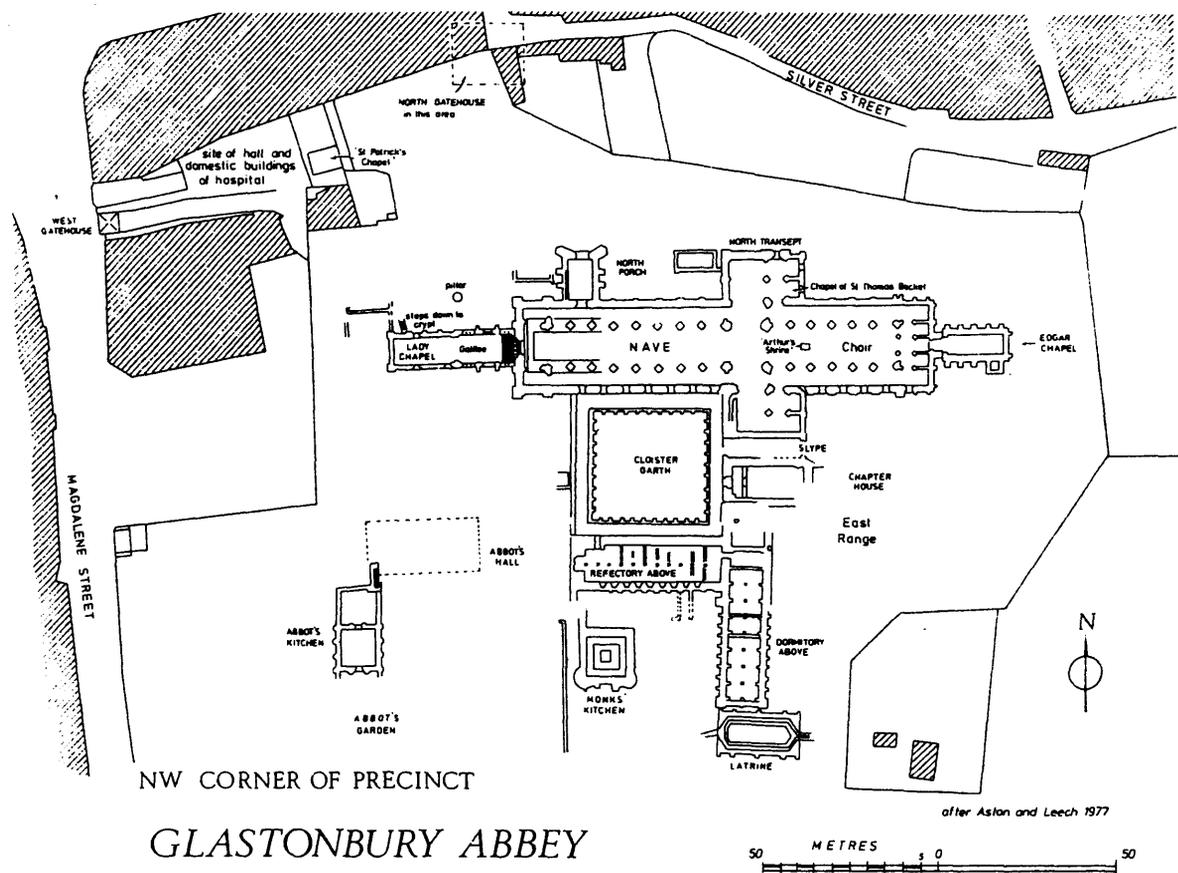


Fig. 4. Plan of Glastonbury Abbey detailing how various features relate to one another. Of particular interest are the Lady Chapel and Galilee, the steps down to the crypt and the chapel sited west of the north transept, which may be that of Our Lady of Loreto.

Source: Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, p. 69.

# St. Joseph's Well

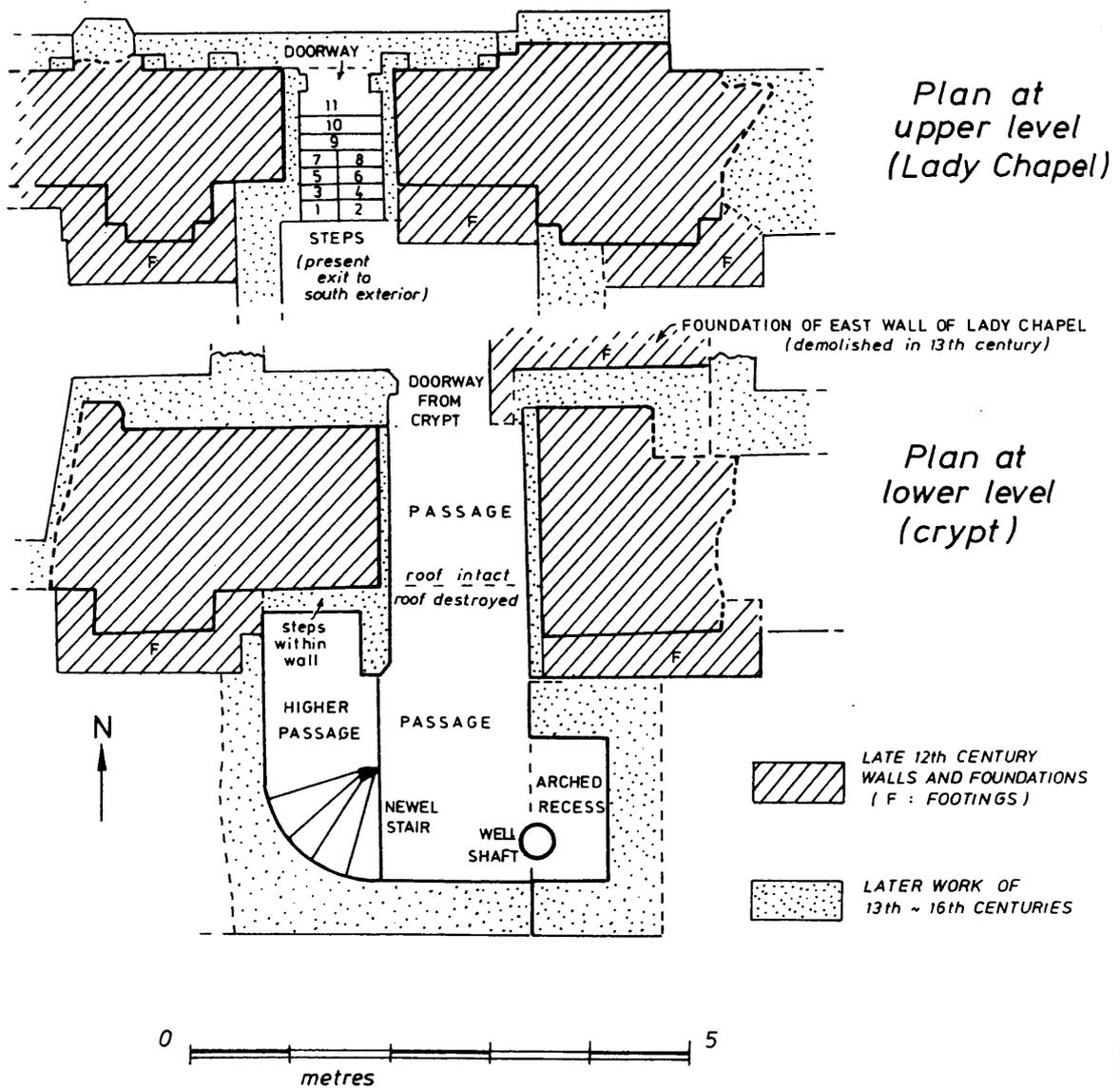


Fig. 5. Glastonbury Abbey, the well in the crypt of the Lady Chapel.

Source: Rahtz, P., *op. cit.*, p. 86.

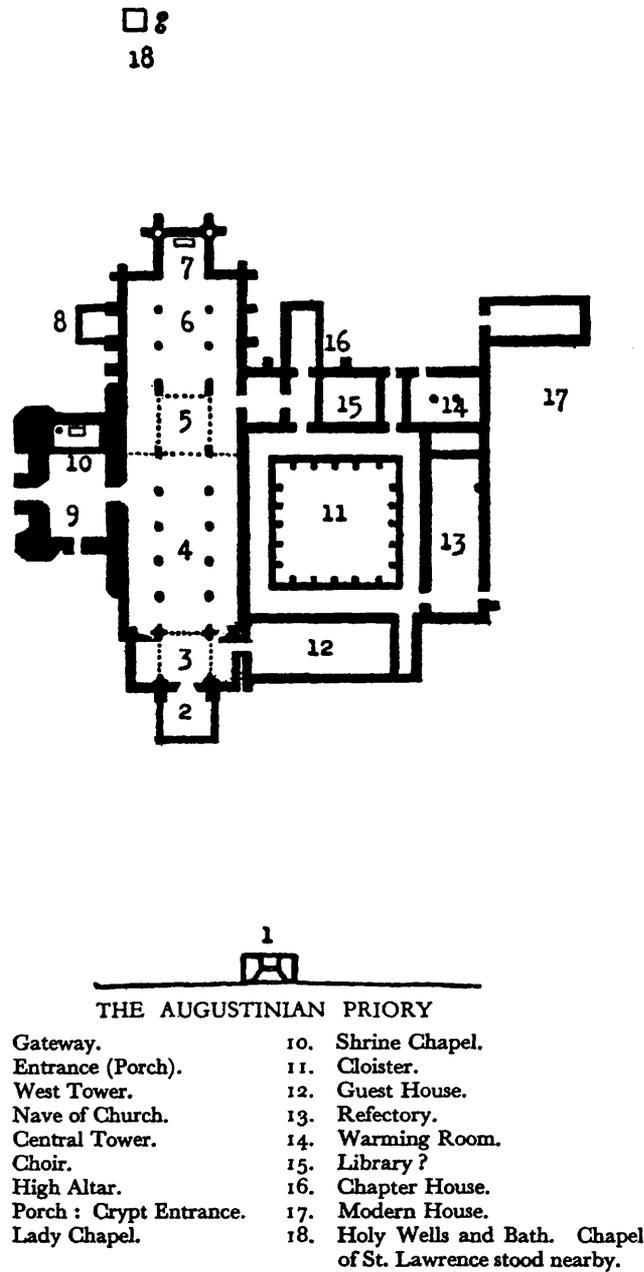


Fig. 6. Walsingham Priory plan. The thick walls on the north side (9 & 10) are those excavated by Lee-Warner and believed by him to be the remains of the medieval shrine. No. 18 marks the site of the twin wells.

Source: Gillett, H. M., *op. cit.*, p. 18.



Fig. 7. The Walsingham seal (obverse).

Source: Gillett, H. M., *op. cit.*, p. 54.



Fig. 8. The Walsingham seal (reverse).

