

Medieval Art in England

SAM FOGG



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27 June – 26 July, 2019

Contents

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| | Introduction | 5 |
| | Metalwork | 6 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 1 | Nielloed silver disc brooch with intertwined serpents in openwork roundels | 7 |
| 2 | Nielloed silver openwork disc brooch with scalloped edging | 9 |
| 3 | A cruciform book mount engraved with segmented interlace | 11 |
| 4 | Aestel | 13 |
| 5 | A bronze corpus | 15 |
| 6 | Staff finial with seated figure | 17 |
| 7 & 8 | Two gilt silver drinking vessels with engraved beasts | 19 |
| 9 | Gilt-bronze corpus showing Christ Triumphant | 23 |
| 10 | The Chetwynd Plate | 25 |
| 11 | Four-handled mortar with applied lettering | 27 |
| 12 | Two-handled mortar with grapevine decoration and banded ridges | 29 |
| | Stone sculpture | 30 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 13 | Long shaft section from Crowland Abbey | 31 |
| 14 | A kneeling man gargoyle from the Lady Chapel of York Minster | 34 |
| 15 | A grotesque cephalic label stop | 36 |
| 16 | A grimacing stone head | 37 |
| 17 | Gargoyle with open mouth and large appendage | 38 |
| 18 | Grotesque head of a woman wearing a caul | 40 |
| 19 | Principal transom head from Canterbury Cathedral | 42 |
| 20 | Two corbels with faces | 45 |
| | Alabaster | 46 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 21 | The Trinity | 47 |
| 22 | Saint Ambrose | 49 |
| 23 | The Annunciation | 50 |
| 24 | Head of Saint John the Baptist | 52 |
| 25 | Saint James the Great | 54 |
| | Wood sculpture | 56 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 26 | Carved tracery sections from the choir stalls of Gloucester Cathedral | 57 |
| 27 | God the Father | 60 |
| 28 | A roof angel holding a chalice | 61 |
| 29 | A roof boss with the eagle of Saint John | 64 |
| 30 | 'Poppy head' pew end with a winged griffin | 66 |
| 31 | Pew end with 'poppy-head' finial and seated beast | 69 |
| 32 | Pew end with a rampant hare and inscriptions | 70 |
| 33 | Traceried Pew Ends | 71 |

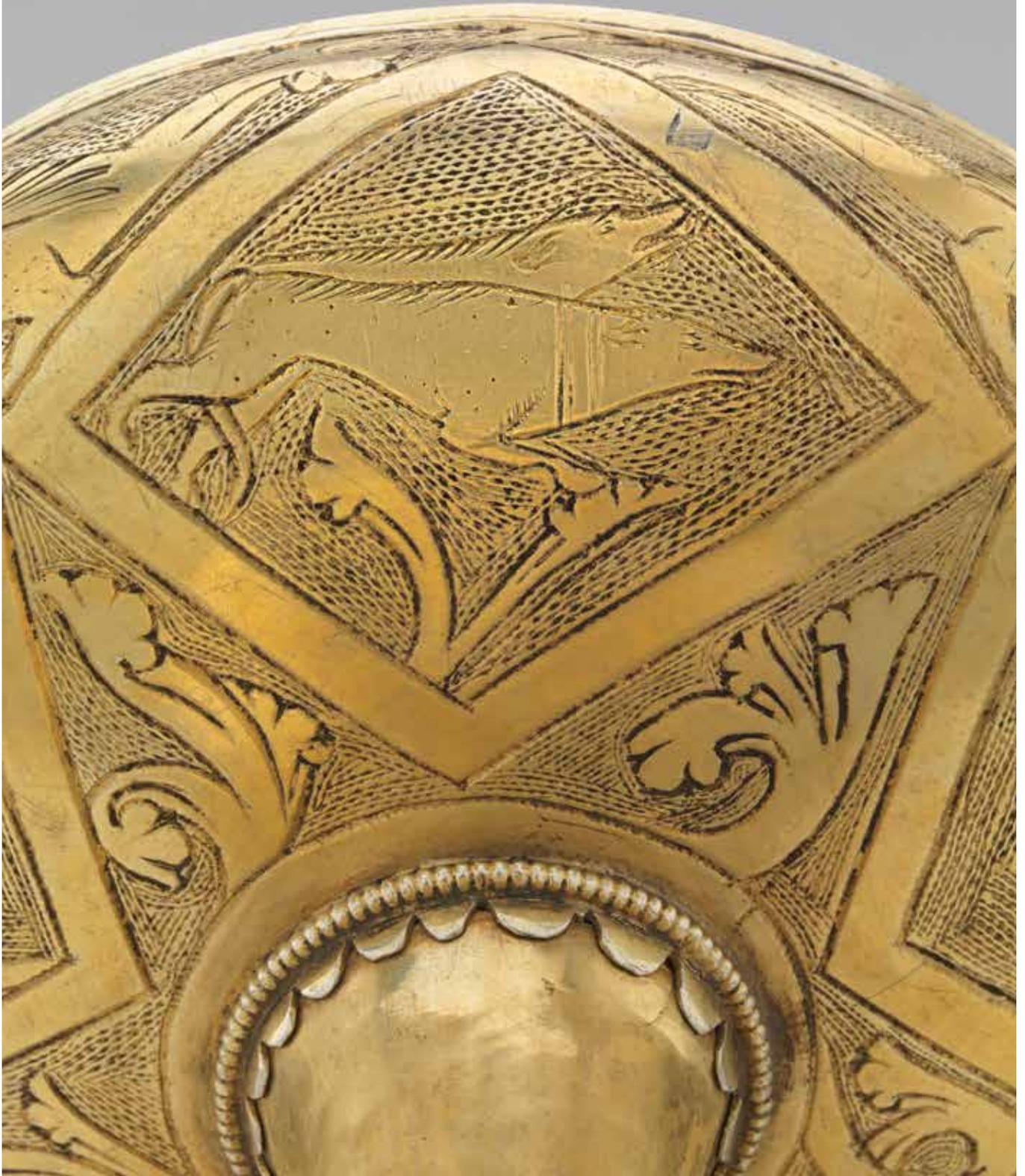
| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| | Stained glass | 74 |
| 34 | Armorial shield with the arms of de Vere, Earls of Oxford | 75 |
| 35 | Angel on a blue ground | 76 |
| 36 | Three Marys at the tomb | 77 |
| 37 | Composite panel with the head of Christ | 78 |
| 38 | Composite panel with the torso of an archangel | 79 |
| 39 | A pair of tracery lights with Saints Lawrence and Stephen | 80 |
| 40 | Armorial shield perhaps with the arms of the Horne Family of Essex | 82 |
| 41 | Composite panel with the Virgin Annunciate | 84 |
| 42 | A lancet panel showing a ministering angel | 86 |
| 43 | An oval composite panel of quarries painted with Yorkist symbols | 87 |
| 44 | Bust of an angel holding a scourge | 88 |
| 45 | Roundel showing a woman harvesting hay | 90 |
| 46 | A crowned heraldic escutcheon with the arms of Henry Manners | 92 |
| 47 | Edward the Confessor | 95 |
| | Manuscripts and miniatures | 96 |
| 48 | A leaf from the Hungerford Hours | 97 |
| 49 | Bible, with Prologues and Interpretation of Hebrew names | 99 |
| 50 | Beauchamp-Corbet Hours | 101 |
| 51 | The missing volume of the Tavistock Breviary | 103 |
| 52 | The Benfield Hours | 106 |
| 53 | The Rugby Missal | 109 |
| 54 | The Spicer Hours | 111 |
| 55 | Lewis of Caerleon, Collected Scientific Works | 114 |
| 56 | Nicholas Hilliard, a portrait of a young lady with a high standing ruff | 117 |
| | Textiles | 119 |
| 57 | A panel of <i>opus anglicanum</i> depicting Saints Barbara and Paul | 120 |
| 58 | Two <i>opus anglicanum</i> orphrey panels with the Crucifixion & standing saints | 122 |
| 59 | Red velvet cope with <i>opus anglicanum</i> embroideries | 124 |
| | Ceramics | 126 |
| 60 | Globular jug with incised decoration | 127 |
| 61 | Rounded jug with dipped glaze | 128 |
| 62 | Baluster jug with a thumbled base | 130 |
| 63 | A Tudor green face jug | 131 |
| 64 | An alphabet tile | 132 |
| 65 | Seven tiles from Glazeley | 134 |
| 66 | Three tiles forming a lion | 136 |
| | Colophon | 138 |

From grand cathedral to parish church, and from castle to cottage, medieval England was filled with imagery. Yet only a tiny proportion of what was made has come down to us. Ravaged by war, iconoclasm, religious reforms, neglect and the vicissitudes of fashion, a number of England's medieval buildings may still be standing, but they have been all but gutted of their original artistic splendour. During the centuries since their destruction or the dispersal of their contents, many works of art once housed in churches and cathedrals up and down the country made their way into private hands, isolated fragments of what was once a rich, polychromatic abundance of visual and material stimulus. Stimulus to pray, exalt, celebrate, commemorate, and engage in private and communal rituals that glued society to common beliefs.

The works of art in this exhibition have taken almost twenty years to bring together, and are arranged over the following pages according to eight key categories of object: metalwork; architectural stonework; Midlands alabasters; wood sculpture and liturgical furnishings; stained glass; illuminated manuscripts and miniatures; textiles; and ceramics. They are all miraculous accidents of survival that somehow escaped the many waves of destruction punctuating the last half millennium. Some may have been too hard to destroy, such as liturgical furnishings and large-scale stonework, some perhaps less provocative to reformists and iconoclasts, including ceramics or private books of hours, and still others were presumably just overlooked or inaccessible in the fury of the moment, such as small stained-glass panels placed high up in church windows, or garments of *opus anglicanum* locked away in chests and vestries. Some of these survivals nevertheless bear the marks of attack and attempts at erasure. For instance, the large alabaster sculpture of the Trinity (**cat. 21**) and the oak pew end with a griffin (**cat. 30**) in this catalogue were singled out by iconoclasts and violently defaced. Even so, the works of art brought together here and in the accompanying exhibition evoke the incredible panoply of English craftsmanship from a period of history spanning almost a thousand years: from wearable objects of status and power made by the country's early Anglo-Saxon communities (**cats. 1–2**), to depictions of Heaven's host of angels and the omnipotent power of God (**cat. 28**); from stout, bulbous jugs which would have occupied the centre of a dining table and borne witness to its theatre (**cats. 60–64**), to meticulously-embroidered textiles that formed dramatic focal points for liturgical celebrations (**cats. 57–59**). All of these objects tell the story of England's complex history of ascendancy and decline, a country whose populations changed dramatically through war, plague and invasion, and whose artistic community embraced immigrants and indigenous craftsmen alike. England in the Middle Ages may have been a country in flux, but the art it produced continues to endure.

Matthew Reeves

Metalwork



Nielloed silver disc brooch with intertwined serpents in openwork roundels

England
c.800–850

Provenance
John Hewett (1919–1994), acquired
1960s–1980s, and by descent

6.1 cm diameter; silver with niello inlay

Condition
Minor losses to the perimeter details. One
repaired break.



A circular disc brooch of exceptional quality, finely worked in the form of a cross with expanded arms in silver with niello inlay, with interlaced serpents decorating the body of the cross and in openwork roundels between each of its four arms. The narrow outer border of the cross turns into the interlace of the openwork roundels, achieving a flowing movement between the main body of the cross and the openwork.

This precious silver brooch would have been worn on the outer garments of a rich landowner or local official as a mark of status, and for decorative rather than functional effect. Its formula of zoomorphic interlace within a crisp geometric design would have made it the height of fashion in the first half of the ninth century. Close parallels can be drawn to the hoard of five brooches discovered during the digging of a grave at Pentney Church in Norfolk in 1978, and believed to have been buried there in around 840 (fig. 1). Its design also compares well to an early ninth-century brooch from the recently discovered Galloway hoard, unearthed in 2014 (fig. 2). Comparisons to other finds in England suggest an English origin in the early- to mid-ninth century, though it is difficult to localise its genesis more specifically than this. Nevertheless, the smooth chasing of its openwork details, the harmonious symmetry of its nielloed interlace decoration, and the balance of positive and negative space in its overall design mark it out as a masterpiece from the golden age of Anglo-Saxon jewellery.

Literature:

D. Wilson, R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, R. I. Page, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork in the British Museum*, (London, 1964)

R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archeology: Sutton Hoo and Other Discoveries* (London, 1974), especially chapter 15; 'Late Saxon Disc-Brooches'

L. Webster and J. Backhouse eds, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900*, (London, 1991)

An unpublished study on the present brooch was undertaken by Jeremy Griffiths, St John's College Oxford, in May 1993.

L. Webster, 'Metalwork of the Mercian Supremacy', in M. P. Brown and C. A. Farr eds, *Mercia, an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, (Leicester, 2001), pp. 263–77

L. Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, (London, 2012)



Fig. 1
Brooch from the Pentney hoard
England
c. 825–850
8.5 cm diameter; nielloed silver
London, British Museum,
Inv. 1980,1008.4



Fig. 2
Nielloed silver disc brooch
from the Galloway hoard
c. 800–850
nielloed silver with textile
encrustation
Edinburgh, National
Museum of Scotland

Nielloed silver openwork disc brooch with scalloped edging

England
c.800–850

Provenance
John Hewett (1919–1994), acquired
1960s–1980s, and by descent

6.5 cm diameter; silver with niello inlay

Condition
A missing section to one quadrant and losses
to areas of the niello.



A disc brooch of sheet silver, finely worked, pierced, and inlaid with niello ornament. Within a scalloped rim, the main decorative field consists of a complex system of overlaying designs, with an openwork quatrefoil merging into a concave-sided cruciform design with a large boss at its centre and similarly-sized bosses used as terminals. Each cusp, terminal, and area of openwork is punctuated by subsidiary fields containing rinceaux or zoomorphic interlace. The central cruciform and the outer cusps are deeply engraved and were all originally filled with niello. They bear symmetrical arrangements of zoomorphic decoration consisting of beasts with elongated necks and others swallowing their own tails. A chain-work border both delineates and unites the quatrefoil and cruciform designs. Despite the loss to one part of the design and some repaired cracking to the brooch's extraordinarily thin silver, the original pin and pin catch survive completely intact on the reverse.

Like the previous brooch, this delicate example would have been worn as a potent symbol of wealth and status by a landowner or local official. Its design is almost identical to the famous Strickland brooch, which has been dated to the mid-ninth century (fig. 1), while the technique and quality of the decoration are also closely comparable to the Trewhiddle Hoard, which was buried in around 868 to protect it from Viking raiders. A number of the Trewhiddle pieces are similarly nielloed and engraved, with a distinctive repertoire of zoomorphic, interlace, and geometric motifs designed with extreme precision and

Literature:

- J. Brondsted, *Early English Ornament* (London and Copenhagen, 1924)
- R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, 'Late Saxon disc-brooches' in *Dark-Age Britain* (London, 1956), pp. 171–201
- D. Wilson, R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, R. I. Page, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork in the British Museum*, (London, 1964)
- D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art from the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (London, 1984)
- L. Webster and J. Backhouse eds, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991)
- L. Webster, *Anglo-Saxon art: A new history* (London, 2012)
- S. Marzinzik, *Masterpieces: Early Medieval Art* (London, 2013)

set into fields (see J. Brondsted, *Early English Ornament*, London & Copenhagen, 1924). The present example offers an important addition to the tiny handful of surviving brooches made with this most remarkable of compositions, and is a moment of real significance for our understanding of the development of Late Saxon disc brooches.



Fig.1
The Strickland Brooch
England
9th century
11.2 cm diameter; silver and silver-
gilt with niello and glass inlays
London, British Museum,
Inv. 1949,0702.1

A cruciform book mount engraved with segmented interlace

England
c. 800

8.1 × 8 cm; copper alloy.

Provenance

John Hewett (1919–1994), acquired
1960s–1980s, and by descent

Condition

A fissure running partway across one arm.



A small copper-alloy cross with equal-sided arms, embellished with irregular segmented interlace patterns on each arm. The centre of the cross and all of its four termini are punctuated with a roughly circular, unadorned surface with a central circular piercing, which indicates that it was made to function as a mount of some form, most likely for the centre of a book cover, and that it was held in place by round-headed rivets or bosses of a type typical for the period (*cf.* those decorating the two disc brooches in this catalogue; **cat. 1, 2**). Albeit they of lobated rather than cruciform format, a handful of related cast copper-alloy book mounts complete with fixing holes were recovered in the 1920s from the site of the Anglo-Saxon monastery at Whitby.¹ Minute air bubbles and pitting on the reverse face of our cross suggest that it was cast rather than hammered and engraved, and the discovery of fragmentary casting moulds with similar interlace designs at the double-minster of Heruteu in modern-day Hartlepool show that there was indeed a sophisticated tradition of metalwork casting in England for book and shrine mounts during the period.² Nevertheless, the remains of what appears to be a black pitch-like substance in the deeper crevices of the design reveal that our example was meticulously finished by hand after the casting process was complete in order to delineate and emphasise the pattern.

The segmented, curvilinear style of interlace covering the arms of this delicate cross emerged as a decorative element in English book illumination during the seventh century, filling the borders of some

Literature:

- J. Brondsted, *Early English Ornament* (London and Copenhagen, 1924)
- D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art from the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (London, 1984)
- S. Youngs ed., *The Work of Angels: Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th–9th centuries AD* (London 1989)
- L. Webster and J. Backhouse eds, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991)
- D. Tweddle, *The Archaeology of York. Volume 17, fascicule 8. The Small Finds: The Anglian Helmet from Coppergate*, (London, 1992)
- L. Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, (London, 2012)
- S. Marzinzik, *Masterpieces: Early Medieval Art* (London, 2013)

of the era's most important surviving manuscripts. For example, the Lindisfarne Gospels (British Library, Cotton MS Nero D.IV), the Lichfield Gospels (Lichfield, Cathedral Library) and the Stockholm *Codex Aureus* (Stockholm, Royal Library, A.135), are all full of this form of decoration. By the ninth century however, complex geometric interlace had become one of the most enduring and pervasive aspects of English art to leave its trace on mainland Europe, and can be found in the products of European Scriptoria as far afield as Saint-Amand in France, Maaseik in modern-day Belgium, and Trier in Germany.³ One of the reasons for its proliferation was the fact that it could be expanded, adjusted, and paraphrased at any scale, on any medium, and for any format, so that similar patterns found their way onto both small-scale ivories and metalwork, and monumental stone and wood carvings alike. Comparisons to the decoration of our cross can therefore be found on the nosepiece of the eighth-century Coppergate helmet⁴ (York, Castle Museum, inv. YORCM CA665) and on monumental carvings such as the Reculver fragments at Canterbury Cathedral, and the early ninth-century Bewcastle, Easby, and Ramsbury crosses, which are believed in most recent scholarship to date to the early years of the ninth century.⁵

Surviving Anglo-Saxon book mounts are vanishingly rare on account of the destruction of all but a tiny handful of early bindings – the present example seems to be unique in format and treatment – and the removal of their metalwork by successive generations of Viking raiders and medieval looters eager to melt down and monetise whatever came to hand. The comparative modesty of the material from which our cross was made may have been its saving grace, yet the fissure that runs across one of its arms suggests that it too was hurriedly ripped from a binding and either stolen or hidden for safekeeping.

1, L. Webster and J. Backhouse eds, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991), p. 142, no. 107a.

2, *Ibid.*, pp. 140–41, no. 106 a-c; see also P. T. Craddock 'Metalworking techniques' in S. Youngs ed., *The Work of Angels: Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th–9th centuries AD* (London 1989), pp. 170–213.

3, D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art from the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (London, 1984), p. 131–3.

4, L. Webster and J. Backhouse eds., *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991), no. 47, pp.

60–62; D. Tweddle, *The Archaeology of York. Volume 17, fascicule 8. The Small Finds: The Anglian Helmet from Coppergate*, (London, 1992).

5, See D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art from the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest*, London, 1984, p. 70 ff., for an analysis of Anglo-Saxon stone crosses and the scholarship surrounding their dating.

Aestel

England, Wiltshire, Salisbury
9th century

3.4 × 2.4 × 1.9 cm; copper alloy.

Provenance:

By repute, found near Salisbury, Wiltshire
John Hewett (1919–1994), acquired
1960s–1980s, and by descent



King Alfred's preface to his translation of Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care* states that an *aestel* was to be distributed along with each copy of the book to the bishoprics of the kingdom. It is clear from the emphasis placed on them by the King that these were objects of great significance, value, and preciousness, but more importantly, that they were integral to the reading, dissemination, and teaching of the words of the core ecclesiastical tracts of the age. Although we are uncertain about exactly what Alfred meant by the word *aestel*, it has become widely accepted in modern scholarship that these objects consisted of a rod-like stick or pointer surmounted by a metalwork tip, for use in following lines of text or for marking the reader's place in a volume.¹ Interpretations of their form almost always centre on the so-called Alfred Jewel – a spectacular piece of Anglo-Saxon metalwork depicting a portrait of the King within an enamelled gold setting – found in 1693 at North Petherton in Somerset and now housed at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (fig. 1). The word itself probably derives from the Latin [h]astula ('small spear' or 'splinter'), which may be compared with the Old Irish *astul*, glossed as 'a book's sliver or spear'.² By the eleventh century, the word *aestel* can be found used as a gloss for the Latin *indicatorium* or 'pointer', and in the thirteenth it was glossed as *festuca* ('stalk' or 'stick').³

While clearly being a far humbler object than the Alfred Jewel, the present example undoubtedly also functioned as an aestel due to its distinctive bottle-neck shape and the presence of two small holes at its base, which would have secured it by way of a locating pin on to a now-lost rod or staff. Its short, cylindrical collar is surmounted by a

'I then began to translate into English the book which in Latin is called *Pastoralis*, in English 'Shepherd-book', sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense, as I learnt it from Plegmund my archbishop. I intend to send a copy to each bishopric in my kingdom, and in each copy there will be an *aestel* worth fifty mancuses. And in God's name I command that no one shall take that *aestel* from the book, nor the book from the church...'

—King Alfred, *Preface to the Pastoral Care*

Literature:

- B. Harbert, 'King Alfred's *Aestel*', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), pp. 103–110
- D. Howlett, 'The Iconography of the Alfred Jewel', in *Oxoniensia*, 39 (1974), pp. 44–52
- D. Howlett, 'Alfred's *Aestel*', in *English Philological Studies*, 14 (1975), pp. 65–74
- C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Manchester, 1982)
- S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great* (Harmondsworth, 1983)
- R. L. Collins, 'King Alfred's *Aestel* Revisited', in *Leeds Studies in English*, 16 (1985), p. 44
- R. I. Page, 'Yet Another Note on Alfred's *Aestel*', in *Leeds Studies in English*, 18 (1987), pp. 9–18
- L. Webster and J. Backhouse eds, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991)
- A. K. Brown, 'Old Irish *astal*, Old English *aestel*: The Common Etymology', in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 24 (1992), pp. 75–92
- D. A. Hinton, *The Alfred Jewel and other Late Anglo-Saxon Decorated Metalwork* (Oxford, 2008)
- L. Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art* (London, 2012)

hollow globe with an open cagework construction that flattens on one side so as to enable the whole to rest, without rocking, against a table or the page of a book. From each viewing angle this framework can be visually dissected into a series of crosses enclosed by circles. Amongst the small number of aestels to have survived from the period this design is apparently unique, but the fact that such a delicate structure has survived intact, without being crushed or corroded while buried underground, is nothing short of a miracle.

1, D. Howlett, 'Alfred's *Aestel*', in *English Philological Studies*, 14 (1975), pp. 65-74.
2, R L. Collins, 'King Alfred's *Aestel* Revisited', in *Leeds Studies in English*, 16 (1985), p. 44; A. K. Brown, 'Old Irish *astal*, Old English *aestel*: The Common Etymology', in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 24 (1992), pp. 75-92.
3, A. K. Brown, 'Old Irish *astal*, Old English *aestel*: The Common Etymology', in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 24 (1992), pp. 79-80.



Fig.1
Three views of the Alfred
Jewel
Anglo-Saxon, Wessex
9th century
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

A bronze corpus

England, Oxfordshire
c. 1100–50

15.5 × 8 × 3 cm; bronze

Provenance

By repute, found in Cirencester
John Hewett (1919–1994), and by descent

Condition

Losses to the right arm and halo, and
a bend in the left arm



The figure of the crucified Christ is presented in a frontal pose with his feet side by side and his head, which is framed by a cruciform halo, lowered to the left. He wears a knee-length perizonium gathered in chevron-like folds over the thighs, and the thin, atrophied form of his body is emphasised by his pronounced pelvic bone and visible ribcage. One arm has been lost and the other bent as a result of forceful removal from the cross to which he was originally attached.

Along with the information of its discovery in Cirencester, the English manufacture of the present corpus is suggested by its long facial type and pronounced nasal ridge, features that can be found on an example dated to the second quarter of the twelfth century in the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge (inv. Z.11501).¹ These characteristics, combined with the tilted, expressive angle of the head, are also comparable to the three armoured knights decorating a plaque from the so-called ‘Temple Pyx’ (Glasgow, Burrell Collection), which has long been considered as having an English origin (fig. 1).² A similarly elongated and elegant corpus formerly in the collection of John Hunt in Dublin (fig. 2) shares our example’s careful approach to the depiction of a cruciform nimbus – unusual for these objects but visible on other forms of English art from the period, including carved choir reliefs from the twelfth century at Chichester Cathedral.³ Since so few English corpora of this date have survived in any context it is impossible to be certain of our figure’s English origin, but the parallels cited above, what is known of its provenance history, and its divergence from German, Mosan, and French examples of the same period, give weight to this localisation.

Literature:

G. Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Sculpture 1066–1140* (London, 1951)

H. Swarzenski, *Monuments of Romanesque Art* (London, 1967)

G. Zarnecki et. al., *English Romanesque Art 1066–1200* (London, 1984), p. 244, no. 236.

P. Bloch, *Romanische Bronze-Kruzifixe* (Berlin, 1992)

1, G. Zarnecki et. al., *English Romanesque Art 1066–1200* (London, 1984), p. 244, no. 236.

2, We are grateful to Neil Stratford for his thoughts on the English origin of the present corpus.

3, P. Bloch, *Romanische Bronze-Kruzifixe* (Berlin, 1992), p. 215, no. V B 12; For the Chichester reliefs see G. Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Sculpture 1066–1140* (London, 1951) fig. 80–81.



Fig.1
Fragment from the 'Temple Pyx'
England (?)
c. 1140-50
9.2 × 7.3 × 2 cm; gilded bronze
Glasgow, Burrell Collection,
inv. 5-6.139



Fig.2
Two views of a bronze corpus
England
c. 1100
15.2 × 13.2 × 2.2 cm; bronze
Formerly, collection of John
Hunt, Dublin

Staff finial with seated figure

British Isles or Scandinavia
13th–14th century

5.4 × 2.2 × 4.5 cm, dense black stone, carved
and incised.



A seated figure holds its right index finger to its mouth and with its left supports a reed or club which rests across its shoulder. An incised ring and dot motif decorates the figure's forehead, the top of its head and the area between its legs. The size and shape of this tactile little carving suggest that it may originally have been designed as a chess piece, but the fact of its being hollowed out from below, with a carefully carved ledge near the opening, indicates that it was either intended as a staff finial from the start, or altered and reused for this function early in its history.

The ring and dot motifs embellishing the figure's head and lap were made with a sharp, circular tool rotated in the maker's hands in the manner of a spindle stick. This type of decoration can be found on a number of medieval gaming pieces from right across Europe, including a Spanish twelfth-century chess queen carved from walrus ivory in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. A far more simplified chess piece preserved in the Scunthorpe Museum (inv. HAAH 1), which exhibits the same dot and ring motifs and a similar profile to our figure, was discovered in a tomb burial in Humberside and has been ascribed an English origin in the thirteenth century. Perhaps the closest single comparison can be drawn to another chess piece in Baltimore, which was found at the edge of the river Thames but has been localised in the surrounding scholarship to Scandinavia (fig. 1). It shows a figure seated in an identical pose to our example, with a sword resting over his left shoulder and narrow, elongated eyes defining his visage. Currently dated to the fourteenth century, it highlights both the prolonged reception

Literature:

A. Kluge-Pinsker, *Die Salier: Schachspiel und Trictrac Zeugnisse mittelalterlicher Spielfreude aus salischer Zeit* (Speyer, 1991)

R. H. Randall, ed., *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery* (London, 1985)

during the Middle Ages of games pieces conforming to a consistent figure type, and the inherent difficulties in dating such objects in modern-day scholarship.

- 1, R. H. Randall, ed., *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery* (London, 1985), pp. 174–175, no. 254.
- 2, A. Kluge-Pinsker, *Die Salier: Schachspiel und Trictrac Zeugnisse mittelalterlicher Spielfreude aus salischer Zeit* (Speyer, 1991), p. 151, no. A 52.
- 3, R. H. Randall, ed., *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery* (London, 1985), p. 176–7, no. 259.



Fig.1
Chess Rook
Scandinavia, found in London
Fourteenth century
6.2 × 4.4 cm; walrus ivory
Baltimore, Walters Art
Museum, inv. 71.1157

Two gilt silver drinking vessels with engraved beasts

England or Scandinavia
c. 1200–20

Provenance

Mr Frank Mann, Portobello Road, London
Private collection, acquired from the above
before 1970

7 The footed cup: 12.7 cm (height) × 14 cm (diameter); hammered, gilded and engraved silver with applied decoration.

Condition

Some scratching to the gilding and small dents to the faces of two of the applied figures.

8 The footless cup: 11.8 cm (height) × 13.8 cm (diameter); hammered, gilded and engraved silver.

Condition

Some minor chipping to the rim and scratches to the body.



7



8

These profusely decorated objects once functioned as lavish drinking vessels. Both are formed with the same wide, shallow body which, in order to avoid spillage, would have slowed and formalised the drinking process. This, along with the precious metal from which they are crafted, implies that they were brought out for ritual celebrations (in a liturgical context?) or for special toasts at a rich dining table, perhaps as part of sophisticated social ceremonies where multiple drinkers were intended to share vessels. ¹ Both are engraved with figures and beasts appearing in a series of regularly spaced geometric frames. Those on the footed cup are lozenge-shaped, and are picked out against a background design of foliage and gouged dashes, while those on the footless vessel are circular, and are interspersed with stylized plant stems backed by an ungilded trellis pattern. In each case the figures appear to interact with those in adjacent vignettes, either by craning their necks and turning their gazes towards each other or, in the case of the footed bowl, with a two-part scene in which a pair of hunting dogs are shown fighting a lion. However, the orientation of the figures on the footless vessel can only be 'read' correctly when it is upside down, suggesting that we are in fact meant to view it as a lid. It thus seems likely that it was originally completed with a short knob, fixed by way of the small lobed clasps encircling its central depression, and allowing it to be removed from a corresponding vessel and turned over in order to function as a second cup (as in the case of a two-part ciborium surviving at the abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune in Switzerland; fig.1). Unlike the lid, the footed bowl retains a densely ornamented stem that splays out with an elegant

Literature:

F. Deuchler and K. Hoffmann eds, *The Year 1200* (New York, 1970)

Aron Andersson, *Mediaeval Drinking Bowls of Silver found in Sweden* (Stockholm, 1983)

N. Stratford, 'Three English Romanesque Enamelled Ciboria', in *The Burlington Magazine*, cxxvi (1984), pp. 202–16

H. Swarzenski, *English Romanesque Art 1066–1200* (London, 1984)

S. Macready and F. Thompson eds, *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque* (London, 1986)

M. Campbell, 'Metalwork in England c. 1200–1400', in J. Alexander and P. Binski eds, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, Exh. Cat., London, 1987, pp. 162–8

B. Marchak and M. Kramarovskii eds., *Treasures from the Ob'Basin* (Saint Petersburg, 1996)

curvature towards the ground. Its lower section is punctuated with regularly-spaced ornaments depicting seated kings and trilobed foliage sprays, each of which was made by hammering sheet metal into a mould and trimming off the excess material before applying the resultant relief to the foot with solder. A *ciborium* dated to the first decades of the thirteenth century and preserved in the treasury of Sens Cathedral, uses closely comparable moulded elements in an almost identical manner.

Although the relative thickness of the metal sheet used for these vessels and the level of detail and quality of their engraving diverge from each other to the extent that we can be sure of their creation by different craftsmen, their overall format, size, and decorative schema suggest a shared artistic outlook and also perhaps a similar context of function and patronage. Their ornamentation was undertaken using a lexicon of motifs employed amongst England's manuscript illuminators, metalworkers, and cloth weavers by at least the mid-twelfth century, such as tightly budding foliage on slender stems, and broad geometric framing elements (which may have originated ultimately in Byzantine textile weaving, but can be found used to much the same effect in the late twelfth-century Giffard Bible at the Bodleian Library, ² and on a c. 1170-1200 fragment of an amice at Canterbury; fig. 3 ³). Several related objects are known, including a lidded/double cup and a footed vessel in a private collection, which incorporate almost identical figure types. Archeological deposits in the interiors of these bowls and, in the case of related hoards found near the Ob river in Siberia and at Dune in Gotland (fig. 2) a more or less well-documented find spot, suggest that groups of metalwork vessels amassed as part of treasuries or in the custody of a travelling agent were buried for safekeeping during periods of unrest and their locations lost to time. ⁴ Debate still rages about the origins of such vessels, with Cologne, Limoges, Scandinavia and England variously mooted as possibilities in the surrounding scholarship, but the two examples discussed here are sufficiently close in style to English art of the period across a range of media as to make such a localization highly plausible. ⁵

1, For an analysis of the use and prominence of such cups at the dinner table, see Aron Andersson, *Mediaeval Drinking Bowls of Silver found in Sweden* (Stockholm, 1983), pp. 1-3, 30. Since the Viking period, it had been customary for guests and diners to share cups, thus promoting friendship and trust; the same custom developed in England by the 12th century and is known as Saxon courtesy.

2, Ms. Laud. Misc. 752, illustrated in H. Swarzenski, *Monuments of Romanesque Art* (Chicago, 1974 edition), plate 180, fig. 404.

3, See also *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200* (London, 1984), p. 358, cat. 493b.

4, Aron Andersson, *Mediaeval Drinking Bowls of Silver found in Sweden* (Stockholm, 1983); B. Marchak and M. Kramarovskii eds., *Treasures from the Ob'Basin* (Saint Petersburg, 1996).

5, For the debate concerning the origin of the group of vessels to which these two belong, see Neil Stratford in *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200* (London, 1984), p. 287, no. 308.



Fig. 1
The Saint-Maurice d'Agaune
Ciborium
England
c. 1200-10
26 cm (height) × 15.8 cm
(diameter); Hammered and
gilded silver with repoussé
enamel
Switzerland, Abbey of Saint-
Maurice d'Agaune

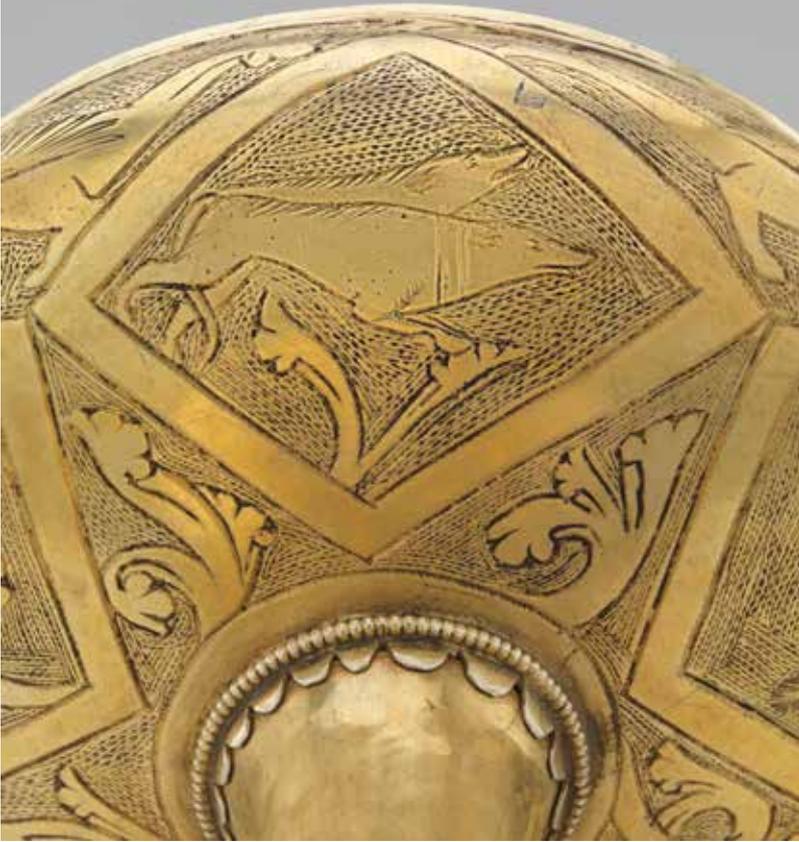


Fig. 2
'Dune cup 4'
England
c. 1200-20
Hammered and gilded silver
Stockholm, Museum of
National Antiquities (Statens
Historiska Museum)



Fig. 3
Apparel of an amice
1170-1200
Canterbury, Dean and Chapter
of Canterbury Cathedral

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7

Gilt-bronze corpus showing Christ Triumphant

England or Scandinavia
c. 1230–40

11 × 9.5 × 2.3 cm; cast and gilded copper alloy.

Condition

Some rubbing to the surface and loss of gilding in places.



This diminutive gilded corpus of Christ shows the Saviour wearing a crown, an iconography used to celebrate his triumph over death. Although hanging from the cross and bowing his head to our left, he appears to stand upright with his shoulders high and his arms in a horizontal position. Below his feet are the rounded petals of a sprouting flower, probably intended to represent a lily stem, which further emphasises the life-giving symbolism of the imagery and evokes Christ's purity.

The delicacy with which this small corpus has been cast is evident in the intricate folds of the *perizonium* and the finely incised marks used to portray details such as the beard, eyes, rib cage and jewels of the crown. Stylistically, it relates closely to corpora attributed to English and Scandinavian artists of the early thirteenth century, including a copper-alloy figure of similar scale which retains its original cross in the National Museum, Copenhagen (inv. D14).¹ A much larger version carved from oak and now in the Historical Museum in Bergen perhaps offers the closest parallels however, being almost identical in several aspects of its composition (fig. 1). Suggested by some scholars to have been carved by an English artist active in Norway, it attests to the fluidity of movement, of goods as well as artists, between the two regions in this period, and the close cultural dialogue established as a result.²

1, P. Bloch, *Bronzegeräte des Mittelalters, Band 5, Romanische Bronzekruzifixe* (Berlin, 1992), cat. VI B 11, p. 251.

2, J. Alexander and P. Binski eds, *The Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987), pp. 231–232, no. 99; A. Anderson, *English Influence in Norwegian and Swedish Figure Sculpture in Wood, 1220–70* (Stockholm, 1949), fig. 49.



Fig. 1
Crucifix figure
Anglo-Norwegian
c. 1230-45
77 × 70 cm; oak
Bergen, University
of Bergen, Historical
Museum, inv. M. A 244

The Chetwynd Plate

Made in Limoges for a member of the Chetwynd family of Shropshire c. 1306–46, with further engraved decoration added in England c. 1485

29.6 cm (diameter); copper alloy, engraved and enamelled.

Condition
The interior surface of the dish regilded.



This spectacular example of medieval plate takes the form of a shallow, broad dish with a flat rim engraved with a scene of running animals, including dogs, foxes, pole cat, hares, a stag, a boar, a lion, a muzzled bear and a small hooded monster, and decorated at its centre with a raised quatrefoil platform on which a shield-shaped coat of arms is picked out with opaque blue enamels. The shield is supported on either side by two fish-tailed monsters with wings, one with a hooded human head, while a third hybrid creature perches on top. Inside the deep quatrefoil impression created on the reverse of the dish by this raised central section is an engraved image of a griffin rampant, picked out against a densely punched ground. Traces of an early gilding layer remain on the reverse of the plate and on the raised edges of the quatrefoil boss in its interior. In the late fifteenth century, an engraved wreath of six double-roses was added around the armorial quatrefoil by an English goldsmith. These are identifiable as Tudor roses, the emblem current after the accession of Henry Tudor as Henry VII in 1485. Possibly at the same time that the rose garland was added, a decorative pattern was engraved around the heraldic boss.

The prominent *champlevé* armorial shield at its centre identifies the original patron of this dish as an early fourteenth-century member of the Chetwynd family of Ingestre in Shropshire. It bears the arms Azure (remnants of a deep cobalt blue enamel survive in the engraved field), a chevron (now untinged) *between three mullets of six points*, which belonged to both Sir Philip de Chetwynd of Ingestre (d. 1346)

and his younger brother Roger, and were a conflation of those of their parents Philip de Chetwynd (*d.* 1306) and Isabella de Pulesdon. ¹ Since subsequent generations bore the same arms but with mullets of five rather than six points it would seem most likely to have been made sometime between the death of the elder Philip's death in 1306 and the death of the younger Philip in 1346. ²

This unusual plate has no close parallels in English metalwork of the early fourteenth century, perhaps because much domestic (and, indeed, ecclesiastical) metalwork was melted down for reuse in subsequent centuries. ³ Nevertheless, an English origin cannot be ruled out (the possibility of which would make this the only surviving object of its type) since the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a dramatic rise in champlevé enamel production on copper-alloy objects in this country, and analogues for its technique and style can be found in the form of the numerous enamelled pendants and horses' harnesses that have survived from the period. ⁴ Yet its form and treatment are in all other aspects so comparable to enamelled metalwork localised to the Aquitaine city of Limoges in southern France (the most prolific centre of production during the Middle Ages) that it is much more likely to have been made in that city for export to England – a practice confirmed most notably by the survival of the famous casket of Richard of Cornwall in Aachen Cathedral treasury. ⁵ Especially popular in the thirteenth century, Limoges-made dishes decorated with coats of arms and other engraved and enamelled embellishment, commonly known as gemellions, survive in relatively large numbers. ⁶ They were intended to be used for hand-washing, and the frequent appearance of heraldry and secular ornament suggests that many must have been used in the domestic sphere. ⁷ The closest parallel to our dish is offered by a late thirteenth-century gemellion held at the musée du Louvre in Paris, which incorporates a comparable raised central section decorated with a coat of arms, three very similar zoomorphic creatures acting as heraldic supporters and picked out with turquoise enamel, and the same dense punchwork decoration within the resultant depression on the object's reverse face (fig. 1a–b). The dating of our dish to the early fourteenth century, a period from which little survives as a result of the waning fashion for Limoges-made enamel, suggests that the city's craftsmen were having to diversify their trade by seeking commissions abroad to bolster their diminishing local clientbase, and makes this dish an extremely important document evidencing the region's continuing production after 1300.