Source: *Ibid.*



Fig. 9. The Langham Virgin. Reproduced here by kind permission of the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

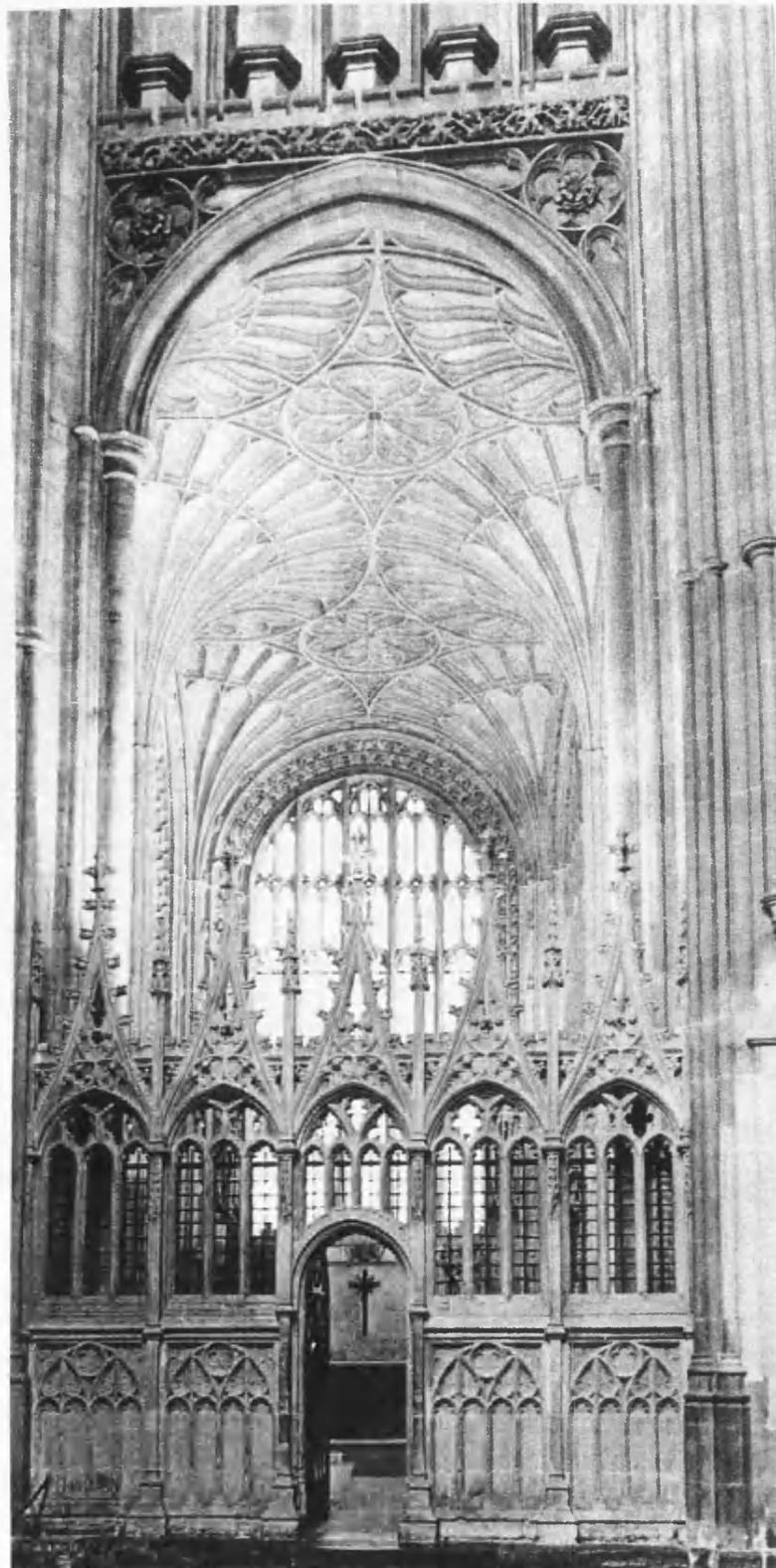


Fig. 10. The Lady Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral.

Source: Collinson, P., Ramsay, N., & Sparks, M., eds, *op. cit.*, plate 82.

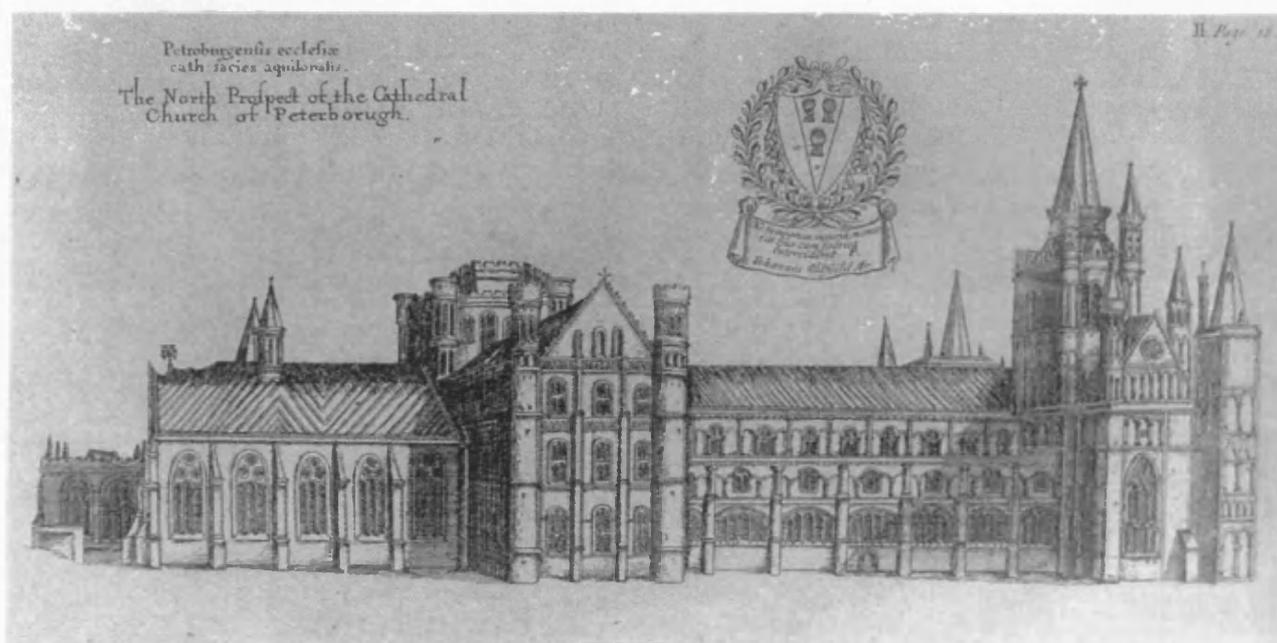


Fig. 11. The only known representation of Peterborough Cathedral that includes the Lady Chapel.

Source: Original artwork by King, D., reproduced here from Gunton, S., *Peterburgh, op. cit.*, frontispiece.

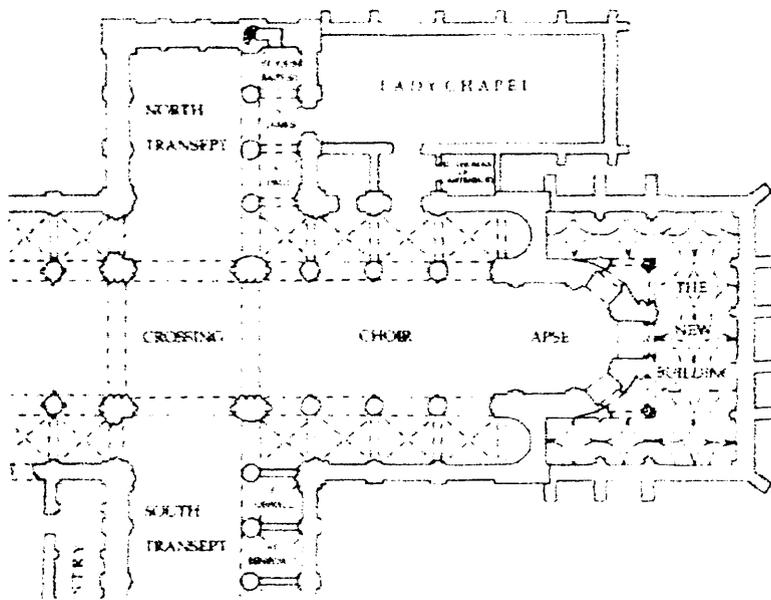


Fig. 12. Plan of the east end of Peterborough Cathedral, by Peers, C. R.  
Source: VCH, *Northamptonshire*, vol. 3, *op. cit.*, between pp. 440-1.

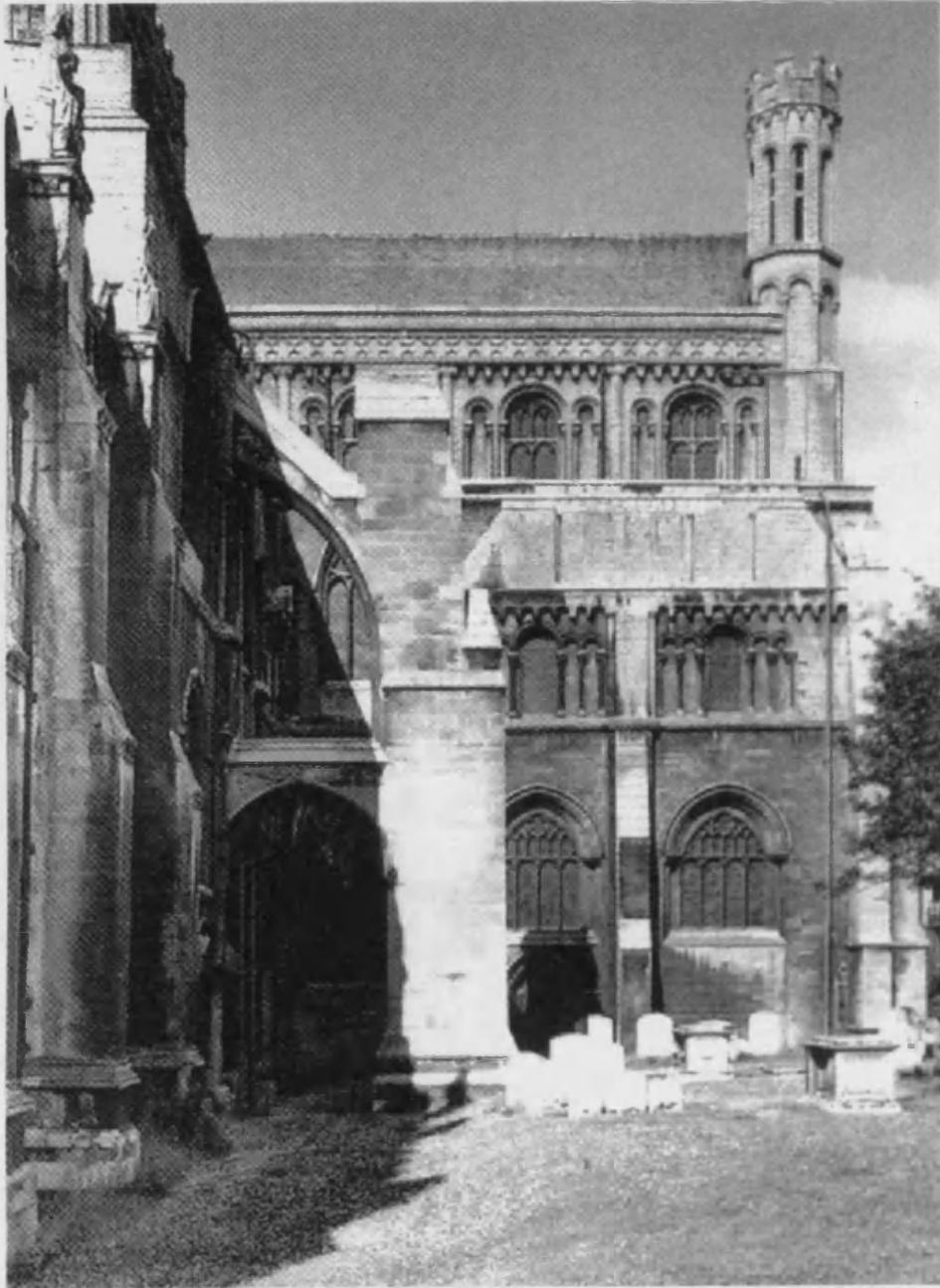


Fig. 13. Peterborough Cathedral, east façade of the north transept. The gable weathering of the former Lady Chapel is clearly visible and indicates its approximate height and width.

Source: Reilly, L., *op. cit.*, plate 103.

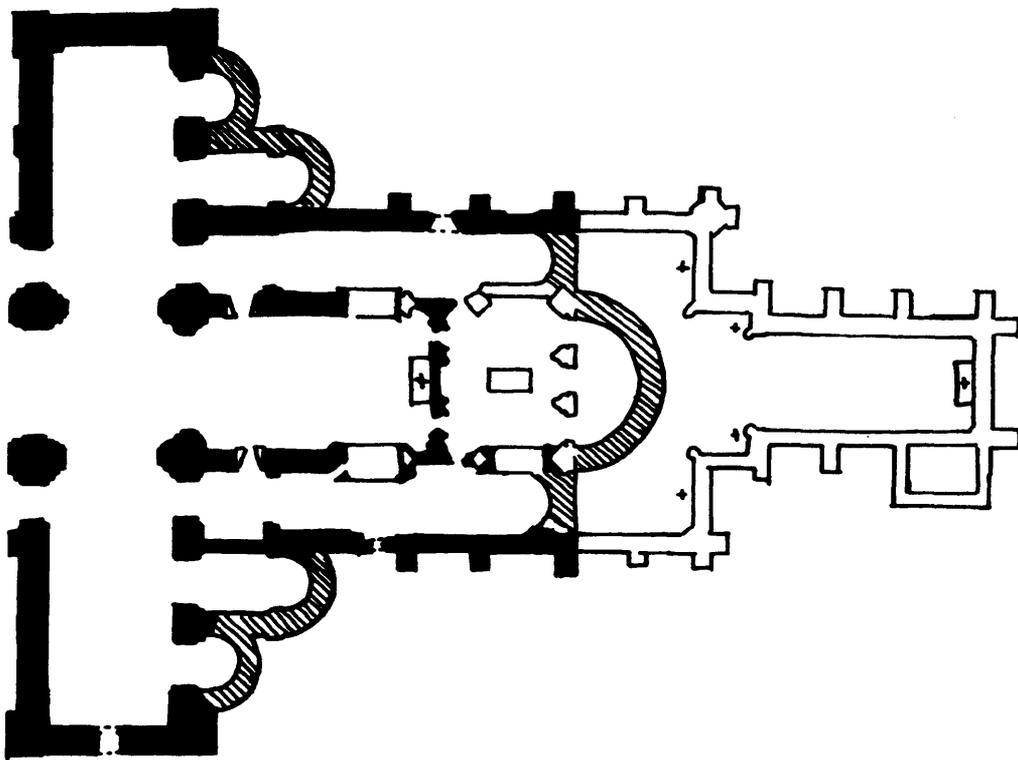


Fig. 14. St Albans, plan of east end, showing Anglo-Norman extant work (solid), apses (demolished), and the thirteenth-century extension (outline). The crosses indicate altars.

Source: Fernie, E., & Crossley, P., *op. cit.*, p. 145.

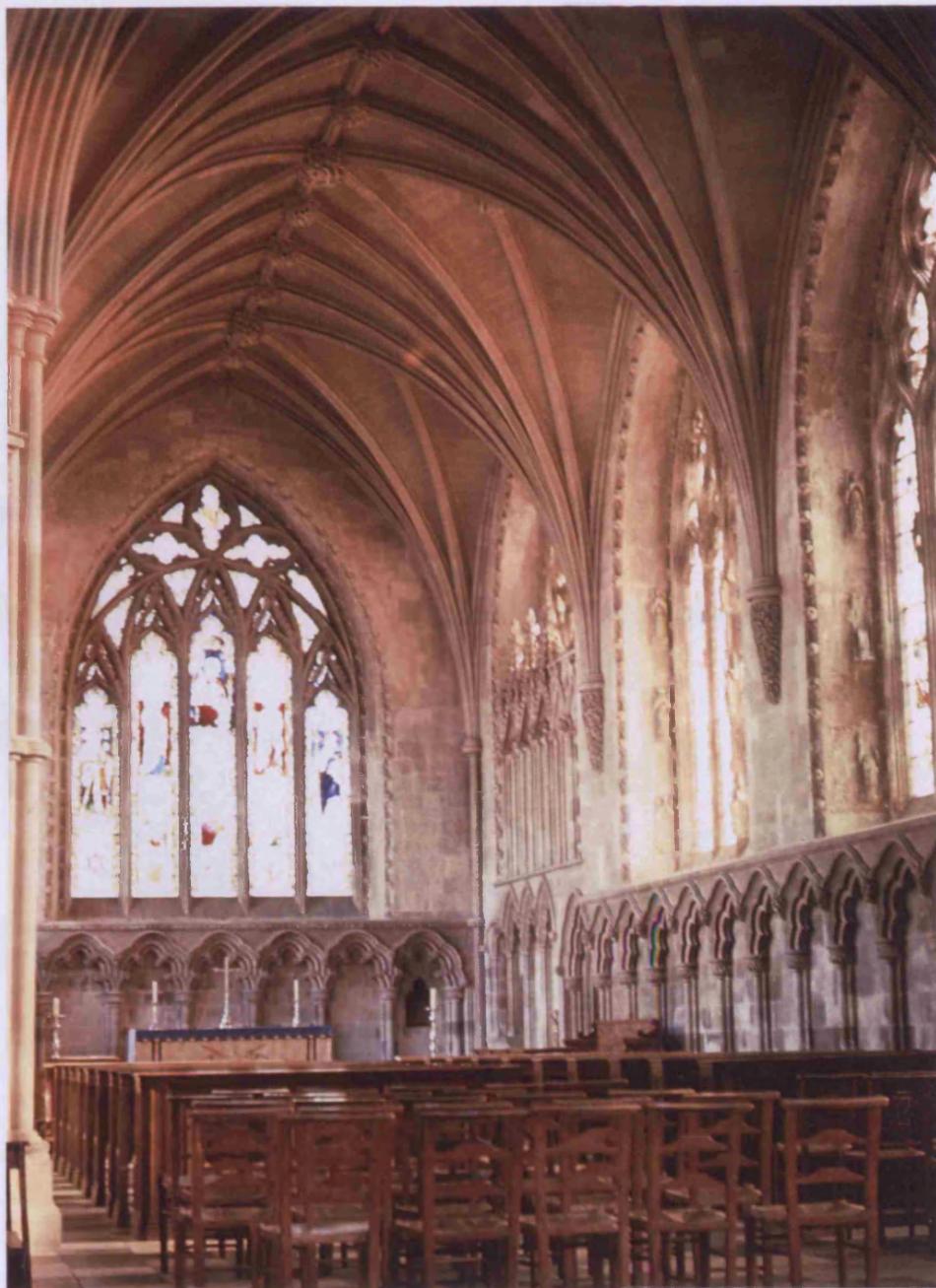


Fig. 15. St Albans, Lady Chapel.

Source: Author's own photograph, c. 1978.

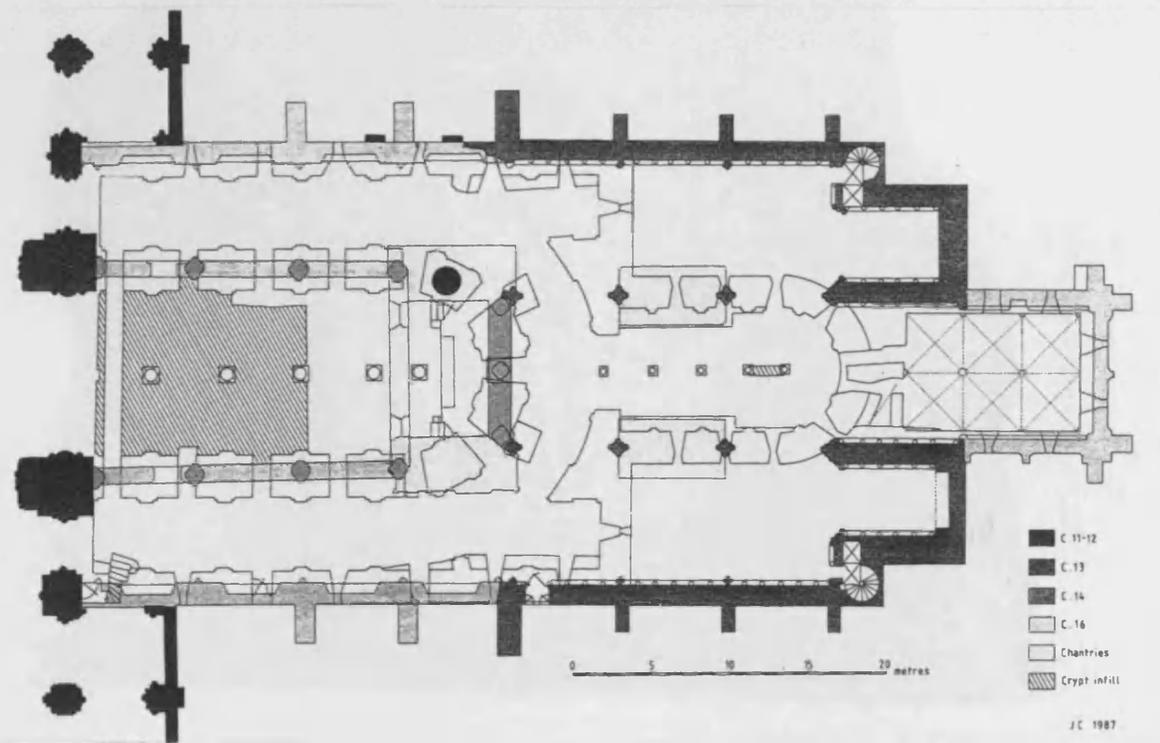


Fig. 16. Winchester Cathedral, plan of the east end, including the axial Lady Chapel.

Source: Crook, J., ed., *op. cit.*, p. 179.



Fig. 17. Winchester Cathedral, 1848 watercolour by Baigent, F. J., of a fourteenth-century painted Purbeck marble slab that may once have graced the Lady altar. Dated to c. 1310-20, the scene depicts the Coronation of the Virgin, flanked by censing angels.

Source: Crook, J., *Ibid.*, p. 132.