1, The Chetwynd arms were a chevron, and those of the Pulesdon (var. Puylesdon) family were three mullets of six points.

2, H.E. Chetwynd-Stapylton, *The Chetwynds of Ingestre, being a history of that family from a very early date* (London, 1892); for the seals of Philip and Roger, see p. 60.

3, For a discussion of the survival of medieval English metalwork, see Marian Campbell, 'Metalwork in England, c. 1200–1400', in *Age of Chivalry*, p. 163.

4, J. Alexander and P. Binski eds, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987), pp. 258–9, nos. 157–164.

5, B. D. Boehm and E. Taburet-Delahaye, eds, *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350* (New York, 1996), p. 38, fig. 9.

6, See J.-J. Marquet de Vasselot, *Les Gémellions limousins du XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1952).

7, see, for example, B. D. Boehm and E. Taburet-Delahaye, eds, *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350* (New York, 1996), nos. 126, 131, 132.



Fig. 1a–b
Front and back views of an enamelled gemellion
France, Limoges
Second half 13th century
Paris, musée du Louvre,
inv. MRR170

Four handled mortar with applied lettering

England, possibly London
c. 1400

14 cm (height) × 17 cm (diameter);
copper-alloy

Provenance

Collection of Ernst Genz (1911–91),
Schwarzach, Germany



Metal mortars are known to have been in use in Europe by at least the twelfth century, since Theophilus (1070–1125) describes an example cast from copper and tin in his treatise on the processes of medieval craftsmanship *On Divers Arts*.¹ They were the workhorses of home and pharmacy alike, cast by the same craftsmen responsible for the period's church bells and water-pouring aquamaniles. Yet bronze mortars were expensive to produce, and examples as ornate as this one would have been reserved either for a monastic pharmacy or for one of the richest domestic kitchens. Unlike most continental European examples, English mortars were typically concave-sided in form, with applied cast elements arranged in horizontal bands.

The ornate applied lettering around the base of this very early mortar is in a form of uncial majuscule script often described as Lombardic. It is comparable in style to that decorating the surface of the famous Asante ewer, which was found in West Africa in 1895 and is now housed in the British Museum (fig. 1), as well as two other closely related jugs in the V&A (inv. 217-1879), and a museum in Luton, respectively.² All three jugs are believed to have been cast in the last decade of the fourteenth century during the reign of Richard II, and incorporate such similar lettering and crosses to our mortar (in those cases used as line ends, but here as decorative elements that punctuate the spaces between each of the object's four handles), that we can date it fairly securely as a result. Just as notably, the mortar's inscription reveals a somewhat humorous and self-referential tone to its decoration. The first word 'FRAPE' was likely taken from the Latin *frappare* (to hit or strike), which was

1, R. S. Lopez in T. Husband and J. Hayward, *The Secular Spirit: Life and Art at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1975), p. 114.

2, J. Alexander and P. Binski, *Age of Chivalry: art in Plantagenet England* (London, 1987), pp. 524–5.

translated in Middle English as *frapen*, while 'RO...DER' is more difficult to decipher but may have been intended to be read as 'RODER' (Latin for gnaw or scrape). The handles have alternating angular and semi-circular profiles, the latter retaining circular iron loops for hanging.



Fig. 1
Asante ewer
England
c. 1390–1400
62.3 × 43.3 × 19.6 cm; copper
alloy
British Museum, inv.
1896,0727.1

Two-handled mortar with grapevine decoration and banded ridges

England
c. 1475–1500

15.5 cm (height) × 18 cm (diameter);
copper-alloy

Provenance

Collection of Ernst Genz (1911–91),
Schwarzach, Germany



Bold and sensuous in design, this large two-handled mortar is enlivened by an undulating vine sprouting acorns and flowers that encircles its rim. This motif conforms to a type of decoration popular towards the end of the fifteenth century, as do the moulded ridges punctuating the body.¹ The thick, chamfered handles project downward slightly from the flaring sides and would have been used to stabilise it while in use.

¹, Cf. H. P. Lockner, *Messing: 15–17. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1982) pp. 45–7 and 121–129.

Stone sculpture



Long shaft section from Crowland Abbey

England, Lincolnshire
c. 1140

92 × 13 × 16 cm; coarse-grained
sandstone.

Provenance

Crowland Abbey, South Lincolnshire Fenlands
A private house at Crowland (from a letter
dated 1982 from Professor George Zarnecki)
Collection of George Zarnecki, London, until
2002

Condition

Surface considerably abraded as a
result of weathering. One section
broken and rejoined.

A tall shaft section from one of the portals of the former abbey at Crowland in Lincolnshire, decorated with a loosely coiled cable pattern incorporating scrolling foliage and small animals. Although heavily worn, the stylised foliage typical of this part of England is still recognisable. The shaft would have been a part of a series of jambs, flanking a doorway and complementing one another with their distinct patterns.

This sinuous architectural fragment was previously in the collection of Professor George Zarnecki, an eminent scholar of English Romanesque sculpture who owned several pieces from the abbey (fig. 2). From the 1980s onwards, Zarnecki loaned his Crowland fragments to the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich and to the Lincolnshire City and County Museum. In a 1982 letter to the museum, Zarnecki mentioned that they had been built into the wall of a house at Crowland and had languished there for a considerable time. This was the case with several other sculptures from the site, most notably a 6-foot figure of Christ with an orb now surmounting the fourteenth-century Trinity Bridge in the town of Crowland.

Crowland Abbey was dedicated to Saint Guthlac, a hermit believed to have lived on the site. Following the abbey's foundation it became an important pre-Conquest pilgrimage site and exerted a strong influence over the economy and administration of the area. The original building, begun in 1113, was damaged by both a fire and an earthquake in the twelfth century. Many repairs ensued but the abbey was dissolved in 1539 and by the early nineteenth century stood in ruins. In September 1804, during the first of several visits to Crowland, the watercolourist John Sell Cotman described what remained of the building to his patron Dawson Turner as 'most delicious... I feel my pen incapable of describing it 'tis so magnificent' (fig. 1). Some of the original structure still survives, with some of its Romanesque sculpture and architectural fragments housed in the north chapel of the church. Other fragments have been dispersed amongst the Lincolnshire Museum and several private collections.¹

Stylistically, the carving of our shaft is closely related to the jambs on the two surviving Romanesque portals at Ely Cathedral (figs. 3–4). These portals, called the Prior's door and the Monks' door respectively, date to the bishopric of Alexander of Lincoln, 1123–48, and include closely comparable coiled cable patterns with decorative foliage and small figures. Although not as crisply preserved, our fragment possesses the same elements, which in fact typify Romanesque sculpture in this area – whimsical foliate scenes, stylised forms and a guarded symbolism. Such motifs, including small creatures among foliage, are commonly found at the margins of contemporary English manuscripts and buildings. Scholars of Romanesque iconography have related them to the complexities of natural sin and to the struggle between the vices and the virtues. The manner in which the creatures often navigate the foliage, either struggling against it or overcoming it, is believed to symbolise the wider struggles and temptations of life.



Literature:

George Zarnecki, *Early Sculpture of Ely Cathedral* (London, 1958)

'Ruins and site of Crowland Abbey,' Historic England. (accessed 10/5/2019) <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012410>

N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Lincolnshire* (New Haven, 1989)

1, 'Ruins and site of Crowland Abbey,' Historic England (accessed 10/5/2019) <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012410>.



Fig. 1
John Sell Cotman (1782–1842)
Crowland Abbey, West front
c. 1804
Watercolour on paper
Hull, Ferens Art Gallery



Fig. 1
Two sculptures from Crowland
Abbey now in private
collections
England, Lincolnshire,
Crowland
c. 1120–40



Fig. 5
The so-called
'Prior's Door'
England, Ely
Cathedral
c. 1120–40



Fig. 4
Detail of the
'Prior's Door'
England, Ely
Cathedral
c. 1120–40



**Long shaft section from
Crowland Abbey (detail)**

A kneeling man gargoyle from the Lady Chapel of York Minster

England, York
c. 1361–73

47 × 47 × 97 cm; limestone.

Provenance

Choir of York Minster, until mid-20th century
George Zarnecki, 1960s until 2002
Private collection, London

Condition

General surface weathering consistent with age and function as an exterior sculpture.



This large sculpture, originally an architectural projection carved for a position high up on the east side of York Minster, shows a kneeling figure straddling a moulding. The figure covers the splitting of the moulding into two gables with his body. Three blind cusps decorate the space below each gable. The figure's dramatically distressed expression is demonstrable by his downturned open mouth and his furrowed brows. Although the face of the figure is somewhat weathered, the details of the body, showing the legs bent at the knee, as well as the drapery folds, are still clear. The blind tracery cusps visible behind the figure are evidence that the figure was carved for one of the buttress pinnacles of the minster's choir, since identical mouldings decorate the bases of each of these soaring structures (fig. 1).

The sculpture was bought in the 1960s by the medieval sculpture scholar George Zarnecki directly from the Minster Chapter, and it remained in his personal collection until 2002. Zarnecki acquired it at a time when the south buttressing of the Lady Chapel (the eastern most part of the building) was being rebuilt and the medieval sculptural decoration was being replaced. Some of the originals were sold by the Minster as ornaments, although many, with close stylistic similarities to the present example, remain in situ (figs. 2–3).

York Minster is one of England's most interesting and significant buildings. The 'new' minster was begun in the first half of the 13th century, when the infamous Archbishop Walter de Gray persuaded the

Literature:

S. Brown, *'Our Magnificent Fabrick': York Minster, an architectural history 1220–1500* (English Heritage, 2003)

J. A. K. Miller, 'The Building program of Archbishop Walter de Gray: Architectural Production and Reform in the Archdiocese of York, 1215–1255.' PhD diss. Columbia University (2012)

dean and chapter of York that the transepts of the minster should be rebuilt in the Gothic style. Since York was one of England's two largest cities, the minster needed to be brought up to its institutional aspirations – and that was exactly what Walter de Gray set out to do. ¹ The building continued for several decades and while it was slowed down by the Black Death, by 1361 the chapter was ready to rebuild its east end after completing the western part of the church. The work on the east end began with the building of the Lady Chapel, east of the old choir. This four-bay structure was completed by 1373, the year of the death of Archbishop John de Thoresby, the patron of this part of the building. ² Hereafter a twenty-year hiatus took place before the choir between the Lady Chapel and the crossing was begun – starting in 1394 and finishing in 1420. Although there are some differences between these two campaigns, the buttress pinnacles and gargoyles on their corners remain the same between the two structures. One significant difference is that the gargoyles of the later campaign are not carved with the cusps out of one block. ³ This particular sculpture can thus be dated rather precisely as it belongs to those crouching figures on the corners of the buttress pinnacles of the north and south sides of the Lady Chapel, dated to 1361–73 (fig. 1). More specifically, the figure most probably comes from the first pinnacle on the southern side, east of the minor transept. The four gargoyles on this pinnacle were all replaced in the 1970s in Portland stone and the originals were removed. One of these originals is almost certainly the presently discussed kneeling man.

- 1, J. A. K. Miller, 'The Building program of Archbishop Walter de Gray: Architectural Production and Reform in the Archdiocese of York, 1215–1255,' PhD diss. Columbia University (2012).
- 2, S. Brown, 'Our Magnificent Fabrick': York Minster, an architectural history 1220–1500 (English Heritage, 2003), pp. 137.
- 3, Our thanks to Stuart Harrison, the present architect of York Minster, for sharing this information.



Fig. 1
Lady Chapel buttress pinnacles, with gargoyles visible at the base
c. 1361–73
York, Minster



Fig. 2–3
Kneeling gargoyles
c. 1361–73
York, Minster, Lady Chapel

A grotesque cephalic label stop

England, Staffordshire
c. 1380–1420

24.2 × 18 × 16.5 cm; grey sandstone.

Provenance

By repute removed from a monastic building
near Tamworth, Staffordshire



A sandstone label stop in the form of a grotesque head surmounted by a vaulted plume with a central scrolling acanthus leaf. The brows, eyes, and crisp-ridged nose of the figure are boldly carved, and framed by striated locks of matted hair falling down either side of the head.

Visually arresting and forcefully immediate expressions of the medieval sculptor's art, figurative grotesques of this type can be found scattered over the surfaces of many English churches. Acting both as apotropaic guardians of the community who would have used the church, and demonic visions of the fantastical netherworlds inhabiting the dreams and margins of medieval life and faith, they afford the modern viewer 'mental time travel of the most tangible form.'¹

While grotesques of this type are difficult to localise precisely, the style of the carving was undoubtedly influenced by England's earlier Celtic history and comparisons can be drawn to the grotesques of Kilpeck, Herefordshire, in particular.² However, its stone type, provenance history and the stylistic treatment of its ornamental springer, all help to localise it to the Staffordshire region of mid-western England some miles north of Kilpeck, and to a date late in the fourteenth century or in the early years of the fifteenth. Similar carvings can be found at the ruined abbey of Croxden, a few dozen miles from Tamworth. It was a large and imposing foundation established in the late twelfth century by Cistercian Monks and dissolved in 1537. This or another site of similar importance and status would be entirely fitting contexts for such carved ornament, intended to guard over the monastic community.

1, R. Wiseman, *Forty Medieval Carvings* (London, 2004), preface.

2, L. and J. Laing, *Art of the Celts; from 700 BC to the Celtic Revival* (London, 1992)

A grimacing stone head

England
14th century

26.5 × 16.5 × 21 cm; limestone.

Provenance
Private Collection, Alsace

Condition
Some chipping and surface damage
due to weathering.



A label stop or architectural ornament in the form of a human head. Forceful and expressive carving delineates the deep wrinkles of the forehead and eye sockets, while the nose and mouth are contorted into a grimace, exposing a row of regular teeth framed by full, ovoid lips. The eyes and mouth are reinforced with drill holes.

Figurative grotesques of this type can be found scattered over the surfaces of many English churches. Acting both as apotropaic guardians of the community who would have used the church, and demonic visions of the fantastical netherworlds inhabiting the dreams and margins of medieval life and faith, they afford the modern viewer ‘mental time travel of the most tangible form.’¹ It remains unclear how and when the present piece found its way to Alsace, but the emphatic grimace and the presence of drill holes symmetrically spaced in the mouth are distinctive aspects of English grotesque carving from the period.

Literature:

R. Sheridan, and A. Ross, *Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church* (New York, 1975)

M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (New York, 1992)

L. Laing, *Art of the Celts; from 700 BC to the Celtic Revival* (London, 1992)

R. Wiseman, *Forty Medieval Carvings* (London, 2004)

J. Benton, *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages* (Stroud, 2004)

1, R. Wiseman, *Forty Medieval Carvings*, 2004, preface

Gargoyle with open mouth and large appendage

England
14th century

82 × 48.5 × 35 cm; limestone.

Provenance
Richard Wiseman collection (before 2004)

Condition
General surface wear and weathering typical of stone sculpture of this age.



A seated downspout gargoyle in the form of a stylised pug-nosed dog, with a gaping, circular mouth and a large, erect appendage. This is a superb example of a decorative downspout for which the sculptor carefully considered the perspective at which it was intended to be viewed in its original setting. It was to be seen from far below, necessitating the simplification of forms and the concentration of bold, legible carving around the underside of the piece. In this respect, correct anatomical detail has been sacrificed for maximum dramatic effect. The animal's circular mouth, the clear delineation of a collar around its neck, and the large phallus running along its stomach parallel with its bent legs all emphasise its humourous, bestial nature. Both the collar and the crisply carved claws of the creature point towards its identity as a stylised hound of some form, which in clear weather appears to howl, while when raining would have vomited water onto the ground below.

Literature:

R. Sheridan and A. Ross, *Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church* (New York, 1975)

A. Weir and J. Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches* (Batsford, 1986)

M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: the Margins of Medieval Art* (London, 1992)

J. R. Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie: Animals in Art in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1992)

J.R. Benton, *Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings* (New York, 1997)

J.R. Benton, *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages* (Stroud, 2004)

Its general adherence to the cubic shape of the block from which it is cut, and its bold simplicity suggest that it was probably also carved in situ, as part of a skilled mason's work on the coping of the intended building's roofline (a common practice and one evinced in the graphic spontaneity of the present example). Part of this architectural detail, in the form of a curved overhang, is still well preserved at the base of the piece.

The intentionally offensive nature of this creature is linked to medieval philosophies highlighted in the writings of the modern art historian Michael Camille, who argued that the sacred and the profane were not as distinct in the Middle Ages as they are today. Rude and offensive imagery thus had an important role next to the imagery meant to instruct. It provided a contrast. The margins of medieval churches were thus full of imagery that is obscene, offensive and humorous (fig. 1). In this guise, the message communicated what not to do.



Gargoyle with open mouth and large appendage



Fig. 1
Male figure at Ancaster
England, Ancaster, Parish
Church
c. 14th century

Grotesque head of a woman wearing a caul

England, Dorset
c. 1375–1400

27.5 × 30.5 × 23 cm; limestone.

Provenance
Private Collection, UK
Richard Wiseman collection, 2013

Condition
General surface wear, typical of exterior stone sculpture from the period.

A corbel with a grotesque face of a woman wearing a caul, her mouth open as she looks to the viewer below. Her large bulging eyes, flat nose, ear-like caul flaps and spherical cheeks combine to create a strongly anthropomorphic appearance. The detail of a hairnet framing both sides of the woman's head are drilled and undercut in a virtuosic display of the carver's skill. Abutting the top of the figure's head is a rectangular lintel that would have supported the roofline of a church. The large square-cut block of stone extending backwards from behind the head further testifies to the sculpture's architectural function.

Cylinder cauls, such as the one worn by our figure, became fashionable in the second half of the fourteenth century and can be found on a number of contemporary effigies and tomb slabs from this date (fig. 1). Such headdresses were expensive possessions worn by women of a high social class and only on special occasions. The inclusion of actual contemporary costume on grotesque corbels of this kind would have been recognisable to visitors of all classes, who must have seen the human images decorating the architecture above their heads as humorous and cautionary mirrors watching over them.

This example is one of two sculptures whose origins can be traced back to the same site. The second, now in a private UK collection, also embodies the same style of abstract yet exaggerated carving and analogous grotesque style (fig. 2). Recent scholarship has suggested that they both come from Christchurch Priory in Dorset, one of the largest parish churches in England (surpassing many English cathedrals in its size). The current building has many phases of construction dating back to the late twelfth century, and it has been altered and renovated in the modern period. During the fourteenth century, work focused on the construction of the roof and its supporting stonework, and it is to this point in the history of the building that these corbels would date on stylistic and technical grounds. Nevertheless, sculptures of a broadly similar type can be found all over South-west England, such as the so-called *Anus Shower* from Glastonbury Abbey, now incorporated into a house in Ansford (fig. 3). Thus, while Christchurch Priory has a strong claim to having been the original context of our corbel, other sites of origin cannot be ruled out.





Fig. 1
 Tomb slab of Sir Thomas
 Burton and his wife
 England, Little Casterton,
 Rutland
 c. 1410



Fig. 2
 Corbel of a Man with large
 Ears
 England, Dorset
 c. 1350–1400
 Private Collection, England



Fig. 3
 The Ansford Anus Shower
 England, Somerset, Ansford
 c. 1400

Principle transom head from the south transept window of Canterbury Cathedral

England, Kent, Canterbury
1428–33

54 × 106 × 32 cm; Caen limestone.

Provenance
Canterbury Cathedral, until 2016

Condition
Broken in three sections and rejoined.
Some weathering and pitting to the stone.



A delicately carved transom head that intersects with a principal mullion, forming two spandrels that meet back to back. For the last 580 years this massive section of limestone formed part of the principal stonework of the vast south transept window of Canterbury Cathedral, remaining in situ until the restoration of the window between 2009 and 2013 necessitated its permanent removal. Separated from the building and brought down from its position seventy feet above ground level, it can now be appreciated as a statuesque form of immense beauty, its springing, energetic mouldings transforming inanimate stone into a dynamic constellation of light and shadow. Its complexity and sophistication attest to the extraordinary skill of the medieval mason.

Canterbury Cathedral is among England's most renowned ecclesiastical buildings, and became one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Europe following the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket there in 1170. The building pioneered Gothic architecture in England as it was the first to incorporate early Gothic vocabulary into its fabric and one of the first to experiment with the Perpendicular style in the late Middle Ages. The decision to rebuild the nave and transepts entirely in the Perpendicular style was made in 1376–7, after the funeral of the Black Prince. It was noted at this time that the nave was 'in a notorious and evident state of ruin.'¹ The architect hired for the task was Henry Yevele (1320–1400), who was one of the most creative medieval architects in England, working at the court of Richard II. Following

Literature:

R. Austen, *Canterbury Cathedral: The South-West Transept, An Architectural Appraisal* (February 2011)

K. Blockley, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown, *Canterbury Cathedral Nave: Archaeology, History and Architecture* (Canterbury, 1997)

P. Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, revised by Paul Crossley (New Haven, 2000)

C. Wilson, *The Gothic Cathedral* (London, 1990)

F. Woodman, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London, 1981)

Yevele's death, the construction of the south transept window was given to Thomas Mapilton (d. 1438), a master mason responsible for the cloisters at Durham Cathedral and who also worked on Westminster Abbey and the Tower of London prior to his appointment at Canterbury. In addition to the south transept window, Mapilton is also credited with building Canterbury's south west tower.