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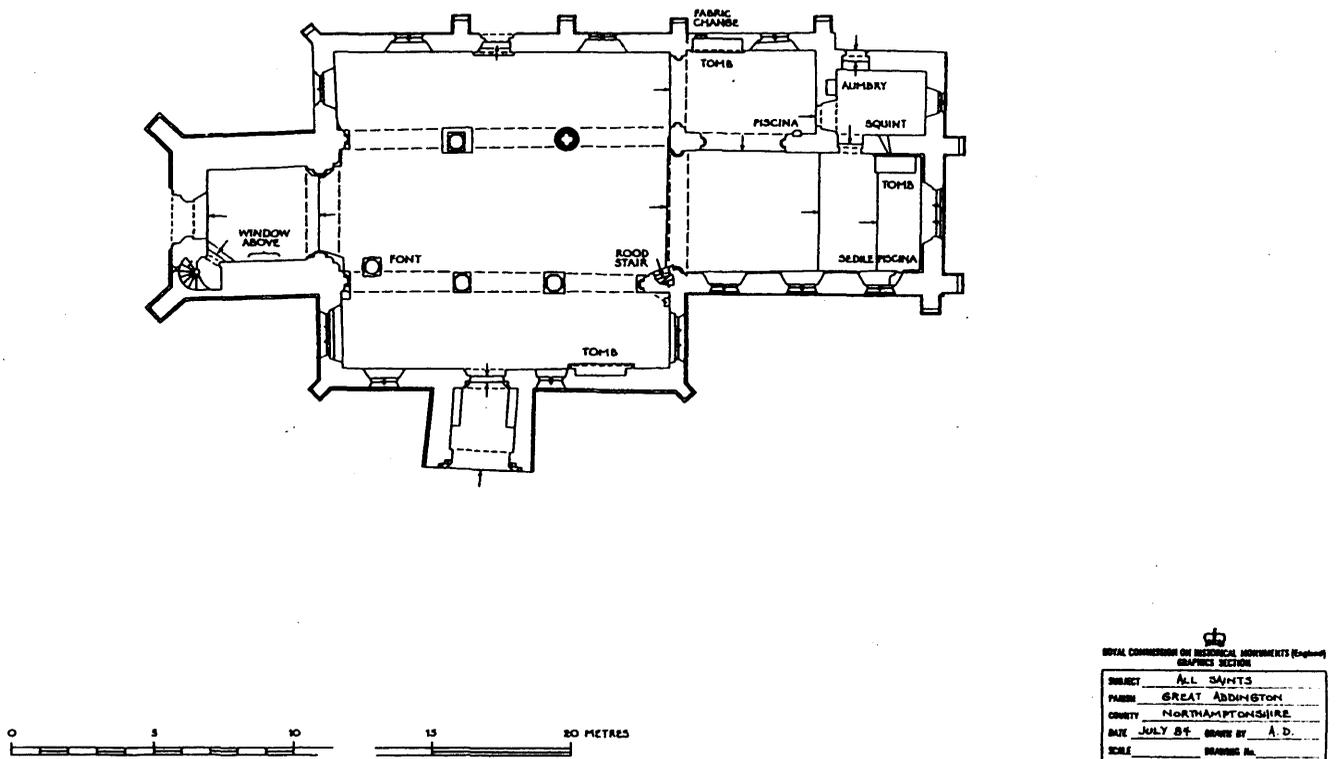


Fig. 18. Addington Magna (Great Addington), plan. The tomb of John Bloxham is shown in close proximity to an elevation squint (or trance). Henry Vere's tomb and a piscina are indicated within the north chancel / Lady Chapel.

Source: RCHME, unpublished.



Fig. 19. Addington Magna (Great Addington), piscina in the Lady Chapel, decorated with roses and clearly not *in situ*.

Source: Author's own photograph, 2004.



Fig. 20. Aldwinckle, All Saints, Chambre chantry / Lady Chapel.

Source: Author's own photograph, 2004.



Fig. 21. Aldwinckle, All Saints, north-east image bracket in the Lady Chapel.  
Source: Author's own photograph, 2004.

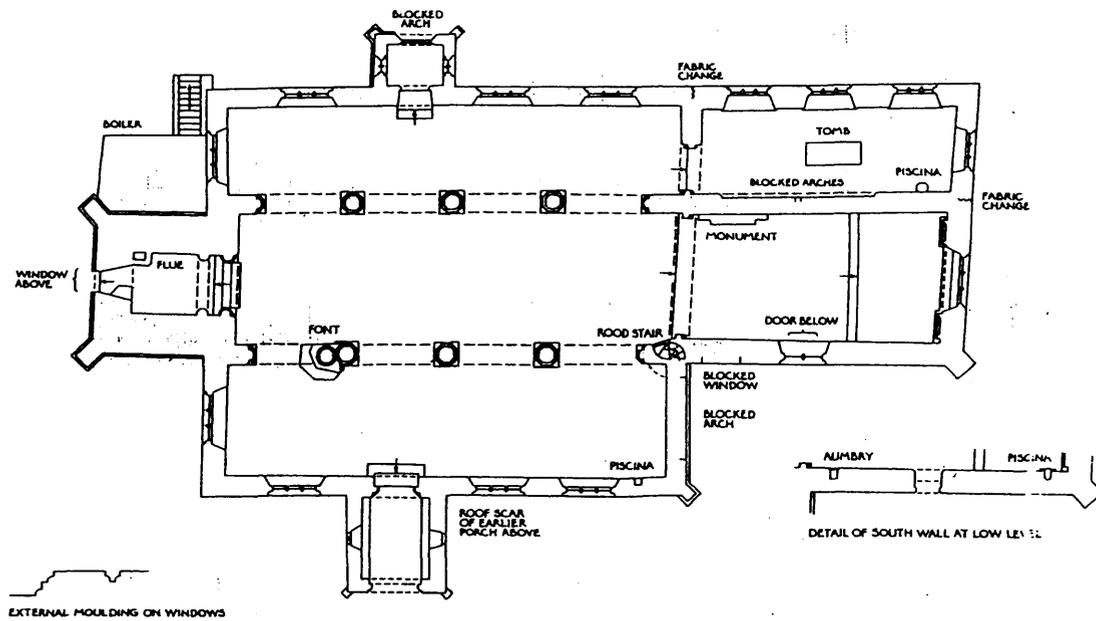


Fig. 22. Aldwinckle, All Saints, south-east image bracket in the Lady Chapel, with serpent. Source: Author's own photograph, 2004.

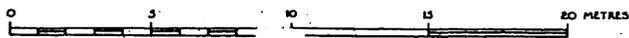


Fig. 23. Aldwinckle, St Peter, lost fourteenth-century glass from a scene depicting the Coronation of the Virgin. Watercolour by C. Winston, 1852.

Source: BL. MS. Add. 35211, iii, f. 20, & Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 4-5.



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ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MONUMENTS GRAPHIC SECTION	
SUBJECT	ST. LEODEGARIIUS
FARM	ASHBY ST. LEDGER
COUNTY	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
DATE	MARCH 85 DRAWN BY A. D.
SCALE	SHARPE 84

Fig. 24. Ashby St Ledgers, plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.

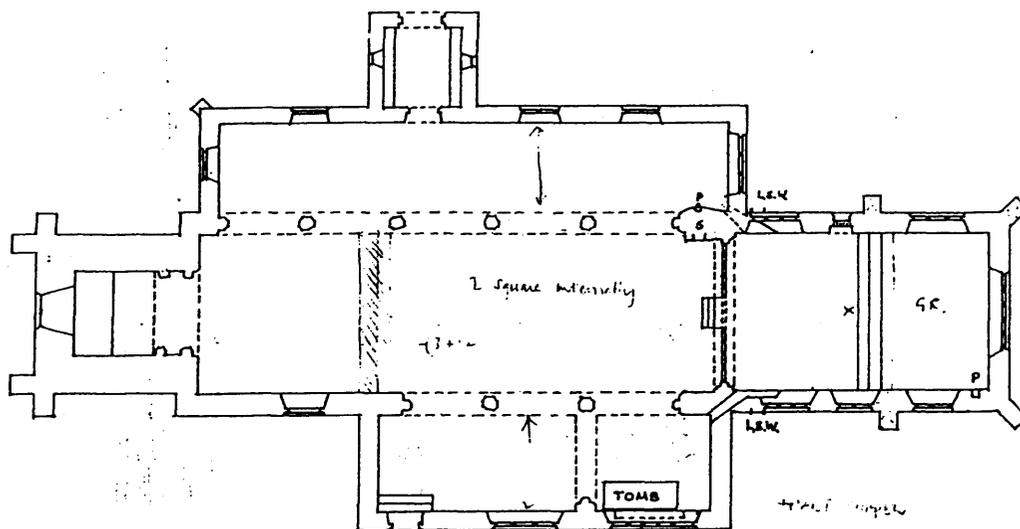


Fig. 25. Blisworth plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.

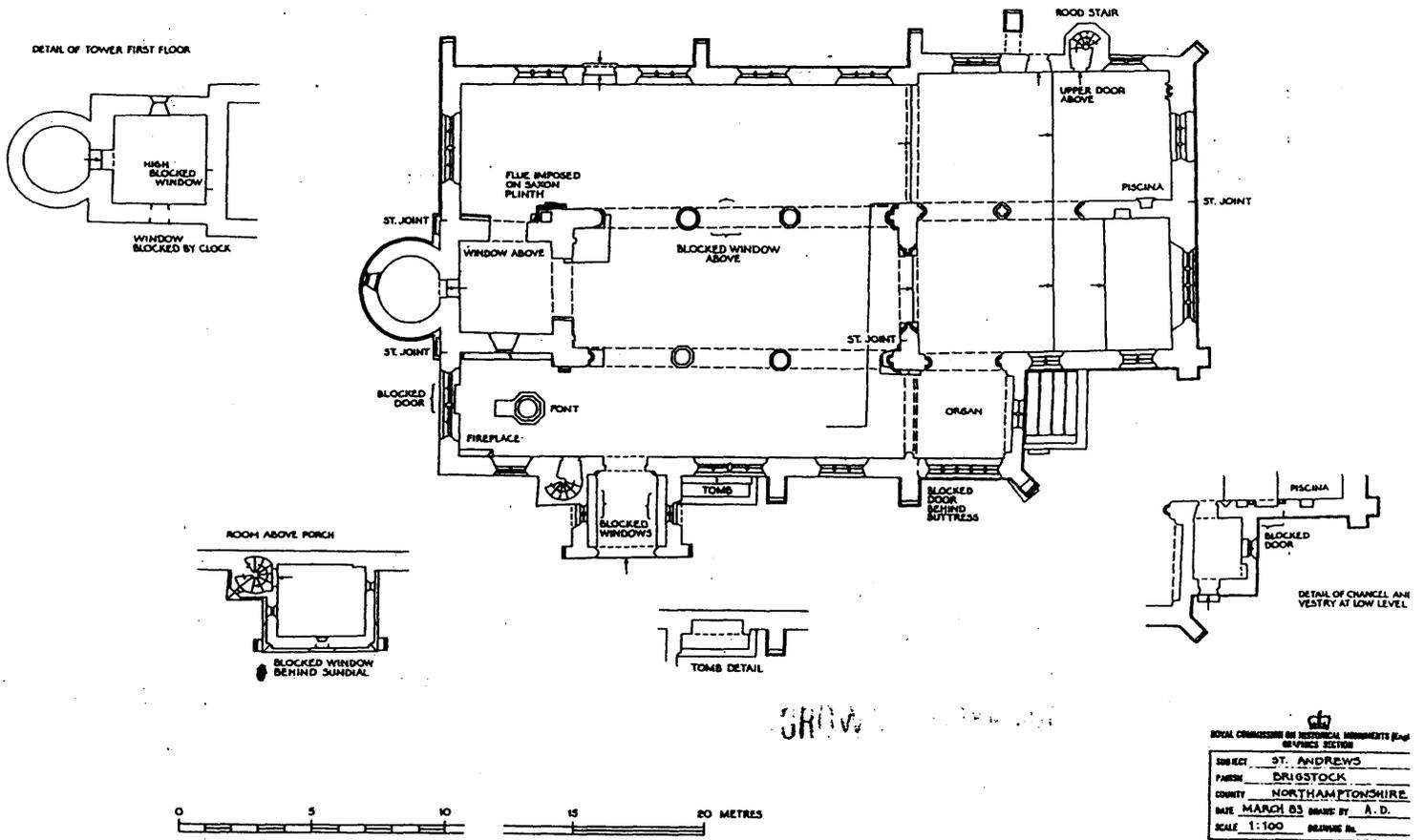


Fig. 26. Brigstock plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.

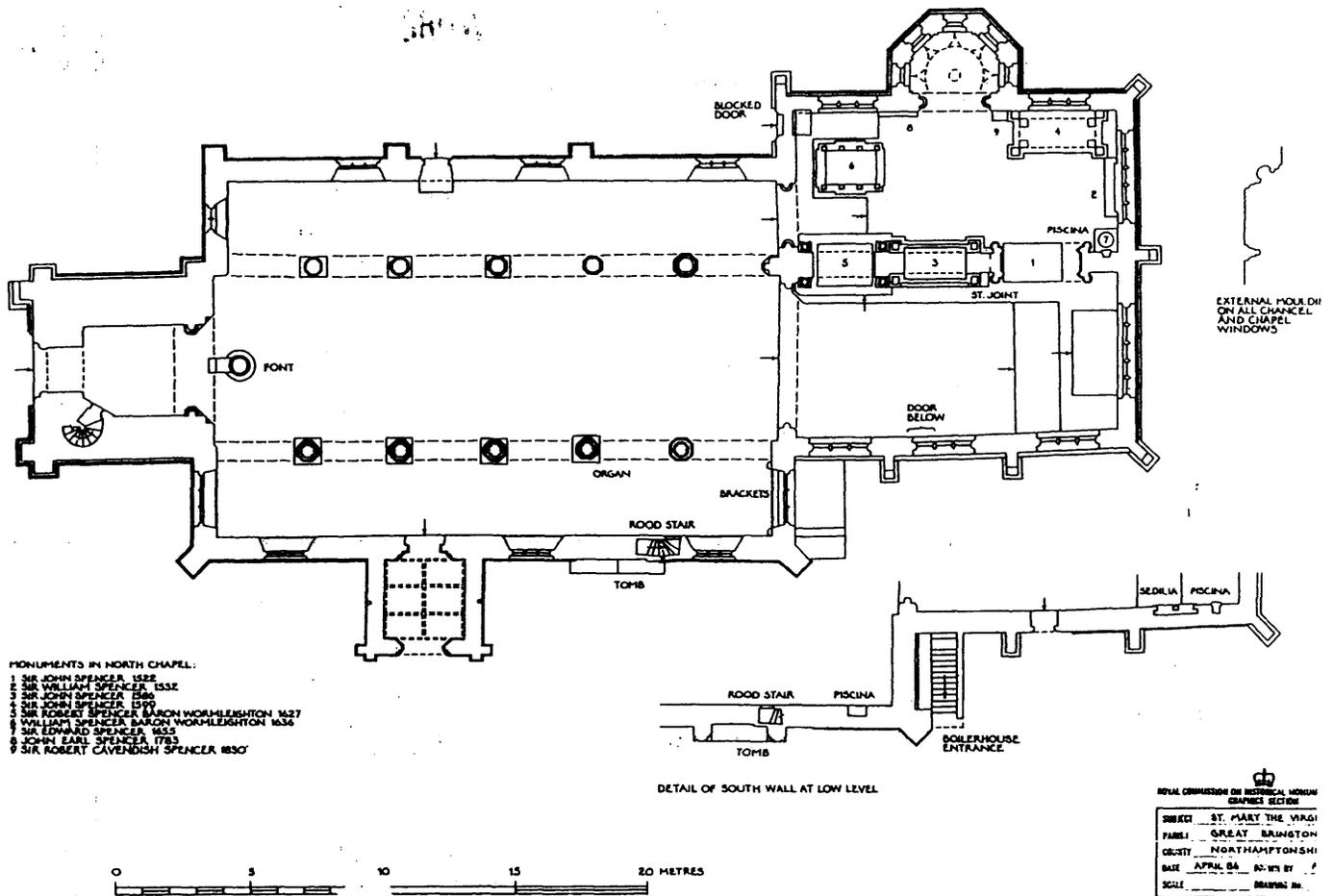


Fig. 27. Brington (Great), plan, showing Sir John Spencer's tomb (No. 1).

Source: RCHME unpublished.

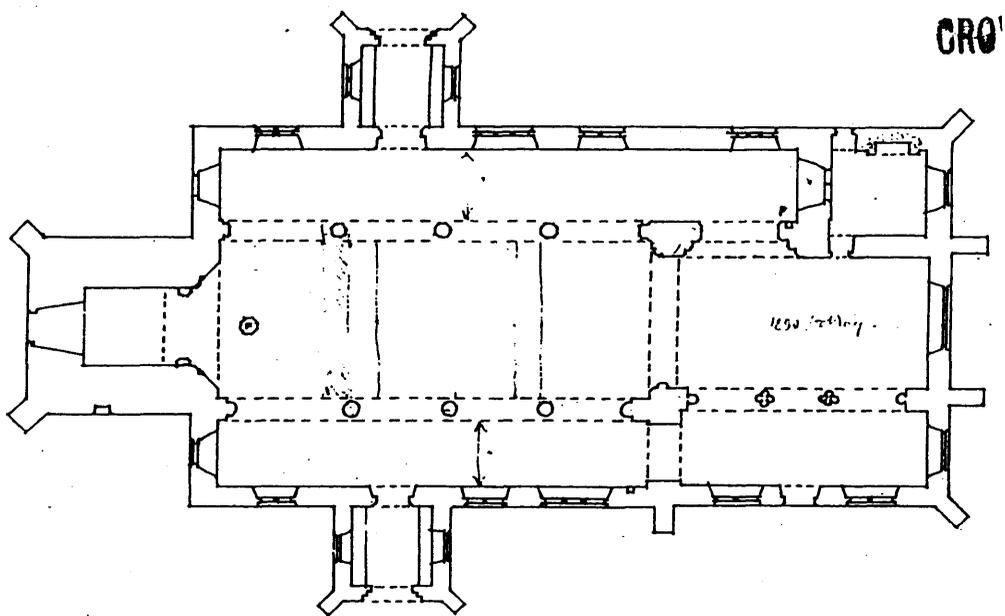


Fig. 28. Bugbrooke, plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.

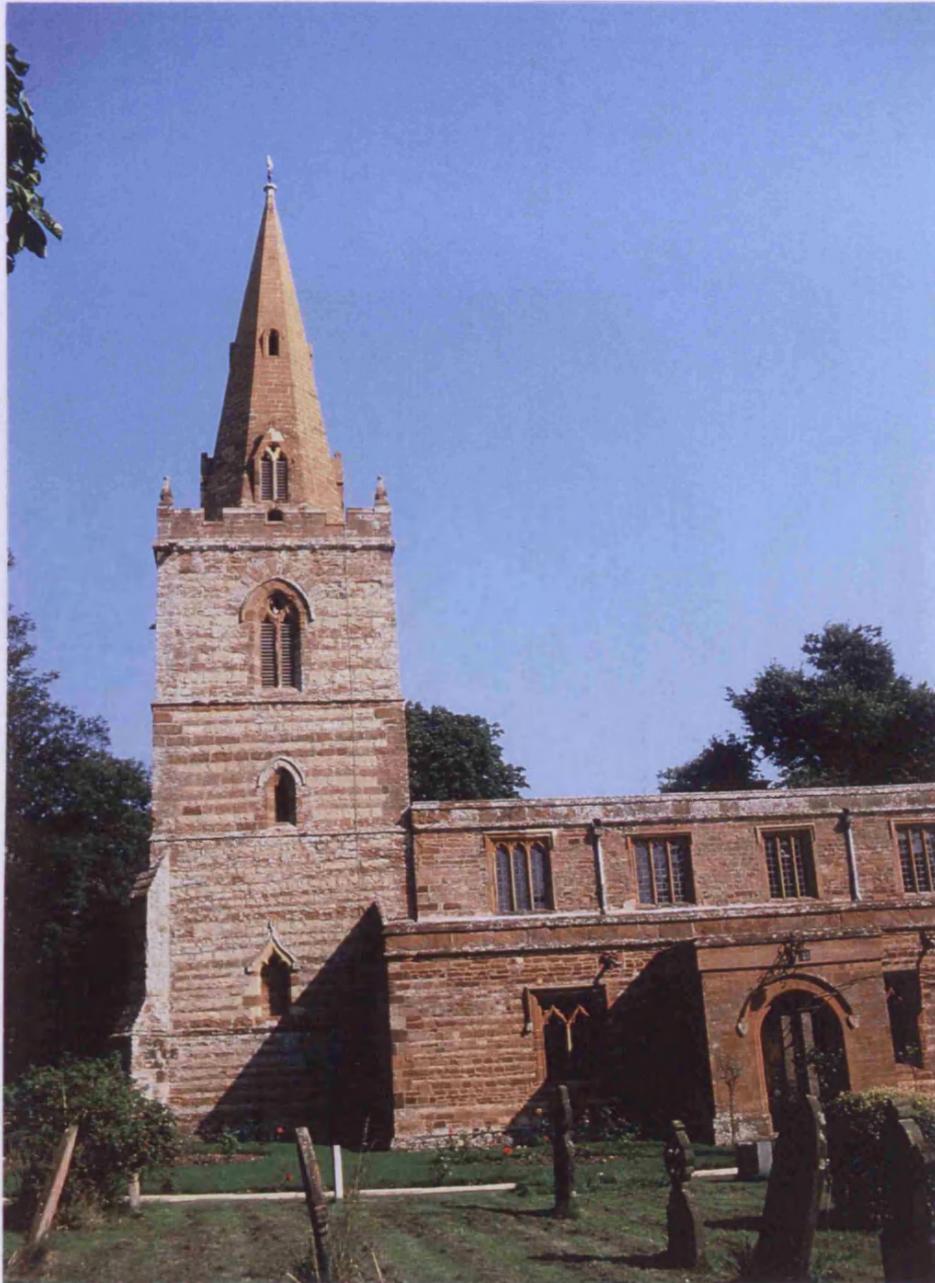


Fig. 29. Bugbrooke, south side, showing the tower niche that probably contained the image of Our Lady in the steeple, now lost.

Source: Author's own photograph, 2003.



Fig. 30. Croughton, All Saints', Lady Chapel at the east end of the north aisle.  
Source: Author's own photograph, 2003.

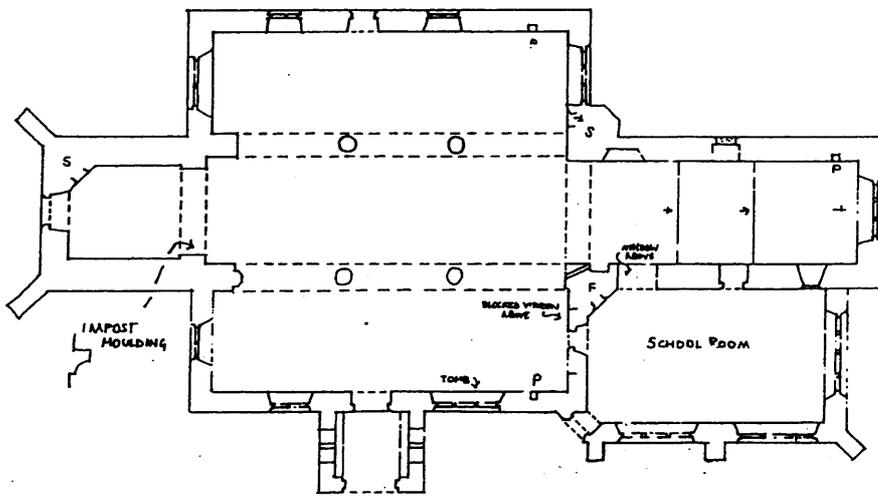


Fig. 31. Farthinghoe, plan.  
Source:RCHME unpublished.