The Cathedral and its late-Gothic architects were pioneers of the Perpendicular style, which was characterised by strong vertical accents, continuous mullions and delicate tracery patterns. The architects of this style often inserted so much glass into the walls of their buildings that the structures truly became glass houses. The south window of Canterbury Cathedral illustrates this phenomenon perfectly, occupying almost the entire height and width of the transept (see fig. 1). Measuring 16.8 x 7.56 metres, it is the largest window in the cathedral.

Although the window was restored in 1792 with new Portland stone, much medieval Caen stone was saved and reset into the window.² From account rolls in 1426–7, we learn that 'sawyers were hired at various times for fashioning 'syntorys', or centerings, which may have been used to keep the window openings from collapsing before the tracery was inserted.³ Both Tim Tatton Brown, who studied the surviving documentary evidence from the fifteenth century, and Rupert Austin, who carried out the recent interpretation of the fabric, agree that the transept was finished by 1433. Tatton-Brown notes that Stone's Chronicle mentions an angel being moved to the top of the gable above the south transept on the 4th of August 1433, suggesting that the transept and its roofline were finished by this date.⁴

Canterbury Cathedral and its south window underwent much repair, rebuilding and restoration over the centuries. Thus, when recent structural analysis of the window showed signs of major structural failure, a decision was made to supplement some of its tracery with new stone in order to save the window from further damage. The removed sections were sold directly by Canterbury Cathedral. The present transom head (see fig. 2) is among the principal sections of the original fifteenth century tracery to have been removed from the window. It is also a perfect illustration of some of the most important characteristics of Perpendicular architecture and an enduring testimony to the stonemason's art.

1, F. Woodman, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London, 1981), p. 151.

2, R. Austen, *Canterbury Cathedral: The South-West Transept, An Architectural Appraisal* (February 2011), p. 7.

3, K. Blockley, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown, *Canterbury Cathedral Nave: Archaeology, History and Architecture* (Canterbury, 1997), pp. 137–8; R. Austen, *Canterbury Cathedral: The South-West Transept, An Architectural Appraisal* (February 2011), pp. 13.

4, *Ibid.*, p. 138.



Fig. 1
The south transept window
of Canterbury Cathedral

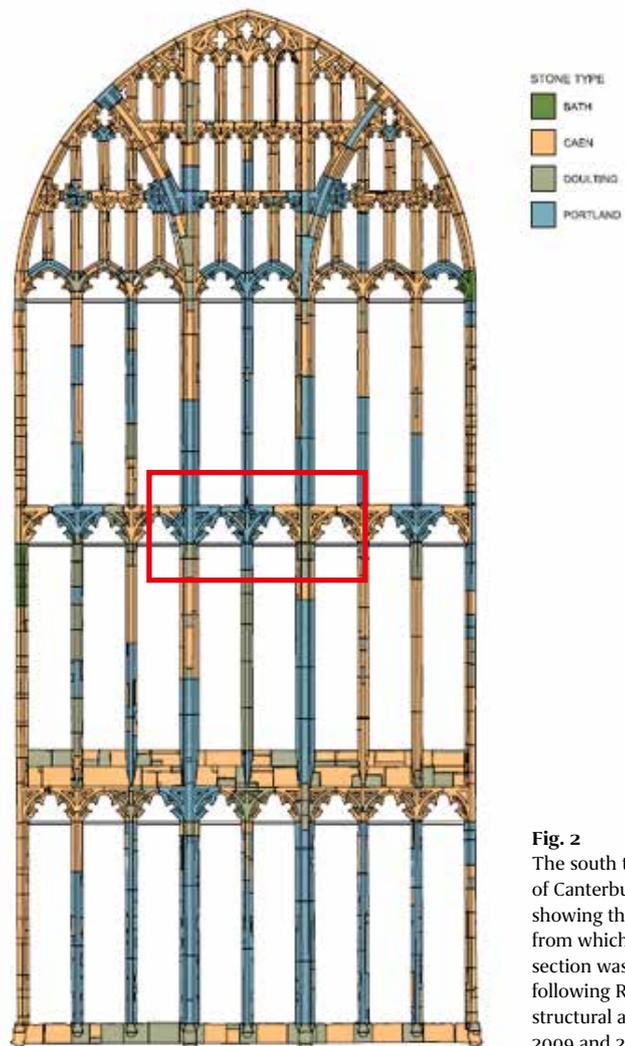


Fig. 2
The south transept window
of Canterbury Cathedral
showing the level of masonry
from which the present
section was removed,
following Rupert Austen's
structural appraisal between
2009 and 2011.

Two corbels with faces

England
c. 1450–1500

14 × 9,5 × 29 cm and 15 × 10,5 × 30 cm,
granular limestone.

Provenance
Private Collection, UK

Condition
Surfaces considerably abraded.



Two architectural corbels carved with diminutive, smiling faces, perhaps intended to represent a husband and wife. The more feminine of the two is characterised by rounded eyebrows and a broad nose, as well as long, swept-back hair articulated with abstracted, wavy lines. She is clearly differentiated from her counterpart, who instead has a long, narrow nose, a receding hairline and a forked beard. Both faces have deep eye sockets and sunken cheeks, as if depicting a couple advanced in years.

The humour of these faces, with features that have been subtly emphasised, essentialised and caricatured, raises them from the commonplace to the realm of a marginal art. Their long profiles and crisp outlines compare well to a large corpus of late fifteenth-century English sculpture and place them securely in that time period. Their weathered surfaces indicate that they functioned as external sculpture, while their scale suggests a position below the arch of a doorway or church portal in the manner of a number of examples surviving in situ. The composition of the stone, with large oolitic and shelly inclusions, means that it was likely quarried from a site along what is known as the Jurassic spine, encompassing a corridor of counties running north-south in western England.

Literature:

R. Sheridan, and A. Ross. *Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church* (New York, 1975)

M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (New York, 1992)

J. Benton, *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages* (Stroud, 2004)

Alabaster



The Trinity

England, Midlands, probably Nottingham
c. 1400–20

48 × 23 cm; alabaster with remnants of
polychromy.

Provenance

Nineteenth-century collection label on the reverse 'DURAND' and numbered '36' in ink
Monsignor Alexandre Compans (1840–1926),
bishop of Bordeaux and Papal Chamberlain
to Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII, France
By family descent until 2017.

Condition

A restored break across God's shoulders,
the tips of his crown and the figure of
Christ missing. Generalised wear to the
polychromy consistent with age and use.

A large relief-carved alabaster panel showing God the Father enthroned on a low bench, his feet raised on a polygonal dais. With his left hand he supports the transverse arm of a cross, which was originally adorned with the figure of his son Jesus Christ, and his missing right hand was likely carved in the sign of the Benediction. Christ's cross is supported on an orb, a symbol of the world, and its upper arm is surmounted by the image of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, flying upwards in a manner that visually and symbolically connects the two figures.

The composition of the present panel follows Francis Cheetham's 'Trinity – Type A' group, which depicts God the Father holding the Crucified Christ in the Throne of Mercy, with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove perched upon the Cross.¹ Although the iconography of the Trinity goes back at least to the early twelfth century, the finest alabaster prototype for this composition to have survived is a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century group in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Ghent.² Around 80 other examples of this subject are known, of which the most closely related versions survive in the Church of St Maria zur Wiese, Soest, the church of Arques-la-Bataille, Normandy,³ and the University Museum of National Antiquities, Oslo.⁴

The pattern of localized damage sustained by the figure of Christ on our example indicates that it was vandalized during a period of iconoclasm, the repeated diagonal, right-handed blows of a chisel across the body having been exerted in a meticulous and deliberate manner so as to erase only his image. We know that many alabasters were taken from English churches during the Reformation and shipped abroad, either for safekeeping by pious Catholics seeking to avoid their destruction during the zealous iconoclastic campaigns launched by Edward VI's protestant ministers, or for profit by opportunists. Recording such an instance in September 1550, the English ambassador to France, Sir John Mason, described 'Three or four ships [which] have lately arrived from England laden with images, which have been sold at Paris, Rouen and other places' (cited in Cheetham, 1984, p. 53). It is unclear whether our example sustained its partial destruction around this tumultuous time, or whether a more specific moment of censorship occurred when it had already reached Europe. Certainly, however, the possibility of its being sent to France early in its life is supported by a long provenance history in that country, having resided in a distinguished Bordelais private collection for at least a century. Indeed, Cheetham records a transaction in the 1470s between a Norfolk-based merchant and a Bordeaux courtier of 'certaines ymages d'alabastre' in return for four tons of wine' (1984, *op. cit.*, p. 47). France was, overall, the largest export market for Nottingham alabasters, with the greatest concentration of them unsurprisingly being found in the northern provinces of Normandy and Picardy. It is most probable that the original home of the present relief was in a church in the area around Bordeaux, given that it was probably here that Alexandre Compans acquired it early in the twentieth century.



1, F. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters* (Oxford, 1984), p. 296.

2, Illustrated in F. Cheetham, *The Alabaster Men* (London, 2001), p. 46; see also N. Stratford in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987), pp. 424–5, no. 519.

3, We are extremely grateful to Lloyd de Beer who brought the Normandy relief to our attention, and it is perhaps the closest referent in quality and technique to the present example.

4, See F. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters* (Oxford, 1984) Appendix, catalogue of Trinity groups, nos. 1 and 3 for the Oslo and Soest groups.



Saint Ambrose

England
Early 15th century

39 × 12.5 × 4.5 cm; alabaster with
polychromy and gilding.

Provenance
Private collection, Belgium;
Art market, Paris, 2010

Condition
The upper left corner repaired, part of
attribute in the right hand missing.

A standing figure of a tonsured male saint, almost certainly Saint Ambrose. He stands in the girdled robe, mantle and hooded stole of a cleric, holding a book in his left hand and a scourge (now lost) in the other, both attributes of Saint Ambrose. Stoles were only worn by deacons, priests and bishops; this is thus entirely fitting for our identification, since Saint Ambrose was a bishop. His head is framed by a halo decorated with blue paint and gilding. The edges of his hood and mantle are trimmed with gold, while a purse hangs from his waist band, suggesting an individual of some wealth and social standing. He stands on a green ground decorated with flowers. The high quality of the carving is particularly evident in the way in which the mantle falls in delicate folds over the saint's left hand and around his neck, appearing to be of a soft material.

Figures of Saint Ambrose in English alabasters are extraordinarily rare. There are, however, a number of other single figures of saints which are comparable in style, such as a figure of Saint Fiacre in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (inv. A135-1946). This figure wears a similar habit girdled at the waist with a stole hanging in front. Like Saint Ambrose he holds attributes in both hands. The vertical fold style of the robes is comparable to the present relief but the Victoria and Albert Museum example is much larger, measuring 60cm high. Another figure of Saint Fiacre which is also comparable in costume and fold style was sold at Sotheby's London, 24th June 1982. The closest comparison in style would perhaps be the Twelve Apostles, also held in the V&A (Inv. No. A.148 to 159-1922). Their scale is closer to the present figure than that of Saint Fiacre (45cm high approx.), and their faces, poses and draperies offer close parallels. Indeed, the faceted base, the positioning and decoration of the halo, and the overall proportions of the figure seem to have been modelled on the same compositional source as the Twelve Apostles. Nevertheless, the quality of Ambrose's hair, which curls legibly and three-dimensionally out from the head and down behind the shoulders, surpasses that of the V&A figures, and suggests the hand of one of the foremost alabaster sculptors active during the period.



Literature:

F. Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England*.
Woodbridge, 2003.

- 1, Inv. A135-1946; F. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters: with a catalogue of the collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Oxford, 1984), cat 31, p. 102.
- 2, Published in F. Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2003), cat. 38, p. 40.

The Annunciation

England, Midlands
c. 1460–90

40 × 26cm; alabaster, with extensive
original polychromy and gilding.

Provenance

Private Collection, France



An exceptionally fine carved alabaster panel depicting the Annunciation. The scene shows the figure of the crowned Virgin kneeling at a writing desk, her body contorted into a dramatic twist as she reacts to the arrival of the archangel Gabriel from the left. The Virgin's smooth drapery oversteps the boundary of the frame by spilling out below, and a bed canopy can be seen behind her large halo. Between the two figures, a large lily frond grows from a tankard placed on the floor, its stem wrapped by a spiralling scroll on which the words 'Ave Maria Gratia Plena' would originally have been picked out in dark paint. Alongside this, the scroll helps to delineate the earthly realm in which the Virgin kneels from that more ethereal vision above, in which a crowned God the Father appears. He raises his right hand in blessing, while a dove of the Holy Spirit, issues out of his mouth and towards the Virgin. This panel was almost certainly a part of a larger altarpiece, where it would have been

Literature:

F. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Oxford, 1984)

accompanied by further scenes from the Life of the Virgin or Christ's Infancy.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, alabasters carved with the scene of the Annunciation became more or less standardised in their composition, though finer details could be adjusted and personalised according to the wishes of the patron or the patterns kept by a particular workshop. This particular design, referred to by Francis Cheetham as 'type D', seems to have been the most popular type, with about 40 examples known.¹ It involved the kneeling Virgin, crowned and haloed, the angel Gabriel behind her, a canopied bed in the upper right corner and the Holy Spirit shooting out of God the Father's mouth. The design was particularly successful in part because the dynamic twists of the scroll and the body of the Virgins echo one another, and helped to showcase the virtuosic skill of the carvers. Several examples of this 'type' of an Annunciation panel survive, such as the Annunciation panels in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 1–2). These two panels clearly reveal that there was a standardised template that the sculptors followed, possibly in pattern books or on canvas. Still, as has been argued by Cheetham, no two alabasters are exactly the same. The present variant, with its delicately sculpted drapery, its elegantly modelled figure of the Virgin and its remarkable state of survival, is an example of a popular theme that has been subtly altered to show its uniqueness amongst the corpus of medieval English alabasters.

1, F. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 162–3.



Fig. 1
The Annunciation
England
Second half fifteenth century
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum, Inv. A.54–1946



Fig. 2
The Annunciation
England
Late fifteenth century
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum, Inv. A.91–1946

Head of Saint John the Baptist

England, Midlands
c. 1470–1500

20 × 15 cm; alabaster with gilding and polychromy, set into a modern oak frame.

Provenance

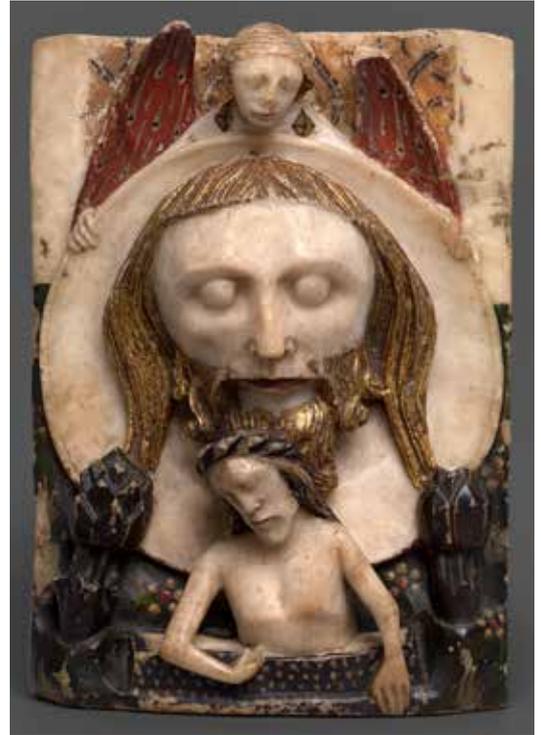
English private collection, 19th century (according to paperwork on the back of an old frame, now removed)
Collection of Jan Koldeweij (1923–2017), Helvoirt, Netherlands, and by descent until 2019

Condition

Some wear and discolouration to the painted surface and a small loss to the angel's wing. The upper right-hand corner broken and repaired. Otherwise in excellent condition.

The decapitated head of John the Baptist is displayed in the manner of a sacred relic, supported on a plate (an allusion to the plate on which John's actual head was presented to Salome by her father Herod following the saint's execution at the king's behest) by an angel subtly bowing its head as if in mourning. As a neat visual pun, the plate doubles as a halo, picking out John's beatified head as the focus of our attention. Christ, wearing the crown of thorns and gesturing to the wound in his side with his right arm, appears from a tomb set within the tree-lined, flowering meadow (an evocation of Paradise) below. The symbolic connection such an image establishes between Christ and the saint commonly invoked as the Saviour's forerunner on Earth is unequivocal.

Right up until the Reformation, English alabaster plaques and panels showing the head of John the Baptist formed popular domestic devotional sculptures, since they were affordable for a large proportion of society, kept to a relatively diminutive and intimate scale, and could be invoked by sufferers of headaches.¹ At the turn of the sixteenth century, a relatively simple example could be purchased for the equivalent of an average day's wages.² As a genre, they seem to have been based on the earlier *Johannesschüsseln* (literally 'John dishes') common across Westphalia and the Southern Netherlands.³ A healthy number of English examples survive, but few with our panel's excellent state of preservation. Evidence from at least one other, which retains its original hinged triptych-format frame, suggests that ours too may have been protected from excessive handling or overcleaning as part of such an ensemble before a new frame was added in the nineteenth century.⁴



Literature:

S. Boldrick, D. Park, and P. Williamson, *Wonder: Painted Sculpture from medieval England* (Leeds, 2002)

F. Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2003)

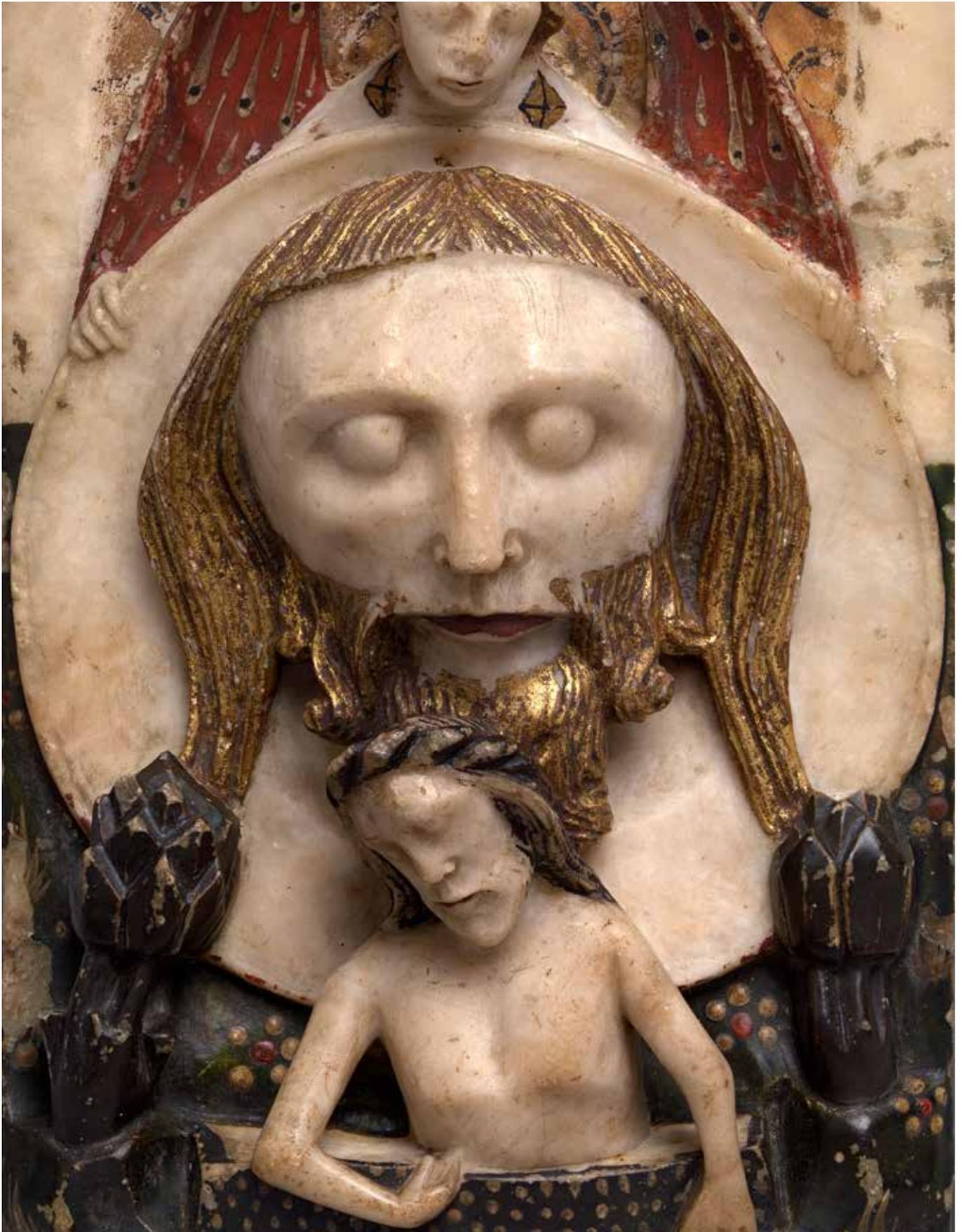
P. Williamson ed., *Object of Devotion: Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture from the Victoria and Albert Museum Alexandria* (Virginia, 2010)

1, Paul Williamson ed., *Object of Devotion: Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture from the Victoria and Albert Museum Alexandria* (Virginia, 2010), p. 178.