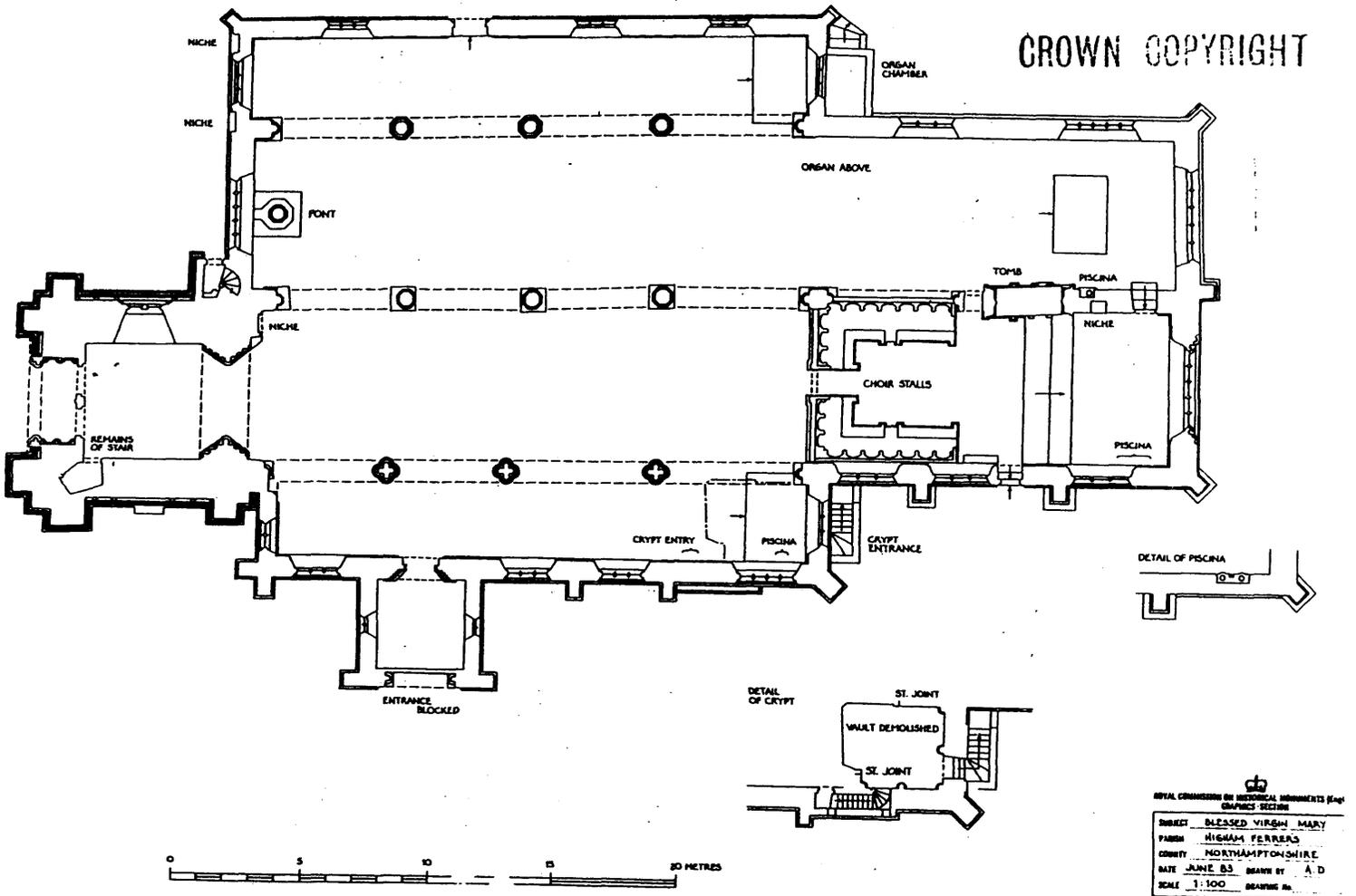


Fig. 32. Higham Ferrers, plan. The Lady Chapel in the north chancel chapel equals the chancel in size.

Source: RCHME unpublished.



Fig. 33. Higham Ferrers, Lady Chapel. The Thorpe brasses are centrally placed, at the bottom of the altar step, beneath the carpet.

Source: Author's own photograph, 2003.



Fig. 34. Higham Ferrers, brasses of William and Marion Thorpe in the Lady Chapel.

Source: Author's own photograph, 2003.



Fig. 35. Hinton-In-The-Hedges, glass of c. 1400-30 depicting the Coronation of the Virgin. Its original location in the church is unknown.

Source: Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

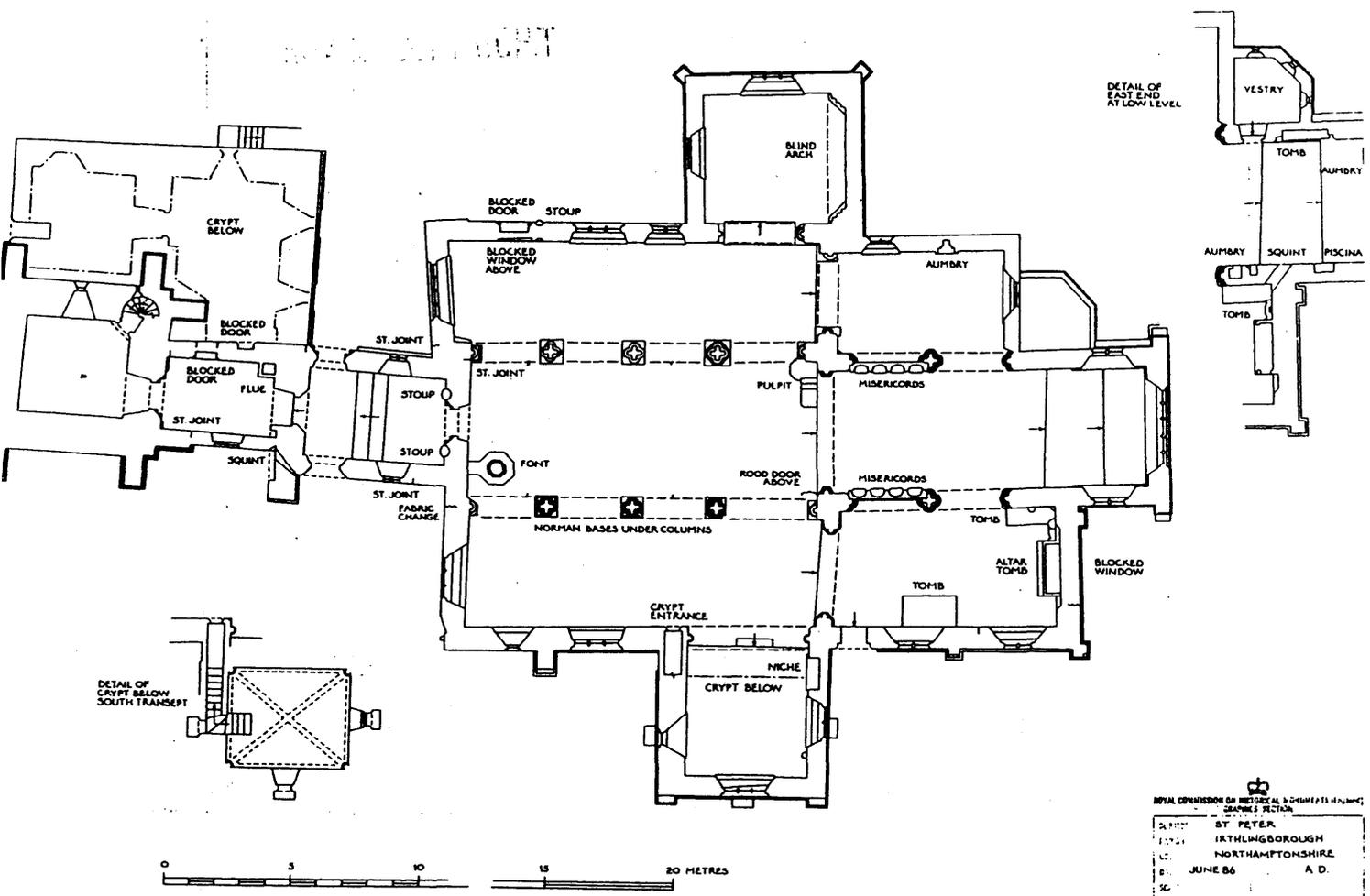


Fig. 36. Irthlingborough, Ss Peter & Paul, plan showing the present location of the Cheyne monument, in the south chancel / Lady Chapel (marked altar tomb).

Source: RCHME unpublished.

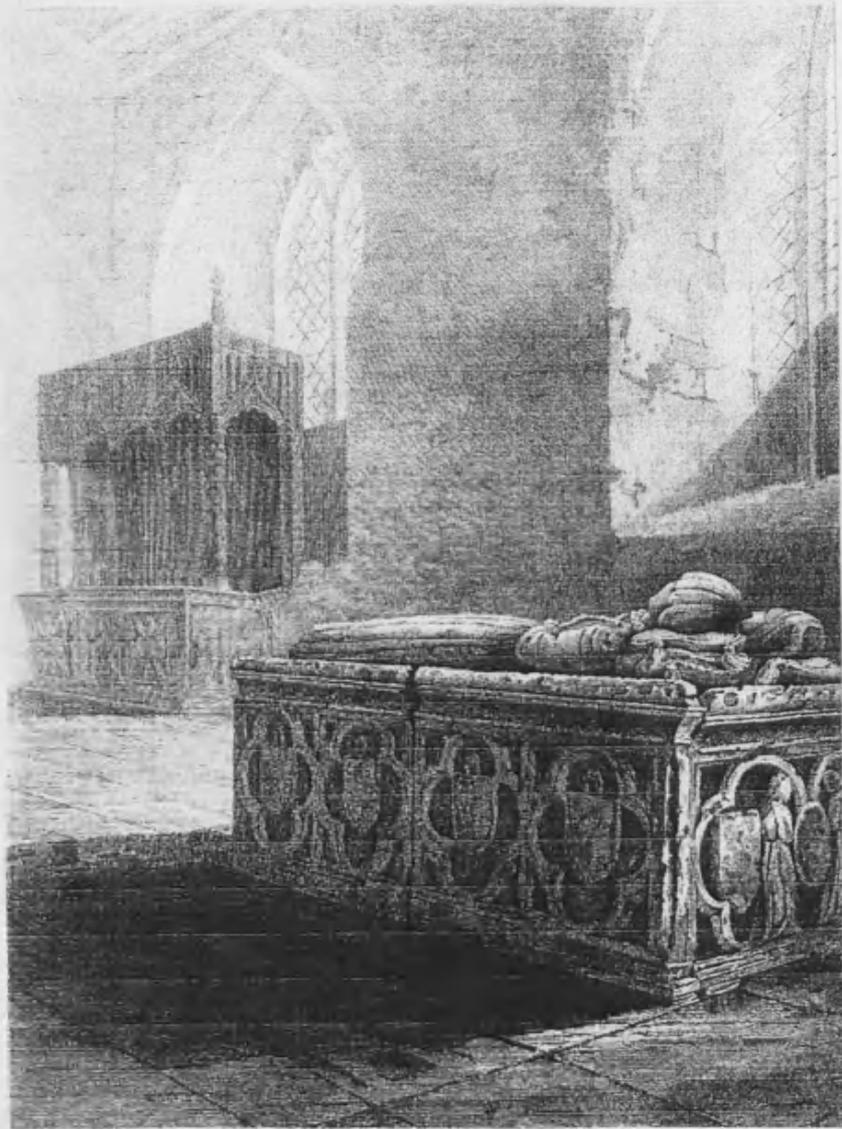


Fig. 37. Irthlingborough, Ss Peter & Paul, the Cheyne (canopied) monument in its former location in the south-east angle of the south chancel chapel.

Source: Hyett, W. H., *op. cit.*, p. 34.

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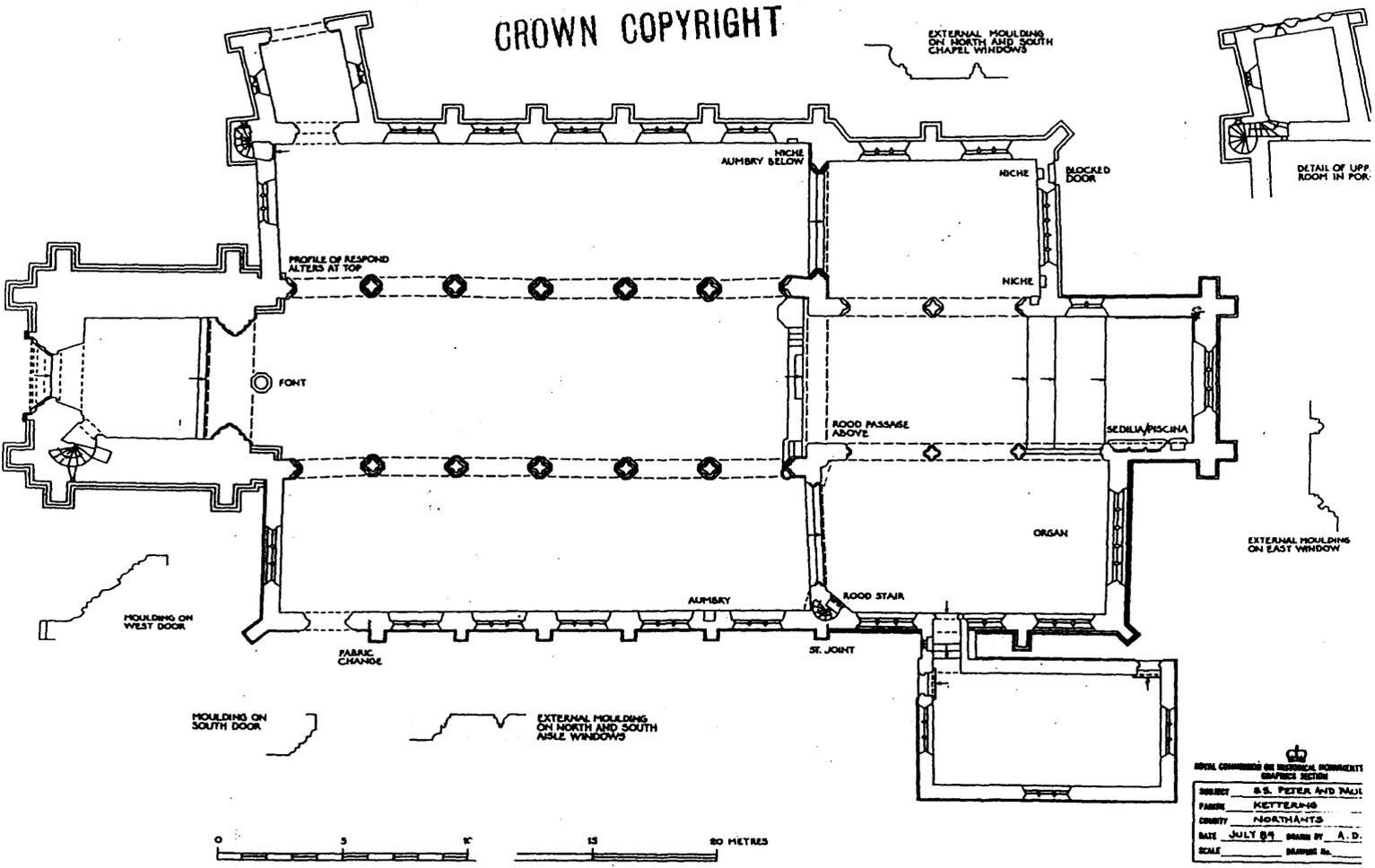


Fig. 38. Kettering, Ss Peter & Paul, plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.

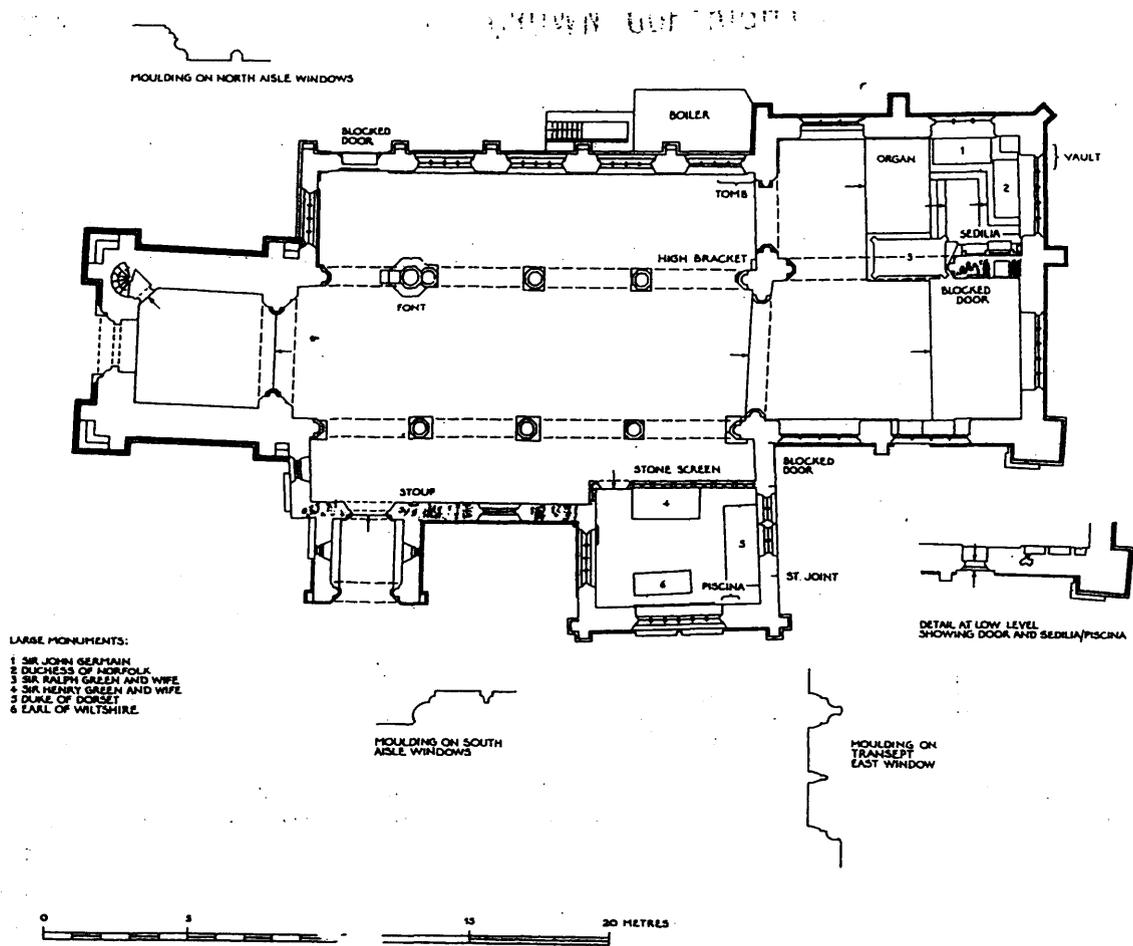
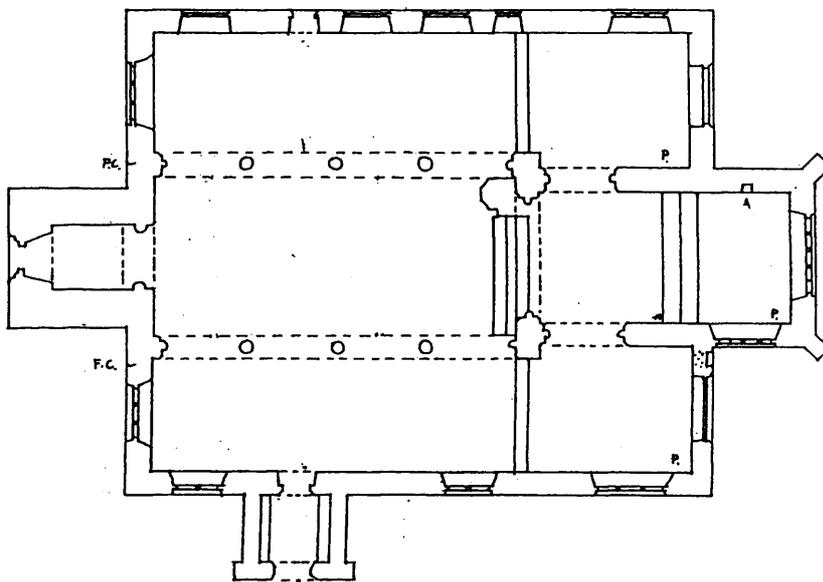


Fig. 39. Lowick, plan. The tombs of Sir Henry & Margaret Greene and that of the Earl of Wiltshire in the south transept, pinpoint the location of the Lady Chapel here, provided they are *in situ*.

Source: RCHME unpublished.



**Fig. 40. Milton Malsor, plan.**

**Source: RCHME unpublished.**

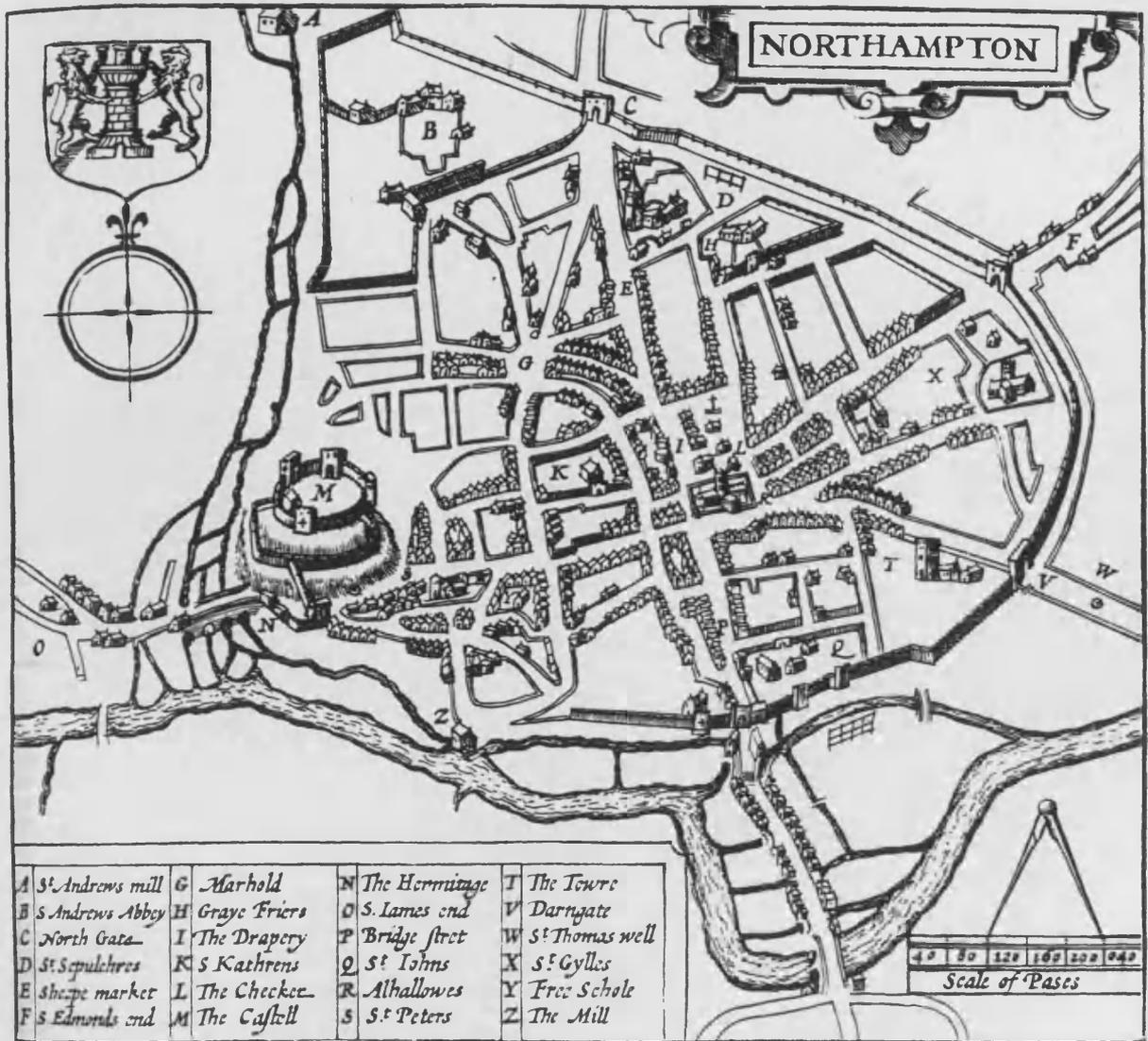


Fig. 41. Northampton in 1610 by John Speed.