2, S. Boldrick, D. Park and P. Williamson, *Wonder: Painted Sculpture from medieval England* (Leeds, 2002), p. 72.

3, *Ibid.*, p. 110.

4, *Cf. Ibid.*, fig. 1.



Saint James the Great

England, Midlands, probably Nottingham
c. 1500

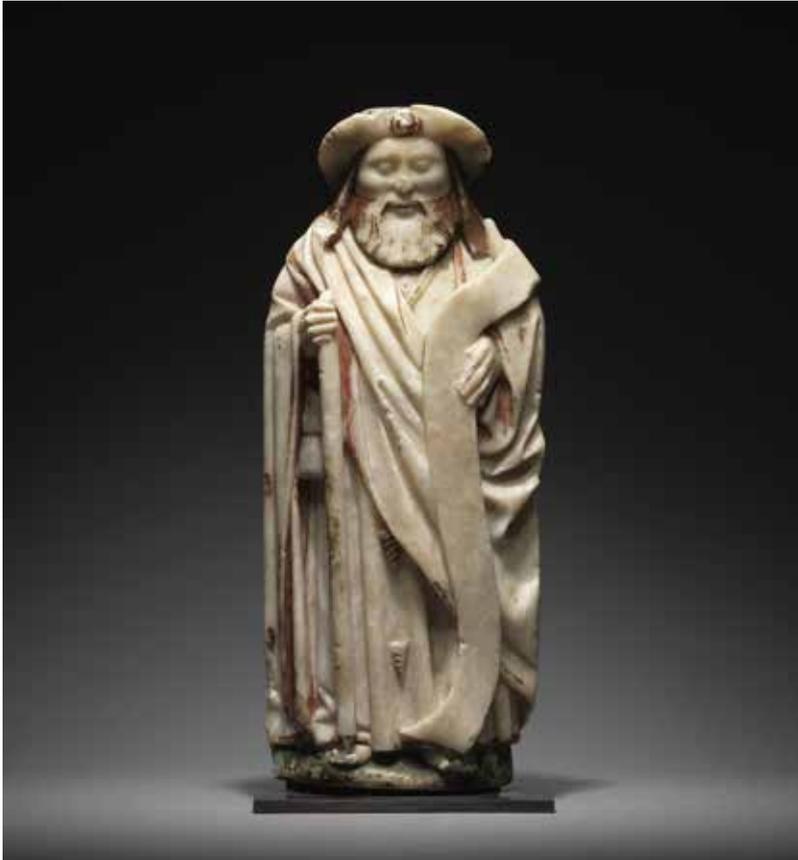
39.7 × 16.7 × 5.2 cm; alabaster with
remains of gilding and polychromy.

Provenance

Private collection, Paris

Condition

A single break across the neck repaired
historically with a scrim support to the
reverse.



Saint James the Great, identifiable by his broad-brimmed hat adorned with a scallop shell, stands wearing a heavy pilgrim's cloak, its long fabric pulled into a complex arrangement of folds across his body. He supports a long trailing scroll in his left hand and holds a staff in his right, his arm raised and cloak falling open to reveal a pilgrim's bag that has been slung across his shoulder and hangs at his side. His garments are decorated, as is traditional for alabaster images of the saint, with a vertical line of whelk shells. A layer of green paint defines the ground on which the saint stands, while his robes are painted red and his beard and hair bear the remains of a brown paint layer or bole.

The figure's spade-shaped beard and broad facture, as well as the scale and format of the stone block from which it is carved, are all indicative of a date at the turn of the 16th century, and the detail of the beard is particularly suggestive of the fashions that existed during the reign of Henry VIII. It can be compared to a group of six apostles in the musée départemental des Antiquités in Rouen ¹ (inv. D. 91.7–13), and figures of the Trinity and of the Sunday Christ, which are both preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum (figs. 1–2). The bulkier appearance of alabaster carving at this moment in time was a new trend, but a short-lived one, for the Reformation instigated by Henry VIII was to cut religious sculptural production in England brutally short by the 1540s.

1, Published in D'Angleterre en Normandie: Sculptures s'albâtre du Moyen Age (Rouen and Evreux, 1998), cat. 34, pp. 83–6

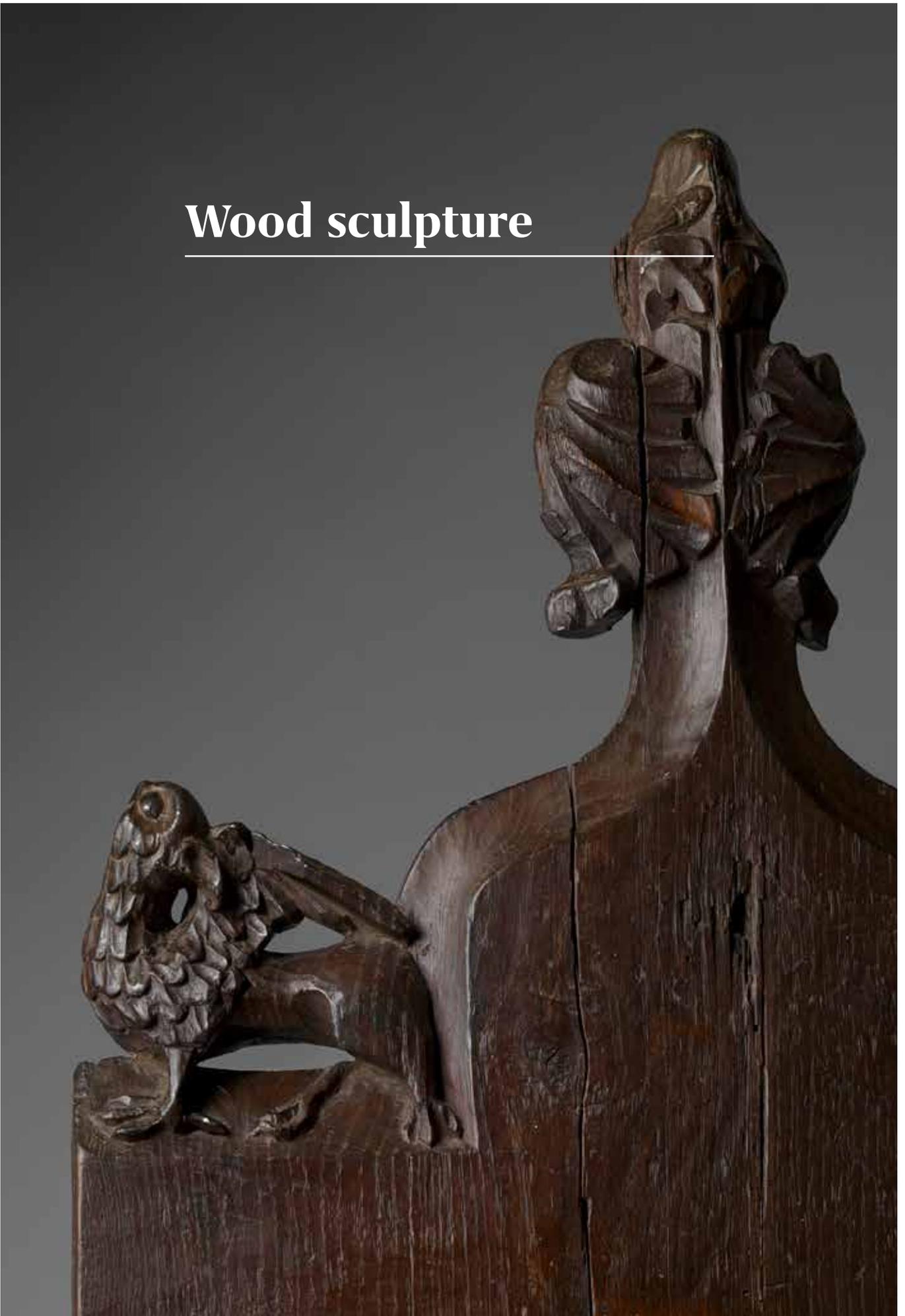


Fig. 1
The Sunday Christ
England, Midlands, Nottingham
c. 1500
39 x 12 x 4 cm; alabaster
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum, Inv. A.1-2010



Fig. 2
The Trinity
England, Midlands, Nottingham
c. 1500-20
51.2 x 26.6 cm; alabaster with
gilding and traces of polychromy
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum, Inv. A.88-1946

Wood sculpture



Tracery fragments from the choir stalls of Gloucester Cathedral

England, Gloucester
c. 1370

c. 72 × 35 × 4.3 cm (arched section);
59.2 × 70.5 × 5.5 cm (fragment with quatrefoils);
oak

Provenance

Gloucester Cathedral until 2005
with Mallams, Cheltenham, 2006



These ornate oak tracery fragments belong to a group carved to decorate the choir stalls of Gloucester Cathedral in the late fourteenth century (figs. 1–2). There are two distinct sections in this group. The largest section has a row of quatrefoils with remnants of paneling above, and was originally positioned right at the top of the stalls' elaborate wooden structure. The second section includes upright mouchettes and cusped tracery elements in a rectangular frame, which would have originally surmounted a running arcade of freestanding lancets. Both of these sections were almost certainly taken down and replaced during Sir Gilbert Scott's major restoration of the cathedral and the choir stalls in 1873. From his campaign, we know that many parts were altered and replaced – such as fourteen of the original misericords. Some of these fragments, including the presently discussed tracery, were since kept in the cathedral before being sold in 2005 to a local buyer. When it comes to the medieval history of the choir stalls, we are able to glean a good deal of information from accounts recorded in the *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, which state that 'Abbot Adam de Stanton [Adam of Staunton]...built the great vault of the choir, at vast expense, with the stalls there on the Prior's side [north range], from the offerings of the faithful flocking to the King's tomb.' Though left unfinished at his death in 1351, the *Historia* mentions that the stalls were completed under the abbotcy of Staunton's successor Thomas Horton, and that: '[as a result of] his persevering work, the stalls on the Abbot's [south] side were begun and finished.'¹

Stylistically, these stalls and their canopies represent some of the finest surviving examples of fourteenth-century carpentry anywhere in England. The rectangular lancet fragment with curvilinear tracery discussed here incorporates a very similar tracery pattern to the screen cresting the stalls, although on a smaller scale. This particular type of tracery has been identified by Christopher Wilson as a reproduction of the cloister tracery in Old St. Paul's, London, giving us key information and evidence for the appearance and character of the interior of one of medieval England's most lamentable losses.² This type of tracery can also be found decorating the windows and cloister of Gloucester Cathedral, showing that its influence and popularity were potent across wood carving and masonry alike (fig. 3). With its rhythmical, repetitive style, the monumental furniture in the cathedral translated absolutely up-to-date architectural designs into wood, and followed the latest developments of the design of the choir and the cloister. As argued by Peter Lindfield, 'the choir stalls at Gloucester Cathedral were [thus] a fundamental expression of the unity of the monastery' which was achieved during the rebuilding of the eastern part of the Cathedral in the Perpendicular style.³ As documents of the spread of design across English architecture, and the achievements of medieval craftsmanship at a precise date in history, they could hardly be more significant.

Literature:

P. Lindfield, 'The Fourteenth Century Choir Stalls at Gloucester Cathedral' in *Regional Furniture*, Vol. XXI (2007), pp. 173–182.

N. Pevsner, D. Verey, and A. Brooks, *Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds in the Buildings of England* (London, 1999), pp. 209–10.

Scott's Recollections III, 321–5, IV 155, 160, 163.

D. Welander, *The History, Art and Architecture of Gloucester Cathedral* (Stroud, 1991), pp. 431–3, 446, 454–8, 466, 468–71, 473–7, 479–80, 486.

1, P. Lindfield, 'The Fourteenth Century Choir Stalls at Gloucester Cathedral' in *Regional Furniture* Vol. XXI (2007), p. 173.

2, *Ibid.* p. 175 and C. Wilson, *The Origins of the Perpendicular Style and its Development to Circa 1360*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (London, 1979), pp. 145–55.

3, Lindfield (2007), p. 176

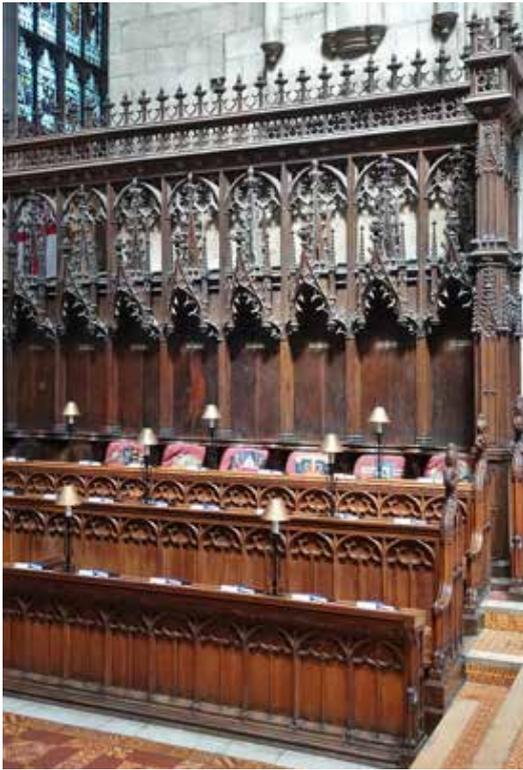


Fig. 1
Choir Stalls
England, Gloucester
Cathedral
c. 1370

Fig. 2
The back of the choir stalls
against a late medieval
chantry chapel
England, Gloucester



Fig. 3
Blind Tracery in the Cloisters
England, Gloucester
Late fourteenth century

God the Father

England
c. 1440–60

46 × 13.8 × 7.7 cm; oak with traces of
polychromy and ground

Provenance

Collection of William Stokes (1921–2015)

Condition

loss of the right hand and to the front of the
moulded base, general surface wear, especially
to the crown, the left hand and the feet

An imposing figure of an enthroned God the Father, holding a book in his left hand. The figure wears a tall crown on top of his thick hair, gathered into pinecone-like clusters. His beard follows the same stylistic formula as the hair and almost overpowers his elongated, yet narrow face. The figure's facial features include a prominent nose, small eyes and pursed lips. He wears a cloak which is composed of tight folds and which sweeps across his torso, disguising the ambiguity between his short legs and his large upper body. He holds a book in his left hand and he would have presumably held his right hand up in blessing. The figure sits on a moulded base.

The remnants of a white, chalky ground layer and traces of polychromy on the sculpture is evidence that it was once painted. This, together with the moulded base below, suggest that the figure formed part of a monumental piece of furniture, such as a panelled choir screen. Its elongated, relief-like form also draws comparison to contemporary alabaster panels, especially those like no. 21 in this catalogue which depicts the Trinity in a strikingly similar manner.

However, the particular style of wood carving suggests specialist sculptors that would have probably worked on a variety of commissions in wood and thus a comparison to contemporary wooden sculpture seems appropriate. The distinctive hair, separated into pinecone shaped sections, is especially analogous to the angels from the many angel roofs in Norfolk, such as St Agnes in Cawston or St Mary's in North Creake (fig. 1 – 2). The angels in these examples also have similarly elongated faces, small eyes and pursed lips. Although on a much smaller scale, this sculpture of God the Father possesses characteristics that link it to those carvers that would have been working on larger projects such as angel roofs. Nevertheless, it also illustrates knowledge of other media, which would have complemented this sculpture when in its original setting.



Fig. 1
Angel roof
England, Norfolk, Cawston,
St Agnes
c. 1470–80



Fig. 2
Angel from the roof of St
Mary's Norfolk
England, North Creake
Second half of the 15th century

A roof angel holding a chalice probably from St Peter's Church, Swainsthorpe

England, Norfolk
c. 1400–50

56 × 24.5 × 7 cm; oak.

Provenance
Private Collection, UK

Condition
Losses to the angel's proper right arm and to the bottom of his left. Breaks at the tip of the nose, the chin and the right side of the angel's hair. General surface wear, including woodworm damage.¹

A rare oak carving of a roof angel, holding a large covered chalice decorated with a cross in both of his hands. The angel is carved in relief, wearing a tunic that stops just below his waist. His body does not continue beyond this tunic, as is common with East Anglian roof angels. The angel has a stoic expression, with pursed lips, eyes wide open and his eyebrows raised. His round, fleshy face is complemented by a delicate nose and his hair is gathered into long pinecone clumps. This carving would have originally been a part of a larger scheme of angel figures pinned to the hammer beams of a church roof. The wings would have been separate fixtures attached between the figure and the beam.

Over the course of the later Middle Ages hundreds of angel roofs were made, starting with the impressive hammer beam roof of Westminster Hall, built at the end of the fourteenth century (fig. 1). It has been argued that the design for this first angel roof was fuelled by Richard II's angel badge, which was also included as a stone frieze in Westminster Hall and painted in the Wilton Diptych. The master carpenter responsible for this roof was Hugh Herland, who is thought to have worked on another such roof in Great Yarmouth in 1394, after the Westminster project was completed. It was this second project in Norfolk, where Herland worked with several local carpenters, that probably caused the spread and popularity of angel roofs in East Anglia. Today only 170 angel roofs survive, many heavily damaged and restored. Over seventy percent of the extant roofs are located in East Anglia.

The angels on the surviving roofs range from six feet tall to smaller relief plaques like the present example. At Westminster Hall, the angels carry coats of arms, as can be expected of a royal undertaking. While coats of arms can also be found in parish churches of East Anglia, other common iconographic programmes include an orchestra of angels holding musical instruments, or angels carrying the instruments of the passion. The presently discussed angel is an example of the latter, as he holds the chalice that would have been presented to Christ as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Our angel's round face, the gatherings of his hair and his simplified facial features are so close in style to the surviving angels at St. Peter, Swainsthorpe (figs. 2–3), we can be almost certain that it was made for the same site, and must have been removed from that roof during restoration in 1885 when the wings on all the angels and some of the figures themselves were replaced.



Literature

M. Rimmer, *The Angel Roofs of East Anglia: Unseen Masterpieces of the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 2015.

¹, Certificate from Thermo-Lignum available on request.



Fig. 1
Westminster Hall
England, London
c. 1393–98



Fig. 2
Swainsthorpe Angel Roof
England, Swainsthorpe
Fifteenth century
© Michael Rimmer 2015



Fig. 3
Swainsthorpe Angel
England, Swainsthorpe
Fifteenth century
© Michael Rimmer 2015



A roof boss with the eagle of Saint John

England
Early 16th century

37 × 39 × 19 cm; oak with traces of
polychromy.

Provenance

Sold Christie's London 'Important Wood-carvings,
Sculpture and Bronzes', December 11th 1979, lot
73, plate 10
Michael & Jane Dunn, Claverack, New York, 1990
Private collection, Boston



This large wooden boss, boldly carved with the eagle of Saint John unfurling its wings behind its body, once decorated the ceiling of a sixteenth-century chapel or church, where it would have hung above the heads of the congregation from a wooden supporting vault. Stylistically, it can be compared closely to other depictions of birds in British late-medieval oak carvings, especially to those in East Anglian churches, such as an early 16th century boss in Saint Mary's Church, Cambridge and a late 15th century boss from the Norwich Cathedral Cloister (see figs. 1–2). In both examples, the bosses display birds whose individual feathers are sculpted three dimensionally. Both of these comparatives come from East Anglia, where the presence of wooden roofs was extremely prevalent in the middle ages—attested to by the survival of so many wooden angel roofs.



Fig. 1
Westminster Hall
England, London
c. 1393-98



Fig. 2
Swainsthorpe Angel Roof
England, Swainsthorpe
Fifteenth century
© Michael Rimmer 2015

Pew end with a griffin

England, East Anglia, Norfolk/Suffolk border 95 × 43 × 6cm; oak with darkened patina
c. 1450–1500

Condition

The beak of the beast missing, some wear.

Provenance

Private Collection, UK

'If the high Middle Ages was the age of the Great Church, of the cathedral and monastery, then the century and a half after the Black Death was emphatically the age of the parish church, and of the lay people who worshipped in them'.¹

The dramatic social upheavals caused by the Black Death combined with burgeoning trade with the Low Countries in its aftermath, were major contributing factors to the emergence of new mercantile and professional classes in the fifteenth century. Increasingly wealthy, they were spurred by a new sense of communal pride, and both individually and together as guilds enlarged and embellished parish churches. Concurrent with this shifting social demographic, the period saw a development in lay devotional practice. The drive to instruct and motivate laymen and women initiated by the fourth Lateran Council led to preaching becoming an important element in church services, which in turn placed a new emphasis upon the public space within the church, and a demand for more elaborate seating in the nave. Hence why, during the period between around 1400 and the middle of the sixteenth century, dense congregational seating was introduced into the naves of many English parish churches.² Wooden pews like this one and the examples following it in this catalogue (cats. 31–33) became one of the many features with which wealthy parishioners could embellish their church.

A sharply carved finial decorates the top of this ogee arched pew end. From the finial to the shoulder, the edge of the pew is simply chamfered. The main face of the pew is uncarved, while the inner face includes an original assembly mark. This simplicity gives more prominence to the small figure of a griffin, which sits on top of the shoulder of the pew end. The griffin tilts his head up while standing proud on all fours. His eyes are large and round and his wings outstretched behind him.

The griffin is a mythological monster with the head and wings of an eagle and the body and legs of a lion. Such creatures often occupy the woodwork in English parish churches, either as bench ends or as misericords, straddling the line between sacred and profane. The imagination and craft involved in producing such pews also reflects the rise of the parish church in fifteenth-century England. It was at this time, after the country had awoken from the aftermath of the Black Death, that a new secular class of patrons, preoccupied with thoughts of life after death, began to make their mark. This rising merchant class made substantial contributions to their local churches in the belief that they would be rewarded with less time in purgatory. Since high quality timber was plentiful, elaborate roofs, choir screens and bench ends, such as this example, were pressed into service to transform church interiors and to reflect the wealth of their patrons.³

Stylistically, poppy head pew ends are almost exclusively found in the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁴ As Arthur Gardner has noted, it is East Anglian pew ends that are commonly found with a finial or a poppy head above the main face,



Literature

A. Gardner, *Minor English Wood Sculpture 1400–1550* (London, 1958)

C. Tracy, *English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork* (London, 1988)

which is either plain or traceried.⁵ By contrast, pew ends in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall are typically square headed, with carving on the main face. Pew ends with similar decoration to the present example survive in situ in a number of churches around the Norfolk/Suffolk border, including in particular at Saint George's, Stowlangtoft (see figs. 1–2).

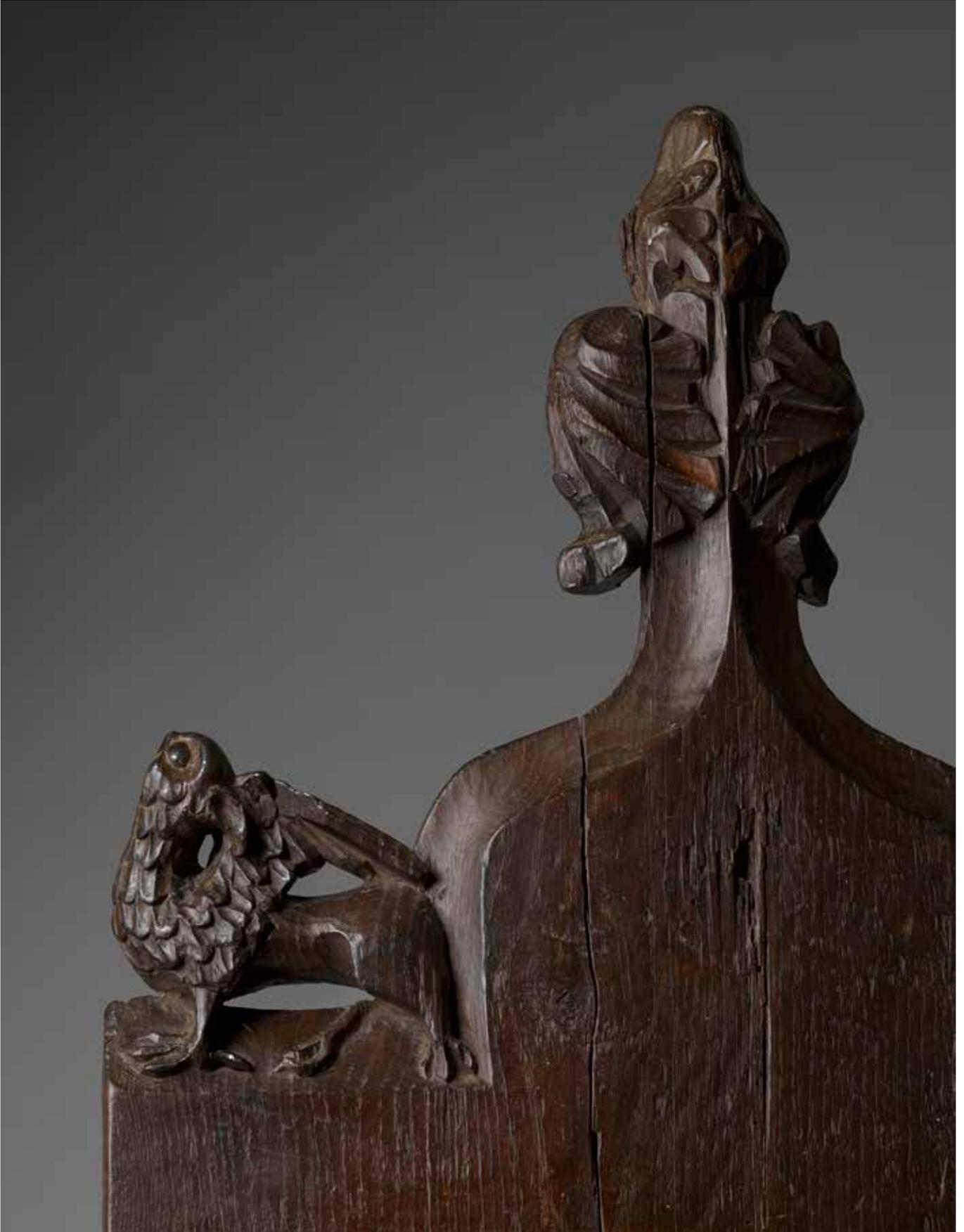
- 1, E. Duffy, 'Late Medieval Religion', in R. Marks and P. Williamson eds, *Gothic Art for England 1400–1547* (London, 2003), p. 59.
- 2, R. Marks and P. Williamson eds, *Gothic Art for England 1400–1547* (London, 2003), chapter V and cats. 270–271.
- 3, A. Gardner, *Minor English Wood Sculpture 1400–1550* (London, 1958), pp. 9–10.
- 4, *ibid.* p. 10.
- 5, *ibid.*



Fig. 1
Pew end with hybrid griffin
15th century
Stowlangtoft, Church of
Saint George



Fig. 2
Pew end with griffin
15th century
Stowlangtoft, Saint George



Pew end with poppy-head finial and seated beast

England, East Anglia
15th century

126 × 28 × 7cm; oak with a dark patina.

Provenance
Private collection, UK, until 2000

Condition
In good condition, natural crack along vein
of the wood, some wear.

A single-sided oak pew end with a poppy-head finial and a seated hound on the shoulder supported by an engaged, square column with mouldings and a plain face. The surface is smooth and worn, particularly on the head of the hound, creating a beautiful patina from years of regular use within its original setting.

In form and style, this tall pew end relates very closely to a number of fifteenth-century examples carved for churches in East Anglia. As is characteristic of the East Anglian school, the top terminates in a sprouting finial or 'poppy-head', unlike the square headed pew ends typical of the West Country. The smooth and stylised moulding of this finial relates closely to those found at St Nicholas, King's Lynn, and at St Mary Magdalene, Wiggshall, both in north-west Norfolk (fig. 1).¹ The architectural structure supporting the hound while simultaneously forming the shoulder of the pew end in a double-storey format, is also a feature in common with examples from this region.



Literature

A. Gardner, *Minor English Wood Sculpture 1400–1550* (London, 1958)

C. Tracy, *English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork* (London, 1988)

1, C. Tracy, *English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork* (London, 1988)

Pew end with a rampant hare and painted inscriptions

England, Norfolk
c. 1500

73.5 × 44 × 7 cm; oak with added polychromy.

Provenance

By repute, from All Saints Church, Salhouse, Norfolk
Mary Bellis collection, Hungerford, 1975
Collection of John and Judith Adler, until 2005

Condition

In good condition with general surface wear, minor losses to the polychromy, the poppy head finial lost.

A pew end carved with a rampant hare seated on its shoulder above a double storey of pilaster ornament with beaded mouldings. In an eighteenth-century program of reuse, the rebated side panel of the pew (originally used to slot the bench and backrest into) was covered with bookended oak planks and painted with a dedicatory inscription identifying the subject as 'Mr Dales' (in full it reads Remember on Ye Mr Dales of Olde) beneath a circular vignette depicting a tree-lined pond and the name of the village (Salhouse) written above in the vernacular as 'Sallows'. At the same time, the pilasters supporting the seated hare were decorated with two heraldic symbols, the cross of St George above and a stylized fleur-de-lys below.

Though its elaborate carved finial is lost, this pew end clearly takes the form of the finial or 'poppy head' pew ends commonly found in East Anglian churches, and which almost exclusively date to the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. The presence of the village name written in the vernacular as 'Sallows', which means 'place of Willow trees' in Old English, may explain the rather enigmatic vignette of a tree-lined pond below, though the significance of this in relation to the subject of the dedication is a mystery.



Literature

A. Gardner, *Minor English Wood Sculpture 1400–1550* (London, 1958)

C. Tracy, *English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork* (London, 1988)

A set of four traceried pew ends from St Andrew's Church, High Ham, Somerset

England, Somerset
c. 1475–1500

Each one 136.5 × 35 × 7.5 cm; oak.

Provenance
St Andrew's Church, High Ham
Private collection, UK, until 2000

Condition
In good condition with minor surface wear on the poppies.

Four finely carved pew ends with tracery patterns embellishing each main face. Decorated by poppies at the top, the pews have a very narrow profile because they lack armrests. The surface area running along the top, between the finial and the shoulder is smooth and simple, with a fairly modest, moulded profile. The front face is decorated by two cusped ogees inside a pointed arch. The spandrels and the quatrefoils below the pointed arch include finely carved foliate patterns.

By repute, this refined set of pew ends were carved for St Andrew's church in High Ham, Somerset, which retains a number of almost identical traceried pews that convincingly help to corroborate this purported provenance.¹ As such, they are rare examples of finial or 'poppy head' pew ends to be found outside of the usual region of East Anglia (see *cats.* 30–32), and instead in the western part of England. Two of the four are decorated with flower heads within the central tracery details, incorporating a design of overlapping petals drilled or punched with a pattern of dots. These features can be found across the whole group of surviving pew ends (both poppy-head and square-headed) at High Ham (fig. 2). The curvilinear tracery decoration is also closely analogous to examples at St Andrew's, and to other nearby churches in Somerset, where some of the most creative 'Decorated style' tracery originated.

If taken in isolation from any known records or events, the style of the carving would suggest a date in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, but this is further evidenced by the fact that in 1476, the church at high Ham was completely rebuilt in the space of a single year by Abbot Selwood and the monks of Glastonbury Abbey. With high-quality timber a plentiful resource in medieval England, elaborate roofs, choir screens and bench ends like these began to transform church interiors and to reflect the wealth of their monastic and lay patrons.²



Literature

A. Gardner, *Minor English Wood Sculpture 1400–1550* (London, 1958)

N. Pevsner, *Somerset: South and West*, Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England (New Haven, 2014)

C. Tracy, *English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork* (London, 1988)

1, Pevsner mentions that at St Andrew's there are 'kneelers with poppyheads, the bench-ends traceried, an alphabet of forms current c. 1500.' See N. Pevsner, *Somerset: South and West*, Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England (New Haven, 2014), p. 357.
2, A. Gardner, *Minor English Wood Sculpture 1400–1550* (London, 1958), pp. 9–10.

A set of four traceried
pew ends from St
Andrews Church, High
Ham, Somerset



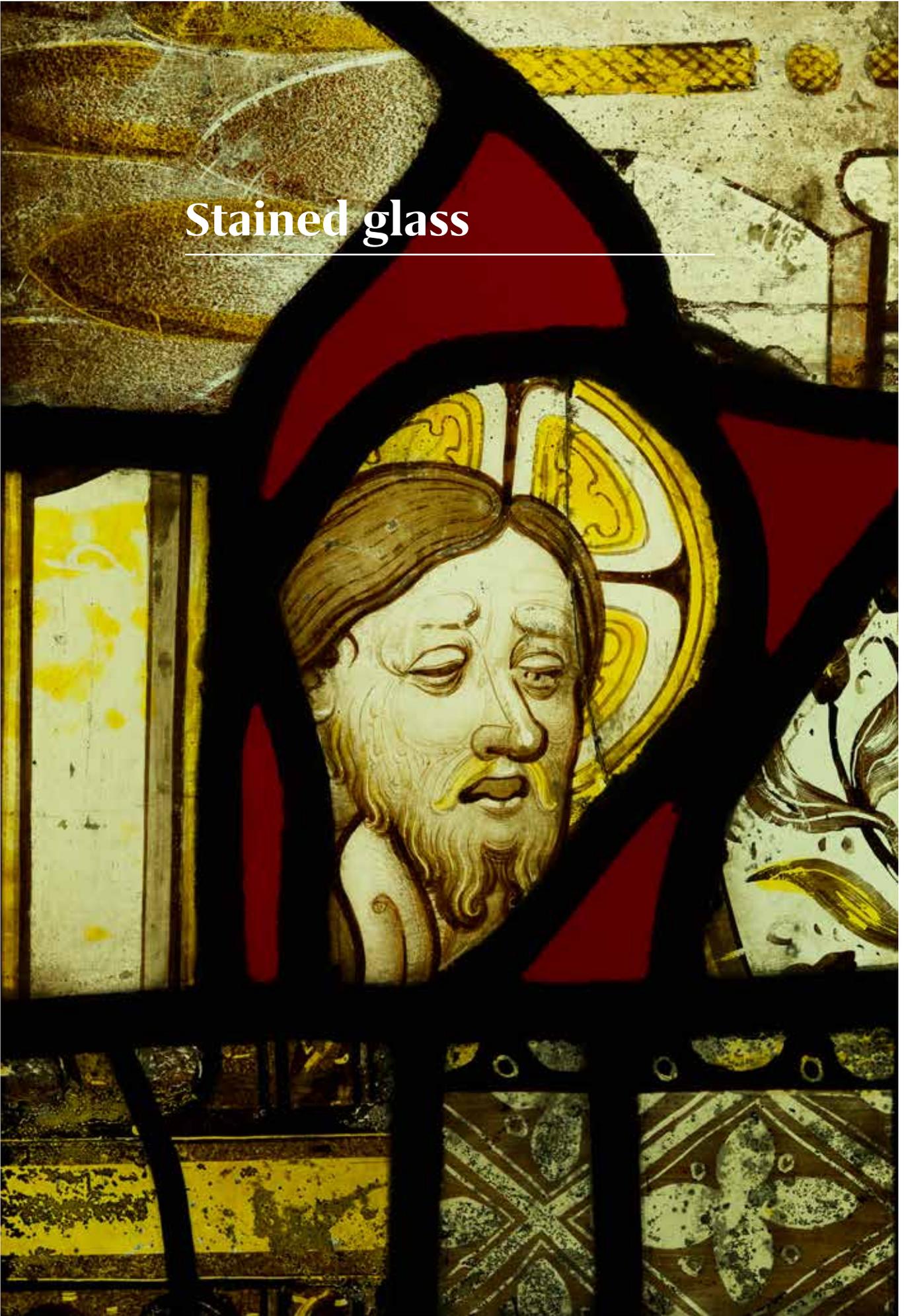


Fig. 1
St Andrew's Church, High Ham, Somerset, view of the nave looking East.



Fig. 2
One of the square-headed pews at St Andrew's, High Ham, showing similar foliate detailing within quatrefoil tracery elements.

Stained glass



Armorial shield with arms of de Vere, Earls of Oxford

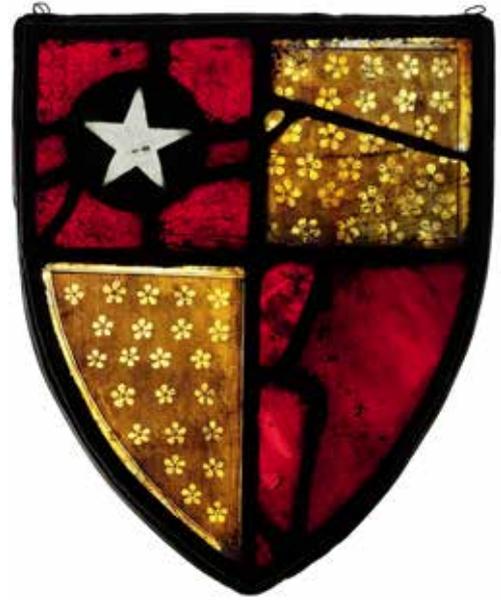
England
c. 1350–1400

297 × 244 mm; red pot-metal and clear glass, silver stain, brown paint.

Provenance
St Andrew's Church, High Ham
Private Collection, UK, until 2000

Condition
Some pitting, leaded and bonded breaks,
lower quarter in or a replacement.

A shield with the arms of the de Vere, Earls of Oxford: *quarterly gules and or, a mullet argent in the first quarter*. A similar shield belonging to Sir Hugh de Vere, (1264–1319) is now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Rogers Fund 1912, inv. 12.137.2) which shows: *quarterly gules and or a mullet argent in the first quarter, all within a bordure indented sable*. The Metropolitan Museum's shield corresponds with one bearing the arms of Sir Hugh de Vere, believed originally to have been located in the East Window of the Abbey Church of Saint-Peter and Saint-Paul in Dorchester. The de Vere family held numerous properties in Oxfordshire, Essex, and Suffolk. The first de Vere, Aubrey, was listed in the Domesday Book as owning lands in Essex and the family burial place was at Colne Priory in Essex. The priory was demolished, and in 1935 the surviving family tombs were moved to Saint Stephen's Chapel near Bures in Suffolk. Around the year 1300 side-chapels were added to the Abbey Church of Saint-Peter and Saint-Paul in Dorchester, and re-building continued into the fourteenth century. This panel like that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is probably from a local series of glazing for a church, perhaps Dorchester or indeed a secular setting, built where both families had influence.



Literature

J. Foster, *Some Feudal Coats of Arms* (Oxford, 1902)

E. A. Greening Lamborn, *The Armorial Glass of the Oxford Diocese 1250–1850* (Oxford, 1949), p.120–3, no.13, pl.47

J. Hayward, *English and French Medieval Stained Glass in the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, vol. I (New York, 2003), pp.240–2, illus.6.3, fig.1.

J. Morris ed., *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Countries of England*, vol. 32 (Chichester, 1875–92), pp.76a–78a.

N. Pevsner, *The buildings of England: Essex*, second edition, edited and revised by E. Radcliffe (Harmondsworth, 1965), p.164.

N. Pevsner, *The buildings of England: Sussex*, second edition, edited and revised by E. Radcliffe (Harmondsworth, 1974), p.125.

Composite panel with an angel

England
c. 1400–50

28.3 × 16 cm, clear glass with black paint,
a modern blue and yellow glass surround

Provenance

Private collection, Netherlands, until 2008
Private collection, England, until 2019

A stained-glass panel with a delightful figure of an angel set within a blue surround and framed by a yellow band of glass. The angel crosses its wings in front of itself and bows its head to our right. Stylistically, this type of figure is typical of English stained glass from the first half of the fifteenth-century, and due to its diminutive size, was most likely used in the decoration of a tracery light (the upper sections of a traceried window) in a small parish church. The slender body type, elongated feathers, and rounded, characterful facial features bear comparison to a number of other surviving angel figures in early fifteenth-century stained glass, such as a fragment showing a musician angel now at the V&A, London (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1
Angel playing a rebec
England
c. 1400–50
Clear glass with brown-black
pigment and silver stain
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum, inv. C.46–1926

Three Marys at the Tomb

England, Norwich
c. 1420–50

35.0 × 23.4 cm; clear crown glass with silver
stain and vitreous enamel.

Provenance

Art market, England, 2003

This fragment depicts two of the three holy women who, according to the Gospels, visited the tomb of Christ in order to anoint His body but found it empty. Instead, an angel appears and tells them that Christ has risen. The precise identification of these three women diverges across each of the Evangelical accounts, but it is generally accepted that they were Mary Magdalene, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salomé, as described by Mark.

Following technological developments in glass painting in the early part of the fourteenth century, stained glass production moved away from colouring with metallic oxides when molten and towards the process that has given it its name – a technique in which a compound of silver is painted onto the back of the glass and fused in place by firing to create a silver ‘stain’. After heating in the kiln, the silver compound turns yellow. Many panels from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are decorated simply in silver stain and highlighted, like ours, with a brown-black pigment. Since the technique reduced the amount of leading required, it allowed much greater freedom of composition.

The profile of the present fragment and the large voided areas of black around the main figure’s ointment pot suggest that it is fairly close to its original proportions, barring of course the break across the second figure’s face at the right edge of the panel. It is framed with a diamond border composed of quarries with the white rose of the House of York. It is a charming and typical example of work from the so-called Norwich school of glass-painting, and can be dated to the middle of the fifteenth century. Numerous examples in this style and from this date can be found in the church of St Peter Mancroft in Norwich, the church of Sts Peter and Paul in East Harling, Norwich cathedral, and elsewhere.



Literature

C. Woodforde, *The Norwich school of glass-painting in the fifteenth century* (London, New York, Toronto, 1950).

Head of Christ

England, Midlands?
c. 1480

Provenance
UK Art market, 2002

23 × 16.5 cm, composite panel of stained glass with silver stain on clear glass, modern red pot-metal glass, brown paint, hatching and back painting, bonded break.



A composite panel depicting the head of Christ, bearing a tormented expression, surrounded by various fragments of stained glass. Stylistically the glass painting on the head of Christ bears a close resemblance to a fragment now in the Side-Chapel at King's College Chapel, Cambridge.¹ By a process of simple hatching underneath and at the sides, the eyes are delineated on both and the nose is formed with the use of under-painting to define shading and tiny hatched lines to create form.

¹, H. Wayment, *King's College Chapel, Cambridge, The Side Chapel Glass* (Cambridge, 1998), no.27, p.77.

A composite roundel with the torso of an archangel

England
c. 1420–40

18.5 cm (diameter); pot-metal red, blue and clear glass with silver stain and black paint, pitting.

Provenance

Collection of Alfred Fisher, until 2003
English private collection



A composite roundel showing the lower torso of an armoured angel, almost certainly identifiable as Saint Michael, with his wings visible behind him. His right hand, shielded behind its gauntlet, carries a staff or sword with a cusped pommel. Framing the fragment are smaller, non-original inserts in coloured glass.