Source: RCHME, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton*, vol. 5, *Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northampton*, London, 1985, p. 51.

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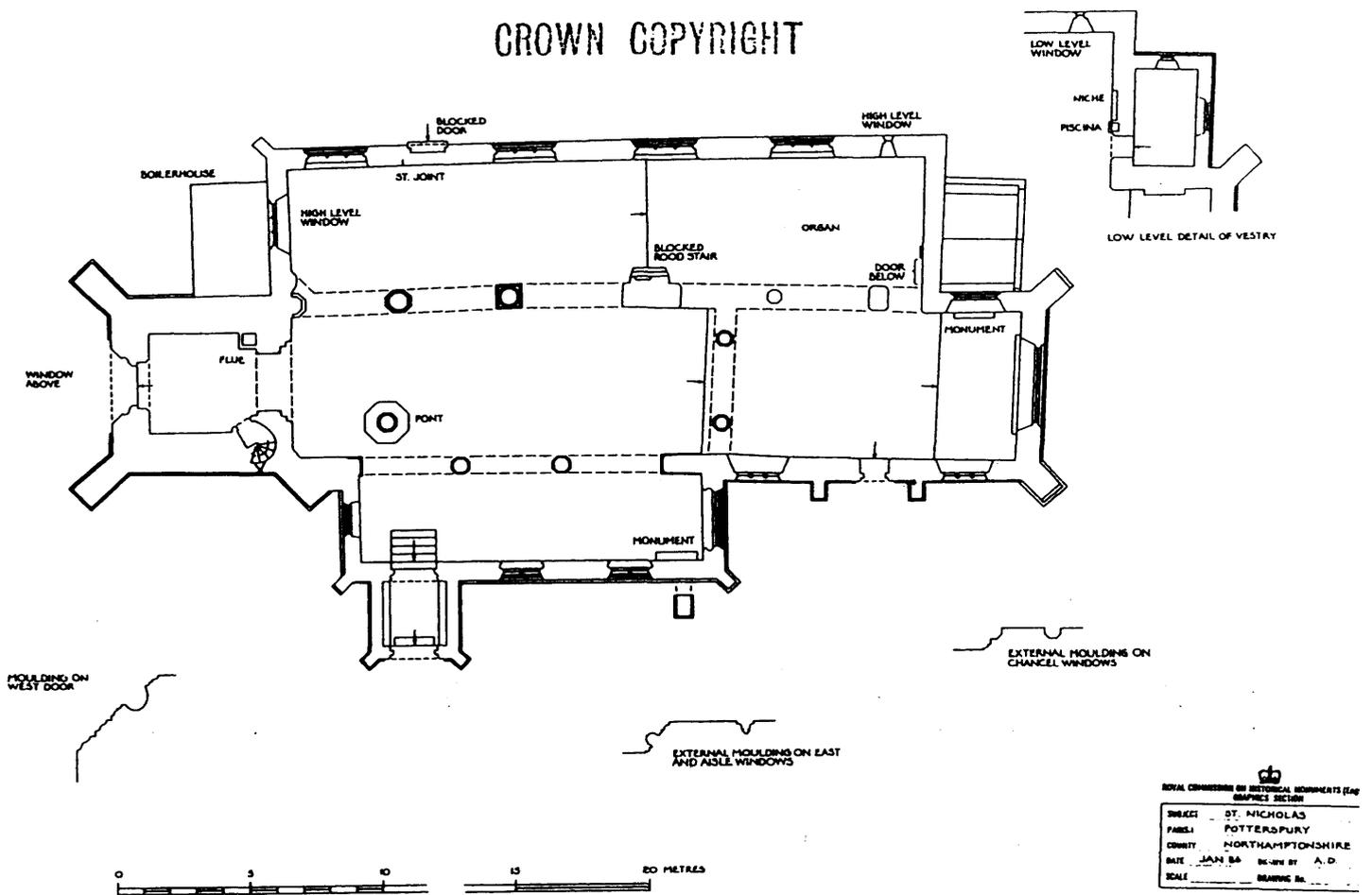


Fig. 42. Potterspury, plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.



Fig. 43. Stanford, glass of  
c. 1324-30, *Maria lactans*  
in the apex of the central  
chancel light and probably  
*in situ*.

Source: Marks, R., *op. cit.*,  
pp. 179-80 & plate 21.



Fig. 44. Stanford, glass of *c.* 1330-50, St Anne teaching the Virgin to read. Not *in situ*. Source: Marks, R., *op. cit.*, p. 181 & plate 24.



Fig. 45. Stanford, glass roundel, c. 1450-1550 depicting the Virgin and Child. Not *in situ*.

Source: Marks, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183 & plate 43.

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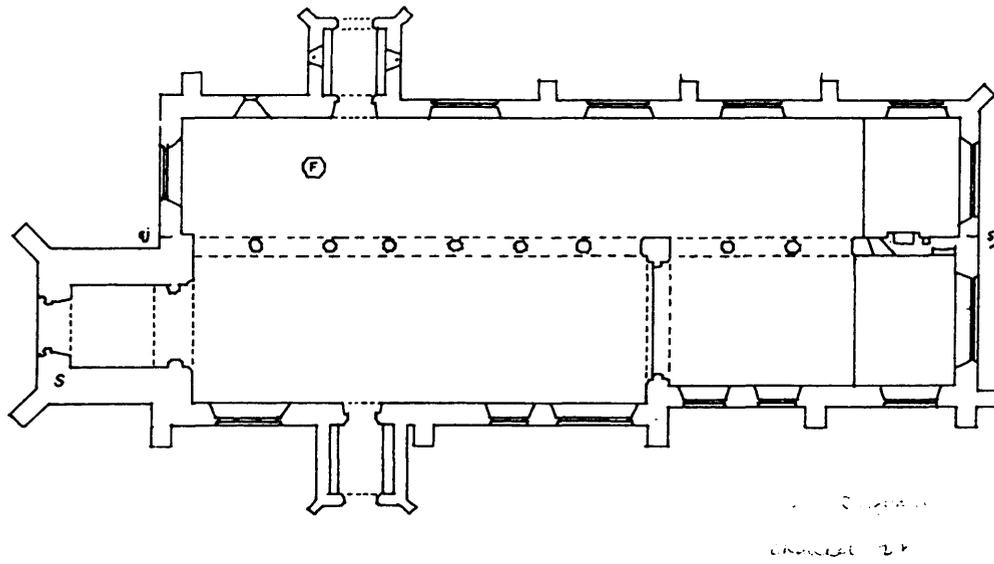


Fig. 46. Staverton, plan.

Source: RCHME unpublished.



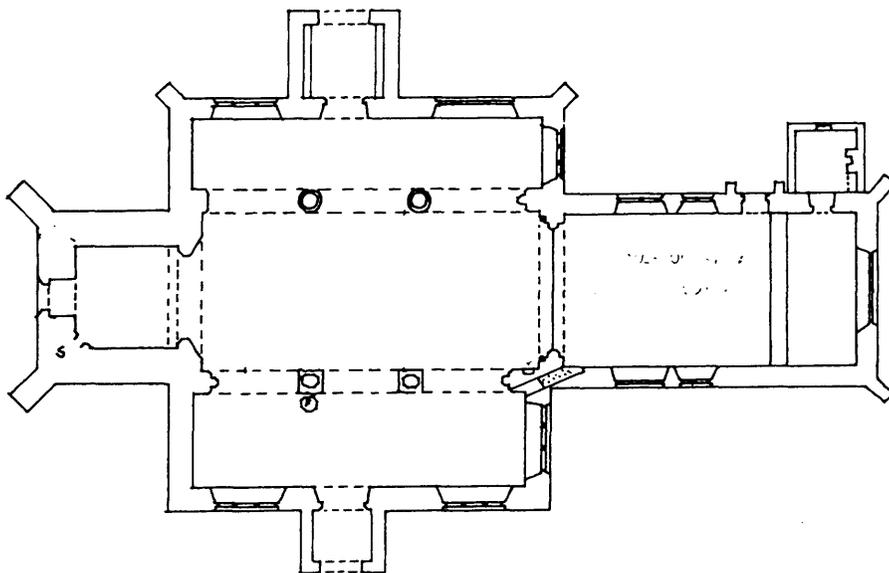
Fig. 47. Thenford, glass c. 1400-28. St Anne teaching the Virgin to read, in the east window of the north aisle, probably *in situ*.

Source: Marks, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 275-276.

# **SPECIAL NOTE**

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OUTLINE PLAN at 1:200

Fig. 49. Wappenham, plan  
Source: RCHME unpublished.



# Pipewell

Here are some old Foundations to be seen not far from the Wood

On y<sup>e</sup> S. side where tis thought the Church stood are Ruins call'd the Hall Hollow Great quantities of Painted Glass & 9. Large Pillars found here within these few years

Pieces of wrought & glazed Pavem<sup>t</sup>. lately found in the Hall Hollow  
Pipewell divid'd between Williston & Rushton

Church  
In a close near  
Ruins a  
Figure found  
in the hollow  
broken supposed  
to be of the  
Martyr



Out of the Hollow  
in Church close behin  
Wallons house ab<sup>t</sup>  
years since were found  
7. Pillars w<sup>ch</sup> serve to  
Build Burdolls house

Fig. 50. The Pipewell Virgin, sketched in the manuscript notes of John Bridges. Source: Bodl. MS. Top. Northants, E. 5, p. 119, NRO. MS. M. 314.

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### Abbreviations

- AASRP – Associated Architectural Societies Reports and Papers.  
BAA – British Archaeological Association.  
BL – British Library.  
Bodl – Bodleian Library, Oxford.  
HMSO – Her Majesty’s Stationery Office.  
JBAA – Journal of the British Archaeological Association.  
NPL – Northampton Public Library.  
NRO – Northamptonshire Record Office.  
ODNB – Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.  
PRO – Public Record Office.  
RCHME – Royal Commission Historic Monuments, England.  
RCHME Unpublished - church surveys, 1982 –1987.  
VCH – Victoria County History.

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BL. MS. Cotton Vitellius E. xviii  
BL. MS. Egerton 3510, f.52v, f.55v  
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Bodl. MS. Top. Northants. E. 1, f.49r, f.87r, f. 93v  
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