Angels were often included in English fifteenth-century tracery lights, but this fragment is so large that it implicates a glazing scheme of major scale and importance. Similarly large, armoured figures in fifteenth-century windows surviving in situ at St Winnow in Cornwall and elsewhere help to suggest something of the grandeur of such a scheme (fig. 1). Details in the armour, such as the pleated surcoat hemmed with rounded dags, and the heavy gold girdle picked out with deep yellow silver stain, suggest a date in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, since a number of illustrations in illuminated manuscripts along with dateable tomb effigies showing similarly tailored armour on knights have survived from this period.

Literature

T. Capwell, *Armour of the English Knight 1400–1450* (London, 2015).

A pair of tracery lights with Saints Lawrence and Stephen

England, York
c. 1430–50

Provenance
Private collection, England, before 2008

Each 37 × 15.5 cm; red and clear glass with silver stain and black vitreous paint, the body of the right-hand figure is a modern stopgap.



A pair of figures, Saint Lawrence and a deacon saint, stand before blood-red backdrops with glowing stars hovering above their heads. Both figures are tonsured, indicative of a monastic identity, and have large, circular halos delicately picked out with a narrow border of black paint. They wear ornate dalmatics decorated with a floral pattern and trimmed in gold. Lawrence holds a book in his left hand and his attribute – the gridiron – in his right, signifying the manner in which he was martyred. His companion now holds a censer with both hands, but would originally have been accompanied by another attribute. Since Lawrence is usually depicted together with Saint Stephen, it is almost certain that our figure can be identified as such, and therefore is likely to have held the stones of his martyrdom.

The cusped, shapely format of these panels indicates that we are looking at a pair of tracery lights, small fields of glass set into ornate mullions at the top of numerous English medieval church windows. Stylistically, the figures relate closely to mid fifteenth-century glass painting from York and its immediate environs. The restrained, pared back facial features are particularly characteristic of the York school: the large, round eyes with thick upper lids and the line of the lower lid extending upwards; the thin line connecting eyebrow to nose; the long noses and definition of the eyebrow; and the full mouths, are all typical of figurative glass from that centre. Such details compare particularly

Literature

- C. Woodforde, *English Stained and Painted Glass* (Oxford, 1954).
- J. Baker, *English Stained Glass of the Medieval Period* (London, 1978).
- B. Coe, *Stained Glass in England: 1150–1550* (London, 1981).
- P. Williamson, *Medieval and Renaissance Stained Glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 2003).

closely to the head of Saint William from the so-called 'Saint William window' in York Minster, painted c. 1422. ¹ The rosette pattern on the deacons' robes is also typical of glass from York, and can be found on the robes of the children in the Saint Mary Cleophas: Alphaeus and Children window in Holy Trinity Church, Goodramgate, York. ² There is another figure of Saint Lawrence from the chapel at Hampton Court Castle (Herefordshire), now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, which has long been associated with the work of the most famous name in glass painting from York, John Thornton of Coventry, who was responsible for the great East window at York Minster and other glazing programs in York. ³ The facial type is comparable and the figures follow the same formula as those in our panels, both being tonsured and wearing dalmatics, and both holding a book and gridiron. That example also attests to the movement of York painters during the period, some travelling long distances to fulfil commissions outside of the region. The stained glass in Newark, Nottinghamshire, which also has comparable figures to our panels, is another closely related example of York glass made for a church in another county. ⁴

1, C. Woodforde, *English Stained and Painted Glass* (Oxford, 1954), p. 23.

2, J. Baker, *English Stained Glass of the Medieval Period* (London, 1978), pl. 60.

3, P. Williamson, *Medieval and Renaissance Stained Glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 2003), cat. 32, p. 138.

4, B. Coe, *Stained Glass in England: 1150-1550* (London, 1981), p. 24.

Armorial shield, perhaps showing the arms of the Horne Family of Essex

England
c. 1450–75

22.5 × 20.5 cm; clear and red glass with silver stain and vitreous enamel.

Provenance

Probably acquired in the 1940s or 1950s by Rev. William and Bryan Hall, The Old Rectory, Banningham, Norfolk
Their sale, Bonhams Norwich, 3rd March 2004, lot 1350
John Kasmin collection

Condition

Weathering and pitting to the red glass and wear to the enamel.



A heraldic shield with a coat of arms sanguine, three hunting horns argent, perhaps made for the Horne family of Essex. The horns and their hanging straps are delicately picked out in dark enamel, their details enlivened through the careful application of silver stain, which would have been cold painted onto the back of the glass before firing to fuse the resultant lemon-yellow colour indelibly in place.

A large group of very similarly decorated heraldic shields variously dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century and now in the library of Balliol College, Oxford, provide strong evidence for dating the present shield accordingly. Another, showing the arms of Sir John Lacy of Cornwall, is preserved in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and has similarly been dated to the 1460s (fig. 1).¹

1, M. Caviness et al., *Stained Glass before 1700 in American Collections: Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern Seaboard States*, Corpus Vitrearum Checklist II, Volume 23 (Washington, 1987), p. 153).

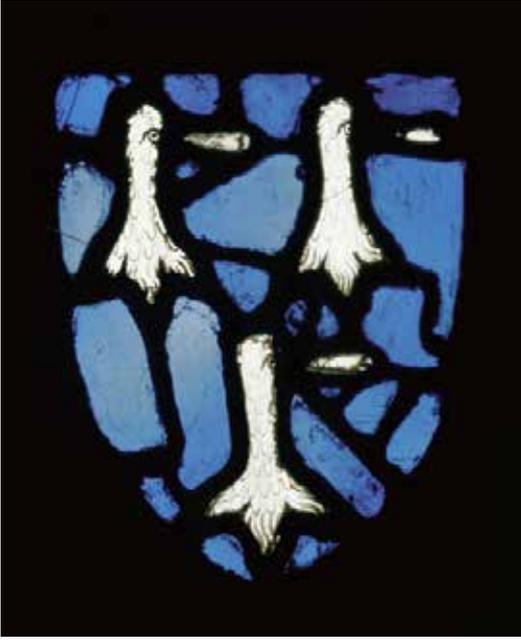


Fig. 1
Heraldic panel with the coat
of arms of Sir John lacy
England
c. 1460s-70s
24.1 × 19.4 cm; blue and clear
glass with black vitreous
enamel.
Philadelphia, Museum of Art,
inv. 1952-90-7

A composite panel with the Virgin Annunciate

England, perhaps Worcestershire
c. 1480–1500

54 × 33cm: clear, blue and red glass with
silver stain and vitreous brown and black
enamels.

Provenance

Sotheby's Amsterdam, 1st December 1996
English private collection

This large, rectangular composite panel centres on the haloed head of the Virgin of the Annunciation, wearing a pearled filet over her unbound blonde hair. She looks to our left towards rays of light on which appears the Holy Spirit in the guise of a dove, representing the moment of Christ's conception. Behind her is a dense background design of wiry foliage picked out using the *sgraffito* or 'sticklighting' method, in which a dark wash is applied over the surface of the glass before being scratched away with the back of the brush or another pointed tool in order to reveal the clear glass beneath. Immediately surrounding the Virgin's head are a number of small silver stain fragments set into a roundel arrangement, which in turn is framed by tall gabled sideshafts supported on ornate corbels that overhang images of birds with outstretched wings. Small heraldic quarries appear above and below.

Although made up from diverse fifteenth-century elements, this vivid composite panel showcases the wide array of imagery, decoration, and ornamental formulae developed over the course of the fifteenth century by English glaziers. The iconographic decision to show the Virgin with unbound hair is a feature of a number of contemporary Annunciation windows, including an example preserved in situ in the church at East Harling in Norfolk, dateable to c. 1480.¹ Yet the stylistic treatment of the head and several of the surrounding fragments and quarries on our panel suggests a centre further West than Norfolk, perhaps in Worcestershire or its environs, since windows of comparable treatment survive at Great Malvern Priory, and have been securely dated to around 1500 (fig. 1).²



1, B. Coe, *Stained Glass in England: 1150–1550* (London, 1981), pp. 80–81.

2, See in particular G. McNeil Rushforth, *Medieval Christian Imagery* (Oxford, 1936) and R. Marks, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* (Toronto/ Buffalo, 1993).

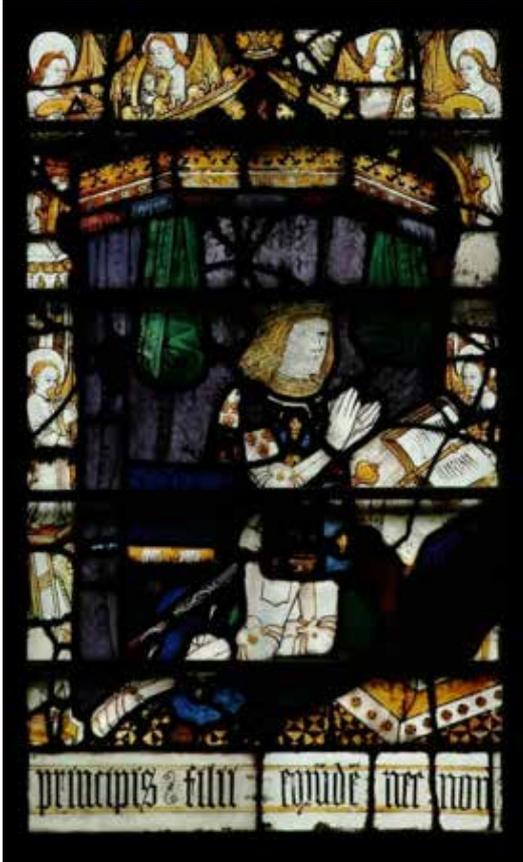


Fig. 1
Prince Arthur Kneeling
in Prayer
c. 1501
Worcestershire, Great
Malvern Priory, north
transept (window nVI)

A composite lancet panel showing a ministering angel

England
c. 1500, with 14th- and 15th-century
stopgaps

56.5 × 23 cm; blue, red, and clear glass
with silver stain and vitreous enamel.

Provenance
Private collection, Germany, until 2012

Like the panel showing the Virgin Annunciate in this catalogue (cat. 41), this rectangular window is a composite piece made of a number of different fragments and quarries of medieval glass. The half-length central figure is that of a ministering angel, who holds a book in his left hand and raises his right to the level of his chest. The difference in scale between the figure's head and the rest of his visible body suggests that although the glass may date to a roughly similar period however, they do not belong together. The treatment of the angel's face, with its bright complexion and ornate, scrolling locks of hair, place it in the early years of the sixteenth century. The decoration of his robes, with swirling foliate sprays reminiscent of brocaded cloth, can be found employed in the same manner in a number of English windows dateable to the second half of the fifteenth century, a date range that also applies to much of the architectural surround. The top of the panel is shaped into a cusped head, which indicates that it was set into the upper section of a shaped lancet window with curving mullions. The stopgaps used to fill the spandrels on each side of the main section and turn it into its present rectangular format appear to be much earlier, and find closer parallels in the fourteenth century.



An oval composite panel of quarries painted with Yorkist symbols

England, York?
c. 1480

Provenance

Probably acquired in the 1940s or 1950s
by Rev. William and Bryan Hall, The Old
Rectory, Banningham, Norfolk
Their sale, Bonhams Norwich, 3rd March
2004, lot 1354



This composite panel incorporates glass of varying dates, the most striking of which bear symbols of Yorkist allegiance, a crowned white rose, a white rose *en soleil* (for Edward IV) and a falcon displayed.

Yorkist symbols and signs of allegiance to the family were used to ornament a rich array of objects in private and public settings alike, from liturgical furniture such as pews (as at Tansor and Hemington, removed from Fotheringhay in 1573) or screens (such as can still be found at Worcester cathedral), to textiles and stained glass. Closely related glass survives in situ, although much rearranged, at Holy Trinity Church in Tattershall, Lincolnshire, made for or in commemoration of William Waynfilet (d. 1486), Bishop of Worcester, one of Lord Cromwell's executors.

1, Richard Marks in Richard Marks and Paul Williamson eds, *Gothic: Art for England 1400–1547*, 2003, no. 67, p. 203.

Bust of an Angel holding a scourge

England, West Country?
c. 1480

23.5 × 17 cm; clear glass with silver stain
and vitreous enamel, set into an oval panel
of clear glass.

Provenance

From an aristocratic European collection
amassed in the nineteenth century
Christie's London, 15th December 1998,
lot 49



The bust-length figure of an angel wearing an alb holds a three-line scourge in front of his body. Clearly intended to relate to a larger scene since he looks not out at us but towards something to our right, he most likely acted as one of a group of angelic supporters positioned around an image of Christ, holding the instruments of his Passion for the viewer to contemplate. His charming smile, rounded facial type and loose, voluminous hairstyle are all features typical of late fifteenth-century glass preserved in a number of English churches, particularly in the West Country (fig. 1), although his survival as a single fragment makes more precise localization is extremely difficult.



Fig. 1
Edward, Prince of Wales
c. 1480
Devon, Coldridge,
Church of St Matthew

Roundel showing a woman harvesting hay: August, from a series of the Labours of the Months

England, Norwich
Attributed to John Wattock (active in
Norwich, 1495–1540)

Provenance

Presumed to have been made for the house
of Thomas Pykerell (d. 1545), 1 Rosemary
Lane, Norwich
By repute, installed at Marsham Church
along with a sister group depicting the
Nine Heroes
Moved to Brandiston Hall, Norfolk, by at
least the middle of the nineteenth century
Installed at Brandiston Hall until c. 1985
Private collection, until 2011

26.5 cm (diameter); clear, purple, and green
glass with silver stain and vitreous enamel

Exhibited

University of East Anglia, Norwich, 14th
September 2013 – 24th February 2014

Published

Christopher Woodforde, *The Norwich School
of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century*
(Oxford, 1950).
K. Ayre, *Medieval English Figurative Roundels*
(Oxford, 2002), pp. xlv and 163–5; with full
bibliography.
D. King, 'The Brandiston Hall Roundels', in
Vidimus (June 2012).



This remarkable roundel, showing a woman harvesting hay with a hand-held scythe, is one of a series of twelve believed to have been made for the home of the mercer and three-time mayor of Norwich Thomas Pykerell during the expansion of his house in Rosemary Lane (fig. 1). The only medieval building still preserved in the street, the front range of the house was enlarged by Pykerell in 1525. The eighteenth-century antiquarian John Kirkpatrick (d. 1728) describes seeing two large windows, one depicting Nine heroes, and the other the Labours of the Months, in a house in Norwich fitting the address and description of Pykerell's at Rosemary Lane. Of the original suite of twelve roundels, each one depicting a month of the year, eight are known to have survived: four now reside in the Norwich Castle Museum, two in the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the remaining two, of which this is one, are in an English private collection. In the present roundel, a woman clothed in purple bends down to cut a handful of golden wheat in a field bordered by trees and giving on to a townscape beyond. The

elongated spire and upper crotchets of a church structure – closely resembling that of the Romanesque cathedral in Norwich – peak out above the harvest at the centre of the landscape.

Within the border at the top of the roundel, and in each of its surviving counterparts, is a twisting loop of fictive yellow cord, suggesting that the whole series may have been visually and literally ‘tied’ together within the larger glazing scheme. It also imitates the manner in which contemporary panel paintings are believed to have been hung from ribbons and cords fixed through their frames, effectively imitating other media with sophisticated illusionism.

During the later Middle Ages, Norwich laid claim to one of the most flourishing schools of glass-painting in the whole of England. Some of the great masterpieces of fifteenth-century Norwich glass include the great East window of St. Peter Mancroft, as well as the windows of East Harling church, and numerous other sites across Norfolk and Suffolk. Yet almost nothing of sixteenth-century Norwich glass has survived, and the group of roundels to which this object belongs are unique documents not only of pre-Reformation stained glass production in that centre, but across the whole of late-medieval England. As David King has noted, they can be compared with the figures of the four Evangelists painted in 1522 and preserved in fragmentary states in the east window of St Peter Hungate in Norwich (fig. 2), but few other parallels of comparable quality are preserved elsewhere. Clearly encouraged to experiment with the medium, the presumed maker of these roundels John Wattock sought to create absolutely up-to-the-minute works of art, and drew heavily on Netherlandish imagery and its influences for the purpose. A similar stylistic approach was taken at the parish church in Fairford, glazed shortly after 1500 by the Flemish glazier Barnard Flower (d. 1517) who travelled to England to work at the royal court. Yet unlike Flower, Wattock is thought to have been born in Norfolk, and thus represents one of the first generation of indigenous English artists to imbibe imported Flemish influences into local production.



Fig. 1
Thomas Pykerell's Norwich house, now number 7, Rosemary Lane



Fig. 2
One of a set of four Evangelists
1522
Norwich, St Peter Hungate

A crowned heraldic escutcheon with the arms of Henry Manners (1526–1563), 2nd Earl of Rutland

England, London
c. 1560 (after 1559)

Provenance
Private Collection, France

50 × 33 cm (roundel); 57 × 39.3 cm
(including clear glass surround): blue, red,
yellow, clear and purple glass with silver
stain and vitreous enamel, set in an 18th-
or 19th-century leadlight quarried panel.

Condition

Some minor breaks repaired with string
leads, and thin plain yellow glass inserts on
the left and right sides of the Garter.

A large heraldic roundel displaying the arms of Henry Manners, 2nd Earl of Rutland and 14th Baron de Ros of Helmsley (1526–1563). Heraldry was a key feature of the richest sixteenth-century domestic glazing schemes. The large dining areas and halls were the usual setting for such displays, since it was here that the head of the family feasted with his household and guests. These eye-catching decorations not only advertised wealth, but also proclaimed lineage and social alliances. A number of armorial panels with similar stylistic and technical details are preserved in the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, many of which were taken from English noble houses and are very likely of London manufacture (fig. 1).

Henry Manners was an English nobleman who, after the untimely death of Edward VI in 1553, and the subsequent death of Edward Courtenay 1st Earl of Devon in 1556, stood for a short time as Heir presumptive, being the senior male descendent of Richard 3rd Duke of York (James VI/I would not be born until 1566). His descent can be traced through Anne of York, Duchess of Exeter, and he became a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I who made him a Knight of the Garter in 1559, a title which informed the inclusion of the Order around the central escutcheon on the present panel. On 24th February in the same year he was made Lord President of the North and in 1561 an ecclesiastical commissioner for the reforms of the Church of England that resulted in the Act of Settlement. During a short but illustrious military career (he died at the age of 36), he was also made Warden of the Scottish Marches, and served as Captain-general of the cavalry at the siege of St Quentin under Mary I in 1557. He oversaw the completion of Belvoir Castle, which remains the seat of the Manners family, and is buried in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Bottesford, Leicestershire, where his ornate alabaster tomb still survives (fig. 3). It is likely that our armorial panel was made to adorn the family home at Belvoir but removed during one of several rebuilding campaigns from 1654 onwards.





Fig. 1
Arms of William Parr, Earl
of Essex
England, from Cassiobury
House, Herefordshire
c. 1545–55
61 × 36.8 cm; clear, red, blue
and green glass with silver
stain and vitreous enamel.
Philadelphia, Museum of Art,
inv. 1952-90-10



Fig. 3
Tomb of Henry Manners
(1526–1563)
English sculptor
Third quarter sixteenth
century
Bottesford, Church of St
Mary the Virgin



Edward the Confessor

England, attributable to Clayton and Bell
c. 1880, incorporating fourteenth-century
elements

53 × 30.5 cm; red, green, blue, and clear
glass with silver stain and vitreous enamel.
Several repaired breaks to the figure and
scroll.

Provenance

Private collection, Northwest England

This intriguing Victorian window panel shows Saint Edward the Confessor kneeling on a plush green cushion, wearing ermine-trimmed robes and holding the model of a chapel and a ceremonial staff. He appears before a re cloth of honour emblazoned with entwined crowns and fleurs-de-lys, and is framed by a scroll that meets a diaper-pattern ribbon in the manner of an architectural arch. In the space above is a blue background patterns with foliage and, at top left, the coat of arms of King Edward. The vast majority of the panel's glass quarries are dateable to the late nineteenth-century and therefore attest to the potent interest in, and aesthetic revival of, English art and craftsmanship of the Middle Ages. Yet, remarkably for glass of the modern period, the band of clear glass decorated with diaper pattern of quatrefoils and crosshatching, the top of the model chapel's spire, and three of the green quarries surrounding it are all medieval glass, and are dateable to the fourteenth century. While many medieval windows were restored and revised by zealous nineteenth-century restorers, this is a seemingly unique example of the use of early medieval fragments to inspire an otherwise entirely modern design.

The sharply defined features of the figure's face and the blue background above the inscribed scroll on our panel are identical in treatment to a number of window schemes painted in the workshop of Clayton and Bell, one of the foremost glazing firms of the nineteenth century. Comparison can be drawn to their series of lancet panels painted in 1881 for St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and to the program at Hull Minster, created in 1880, among many others (figs. 1–2).



Fig. 1 (left)
Clayton and Bell
The Arrest of Christ,
detail
1881
Norwich, St Peter
Mancroft, East window



Fig. 2 (right)
Clayton and Bell
Faith and Hope in
Adversity, detail
1880
Hull Minster

A leaf from the 'Hungerford Hours', showing Christ amongst All Saints inhabiting an initial 'S'

England, East Anglia
c. 1330

Provenance

Alan G. Thomas (1911–1992) and Charles Ede (1921–2002), by December 1969
Friedrich Georg Zeileis (b.1939) until 2009
Private collection UK

c. 165 × 100 mm; single folio from an illuminated manuscript on parchment, ruled in brown ink for 17 lines of text written in a fine gothic bookhand, verso with large historiated initial 'S' with foliate extensions around all four sides of the leaf. The recto prayer has a two-line illuminated foliate initial with long marginal extension. Line-fillers in tooled gold, pink, and blue, with white ornament, verse initials alternately gold with blue penwork (faded on the verso) or blue with red penwork. The edges cropped, the recto with offsets, the verso border mostly cropped, the historiated initial somewhat cropped, worn, and smudged.

Published

F.G. Zeileis, 'Pü ridon le carte': *Buchmalerei aus Mittelalter und Renaissance: Katalog einer Privatsammlung* (Gallsbach, 2002), no. 138 (col. ill.); (Rauris, 2007), no. 152 (col. ill.); (Rauris, 2009), no. 152 (col. ill.) ('Ostengland um 1330').



Literature

- J. Backhouse, 'An English Calendar circa 1330,' in *Fine Books and Book Collecting: Books and Manuscripts Acquired from Alan G. Thomas and Described by His Customers on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by C. de Hamel and R. Linenthal (Leamington Spa, 1981), pp. 8–10 (ill. of fol. 1v).
- L. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385* (London, 1986), no. 81 and figs. 208, 212–215
- M.A. Michael, 'Destruction, Reconstruction and Invention: The Hungerford Hours and English Manuscript Illumination of the Early Fourteenth Century,' *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700*, 2 (1990), pp. 33–108, passim and pls. 1–5.
- C. de Hamel and S. Cooper, 'The Hungerford Hours,' in *Tributes to Adelaide Bennett Hagens: Manuscripts, Iconography, and the Late Medieval Viewer*, ed. by J. K. Golden (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 355–69, at pp. 355–58 and Fig. (col. ill.).

This leaf belongs to the highly-celebrated and much studied Hungerford Hours, so named after the obits of Robert Lord Hungerford (d.1459) and his wife Margaret Botreaux (d.1478), added to the manuscript's calendar by its late 15th century owner. It is a fine and impressive example of the

desirable East Anglian school of illumination, and though the text of the manuscript is predominately written in Latin, this leaf includes parts of two, probably unique, Anglo-Norman texts.

The large historiated initial 'S' depicts a bust of Christ with a cruciform halo surrounded by the heads of St Peter and other saints, including at least one woman. These are finely drawn in ink, with lips and cheeks picked out in red. Michael A. Michael identified the artist with that of a Psalter at Schloss Herdringen in Germany (Fürstenburgische Bibliothek, MS 8), to whom Lucy Sandler has also attributed the Beatus page of a Psalter at Oxford (All Souls College, MS 7),¹ and the Canon of the Mass in the Tiptoft Missal (New York, Morgan Library, MS M.107).² Sandler remarks that the illuminator 'drew faces with square jaws, arching eyebrows, jutting noses and stubborn mouths',³ as seen on the present leaf. That he worked only on the two most important pages of the the Tiptoft Missal and All Souls Psalter clearly indicates his relative status among contemporary illuminators.

The dating of this manuscript can be supported by the dating of manuscripts attributed to the same hand. The Tiptoft Missal is datable 1311–1332, and includes clues that suggest it was intended for use in the diocese of Ely; one of its illuminators also contributed to the Stowe Breviary (London, BL, Stowe MS 12), which is datable 1322–1325 and has a calendar for use in the diocese or Norwich. The All Souls College Psalter is not precisely datable or localisable, but it does contain clues that point to intended use in the diocese of Norfolk or Ely: feasts of Sts Wilfred, Etheldreda, and Winwaloe. Thus all three manuscripts point to a date in the 1320s–30s and a localisation in East Anglia. The East Anglian origin is further corroborated by other leaves from the Hungerford Hours: the calendar includes an exceptionally unusual feast of St Guthlac, of Crowland Abbey, and the litany of saints includes 'Seynte Audree' (i.e. St Etheldreda, of Ely).

- 1, L. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*, London, 1986, no. 82 and fig. 209.
 2, *ibid.*, no. 78 and full-page colour fig. 199.
 3, *ibid.*, p. 85.



A leaf from the 'Hungerford Hours', detail (left) and reverse (right)



Bible, with Prologues and the Interpretation of Hebrew names

England, probably Oxford
c. 1240

Provenance

John Bowen (1756–1832), inscribed
'Johannes Bowen / Anno .Ætat 70. / Annoque Domini 1826'
Matthew Holbeche Bloxam (1805–1888), of
Rugby, 1865
Rugby School, Warwickshire, MS Bloxham
1005, with their armorial bookplate,
deaccessioned in 2018

c. 260 × 180 mm (folio); decorated manuscript
in Latin on parchment, 275 folios, with large
foliate initials at the Biblical books, Prologues,
and main divisions of the Psalms, in colour on
coloured grounds, some extending almost the
full height of the page, the Interpretations of
Hebrew names opening with a fine-four-line
flourished puzzle initial, in a 19th century
polished brown calf binding with gilt letters
on spine. Initials excised from fols. 107, 109,
112, 120, 135, 143, 174, 179, 180, and 240; the
margin of fol. 1 torn and repaired, the margin
of fol. 2 torn, the upper margin of fol. 173
sliced, and with occasional marginal staining,
the edges and corners of the binding scuffed



The early provenance of this ornate bible is unclear but it seems to have remained in England since its creation. There are annotations from previous owners and readers in English from the 13th century to the late-18th or early-19th century, 'Jacobus [...]', (fol. 1r), and 16th century scribbles, pen-trials and inscriptions in various English hands including 'Wylla[m] Church' (fol. 51r), 'John Shurley' (?) (fol. 150v), 'Rollaunde Sinibesse' (?) (fol. 249v), and 'Yevane Fairburn of maudale [?]' (fol. 275v), one with the date 'anno domini 1556' (fol. 166r).

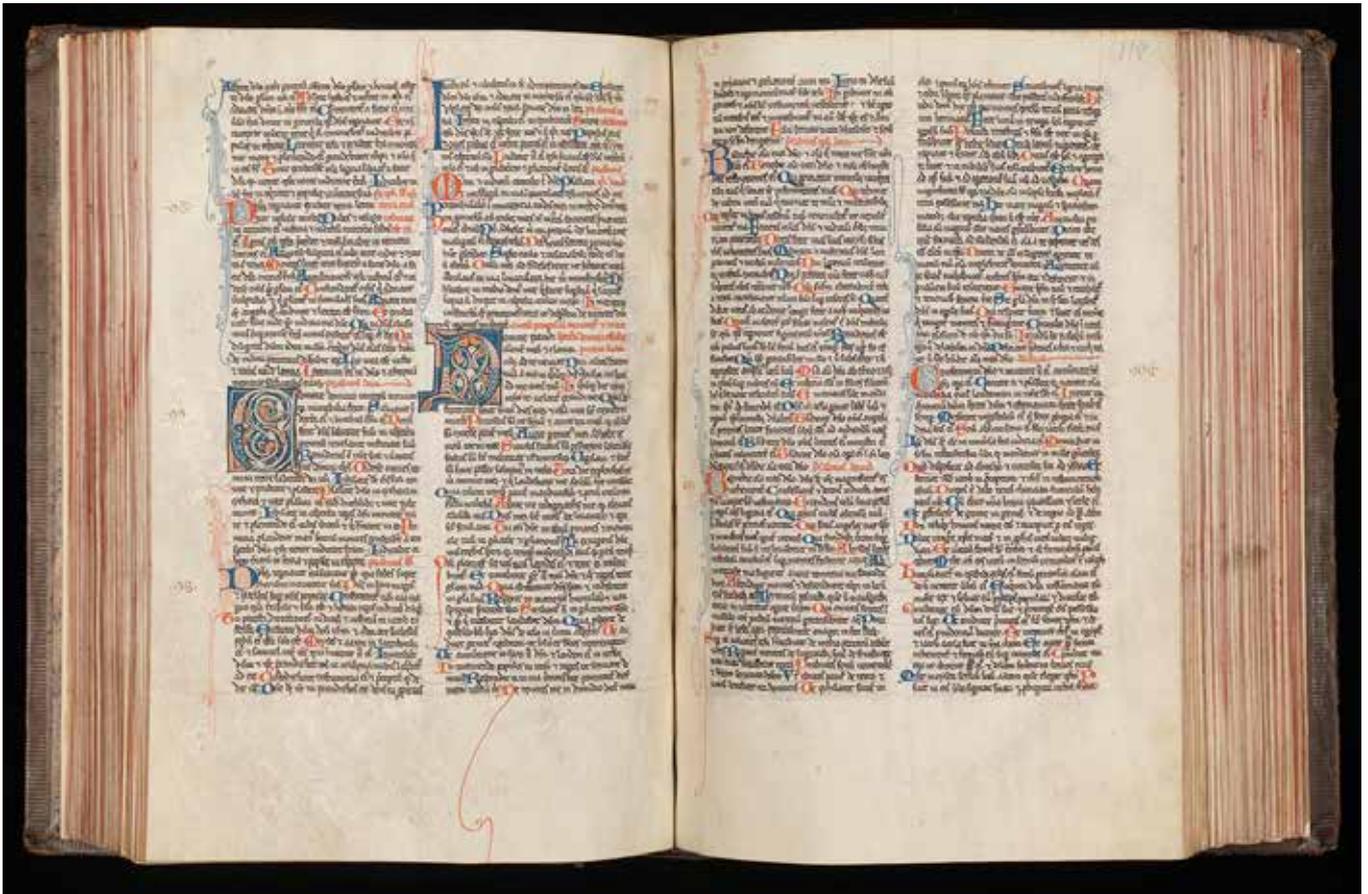
It is profusely decorated with foliate initials many including animals, such as fish, birds, dragons and quadrupeds. The decoration does not use gold but by the standards of medieval Bibles, most of which have initials in plain red and blue inks, it is lavishly decorated with coloured

pigments and representational features such as animals and dragons. The Interpretations of Hebrew names contains a penwork drollery in the lower margin depicting a man with axe and shield. Typical of Oxford manuscripts, including those illuminated by William de Brailes, are the orange and blue dragons with long wavy ears, with which a number of initials terminate (fig. 1).

In the Old Testament, chapters begin with a coloured initial but not on a new line; chapter numbers are therefore set in the margins; by the middle of the 13th century (and especially in the second half of the century) it was normal for each chapter to start on a new line, and for spaces to be left for the incorporation of the chapter numbers within the columns of text. The fact that the first line of text on each page is written below the top ruled line suggests a date no earlier than c. 1230. This manuscript probably belongs to precisely the moment when Bible production in Oxford was entering its first professional phase, stimulated by the establishment of the Franciscan and Dominican houses in the city, and had not yet begun to emulate Paris in the production of pocket-sized volumes written in minutely small script.



Fig. 1
Detail from the William
de Brailes Bible
England, Oxford
London, Gray's Inn, MS 24



The Beauchamp-Corbet Hours

Illuminated by the DuBois Master and associates

England (London or Oxford?)
1320s

Provenance

Made for Beatrice Beauchamp (d. 1347)
Willoughby family of Lincolnshire, by the end of the 14th century
Edmé François Marie Boileau de Maulaville (1759–1826)
Private collection, France, sold at Osenat, Fontainebleau, 30 March 2003
Cornelia Funke, Los Angeles

165 × 110 mm (folio); illuminated manuscript in Latin and Anglo-Norman French on parchment, 194 folios, 17 large and 22 small historiated initials, 8 calendar miniatures, 16 large marginal heraldic shields, every text page illuminated with borders, generally in good condition, portions of two calendar leaves excised, cuts in the margin of fol. 39, some flaking and smudging of pigments, some marginal decoration (notably some of the shields) cropped, some overall wear. In a 17th/18th century gilt and blind-stamped brown leather binding, worn, carefully re-backed with the old spine re-used.

This lavishly illuminated manuscript is an exceptionally rare example of a 14th century English Book of Hours, whose first owner is identifiable thanks to the profusion of heraldic devices that decorate the borders and historiated initials. It was made for Beatrice of Beauchamp, whose arms are seen in the first major initial of three female figures dressed in heraldic surcoats, along with that of the Fitzalan family (f.17r).

Throughout the manuscript the heraldry of seven English noble families is depicted. Beatrice's family Beauchamp of Hache, that of her first husband Piers II Corbet (d.1322), her second husband John Leyburn (d.1348) and other related families from Shropshire and neighbouring regions: Fitzalan, Fitzwarin, Lestrangle (or Le Strange of Knockyn), Warrene and Leigh (or Lye). The Corbet shields and women dressed in the Corbet arms are quite prominent and suggest that the manuscript was made either when Beatrice was still married to Corbet, or after his death and one or more of his female relations ordered the manuscript as a gift to maintain the bond with his widow. The date 1329 is written in Roman numerals at the top of the calendar on f.1. This is close to the date of the Beatrice's second marriage and may have been added at the same time as much of the heraldry in the margins including that of the Leyburn and Lestrangle families.

The Calendar is illustrated in the lower margin with the Occupations of the Months. The major texts and textual divisions are illustrated with historiated initials 8 lines high accompanied by a four-sided border. This includes the Hours of the Holy Spirit, illustrated with three ladies: one wearing the arms of the Beauchamp family, flanked by two smaller ladies wearing the arms of the Fitzalan family; above them the Dove of the Holy Spirit; to the left of the initial a young woman with a hawk on her wrist, a dog at her feet, and a gold letter "B" (presumably for "Beatrice" and/or "Beauchamp") next to her head. The major historiated initials depict scenes from Life of the Virgin and following this, the seven penitential psalms are illustrated with a lady wearing the Beauchamp arms, kneeling before a seated Dominican confessor who blesses her. The office of the dead is illustrated by a funeral procession for a dog, and Job on the dungheap, tormented by a devil. The slightly smaller historiated initials (6 lines high) include various other figures and saints, such as a Dominican monk, God the Father blessing, the Three Marys, and ladies in contemporary costumes holding coats of arms.

The suffrages to saints and for Peace (typically 5 lines high) are illustrated with historiated initials that include the Virgin and Child, Pentecost, the Trinity and various saints. The small initials (2 lines high) often contain heads such as that of a bishop, a young layman, a monk, a woman, and perhaps Christ. A number of pages have drolleries or vignettes in the margins, e.g. a man fighting a dragon, people playing



Literature

K. A. Smith, "A 'Viewing Community' in Fourteenth-Century England", in *The Social Life of Illumination*, ed. by Joyce Coleman et al. (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 121-176

L. F. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285-1385*, 2 vols. (London, 1986)

O. Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. 3: British, Irish, and Icelandic Schools* (Oxford, 1973)

musical instruments, hunting scenes (dogs chasing deer, rabbits, etc), and borders sometimes have figures, e.g. a king, a bishop. etc.

Four artists appear to have collaborated in the illumination of the present book of hours. The leading illuminator was responsible for the historiated initials in the Hours of the Virgin except for None; his colours are bright, his draughtsmanship crisp, and his gold backgrounds highly burnished, though the figures can be rather stiff and wooden. The majority of the remaining illumination is by a second artist. A third artist only executed the initial marking the None in the Hours of the Virgin; his palette is softer, and the older men have blue-grey hair.

The main artist is known as the DuBois Master, as he was the main artist of the Hours of Hawisia DuBois (New York, Morgan Library, MS M.700). Lucy Freeman Sandler describes him as “one of the more prolific of surviving artists of the first half of the century, for his hand is one of those in the Milemete Treatises (nos. 84 and 85, Hand II), and, together with some of the other Milemete artists, he seems to have contributed to various folio legal and historical texts”, namely: Boniface VIII, *Liber Sextus* in Cambridge (Gonville and Caius College, MS 257/662), and three manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The Milemete Group was active in the 1320s, and takes its name from Walter of Milemete’s treatise *De nobilitatibus, sapientiis, et prudentiis regum*, a mirror of princes, perhaps written c. 1325–1327 in London for the young Edward III. But the DuBois Master also contributed to several manuscripts probably written in Oxford (which is also closer to the lands of the Beauchamp and Corbet families), and this is therefore likely to be the place where the present manuscript was produced.

- 1, K. A. Smith, “A ‘Viewing Community’ in Fourteenth-Century England”, in *The Social Life of Illumination*, ed. by Joyce Coleman et al. (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 135–54.
- 2, L. F. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385* (London, 1986), Vol II, no. 88, and <http://corsair.morganlibrary.org>.
- 3, (i) a Book of Hours (MS Douce 231), (ii) Boniface VIII, *Liber Sextus* (MS. e Mus. 60), and (iii) a historical collection including works by Bede, William of Malmesbury, et al. (MS. Bodl. 712. On the three Oxford manuscripts see O. Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. 3: British, Irish, and Icelandic Schools* (Oxford, 1973), nos. 575, 577, 587, respectively).



The Beauchamp-Corbet Hours (left and detail below)



The missing volume of the Tavistock Breviary

England, perhaps Oxford
c. 1310–20

Provenance

The long-lost sister volume of the Tavistock Breviary in the Morgan Library in New York, MS. M.329
Nicholas de Moels, 2nd Baron Moels (+1316) (obits added to the Morgan volume)
Richard Sterne (1596–1683), Archbishop of York (inscription in the Morgan volume)
Bernard Quaritch Ltd, A Catalogue of Rare and Valuable Books, catalogue no.328 (January 1914), no. 580, rebound for them
Allan Heywood Bright (1862–1941), nephew of Henry Yates Thompson, his bookplate on the front pastedown
Private collection, by descent, until 2014

c. 153 × 100 mm (folio); illuminated manuscript in Latin on parchment, 256 folios, some rubbing with loss to pigment and gold, text to opening leaves affected by damp, five marginal vellum repairs, inner margins strengthened on final versos or quires; bound in chestnut-brown morocco c. 1913 by or under the supervision of Douglas Cockerell (1870–1945) (fol.i verso inscribed in pencil 'Bound by D. Cockerell')



This manuscript is the long-lost sister volume of the celebrated Tavistock Breviary in the Morgan Library, which includes the feast of St Eustace in the calendar as major feast and two other uncommon feasts, 'Ruthonis' (1 June), and the Cornish saint, Petroc (4 June), who was also venerated in Devon. It has thus been determined that the manuscript was intended for use in the church of Sts Eustace and Rumon in Tavistock and various early obits that suggest 14th century ownership in Devon support this. The stag of St Eustace (with a cross between its antlers) appears twice in the margins of the Morgan volume (fig. 1), as well as in the lower margins of the present manuscript (fols.13v and 166r). The original Breviary was divided into two volumes by the 17th century, as the Morgan Volume is described as bound in 17th century

Literature

L. F. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 5, 2 vols. (London, 1986).

English brown calf. This volume is complete in itself.

The manuscript has ten historiated initials on gold ground, which include the Angel Gabriel holding a scroll, the Nativity, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Three Kings holding their gifts, the Resurrection of Christ, Pentecost, and Christ enthroned. The initials are accompanied by full or partial borders of foliage and figures, naturalistic birds and other charming scenes. These scenes include a jousting monkey riding on the back of a dragon, a youth tuning a harp, a youth sitting cross-legged playing a psalter, a man playing bagpipes, heads of kings and bishops, a jester with a bell hanging from the tip of his hat, Moses (with horns), and other human-animal hybrids.

The lively drolleries inhabiting the borders that mark the major texts, and the profusion of humorous figures and heads drawn in the margins of almost every page make this a delightfully appealing manuscript. Genre details such as the huntsman with a duck tied round his waist, and the shepherds playing hockey, are excellent examples of the sort which flourished in English manuscripts of the late 13th and early 14th century. The disparities of scale, variety in technique (full body-colour alongside colour ink outline drawing), juxtaposition of naturalistic details with stylised narratives, and the fantasy hybrids, are characteristic features of English illumination and they reappear throughout the 14th century. Although differing in format, quality, and border forms there are broad similarities with the Pabraham-Clifford Hours (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 242) and the Vaux Psalter (London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 233) in the manner in which the disparate elements are brought together, and quite precise similarities in some of the naturalistic and grotesque inclusions; for example, the large blue jay, the lion (fol.4r-v) and the large-headed backward-looking bipeds. In addition, it may be relevant that the Vaux Psalter includes in its decoration the arms of the Moels family (*cf.* Provenance, above). Sandler suggests that these two manuscripts may have been produced in the Midlands, in which case Oxford might have been the most obvious centre for the dissemination of the style.



Fig. 1
Tavistock Breviary, fol. 16v
Morgan Library, New York,
MS M.329



The missing volume of the
Tavistock Breviary (detail)

*i. a. Se
i. p. ayi
ox. ucs.
oclos et
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tuet col
to. p. b.
omni co.
di pi. ai
b. Hora
ingens.
x. v. bo
ite omni
orest in
ni pe est
E. a. m.
ertet do?
o. a. pi
b. Egre
l. a. i.
tur aut
ul i die
omni ex
ie libu*

munitionum. et super
omnes naues thar
sis et super omne
quod visu pulchrum est.
v. Ecce ungo accipiet.
Equabitur sub
linitas hominum:
et humiliabitur
altitudo unorum. Et
exaltabitur solus
dominus in die illa:
et ydola penitus con
tereuntur. Et introi
bunt in speluncas pe
tray et in uo:agi
nes terre a facie for
midinis domini. et a
gloria maiestatis eius.
cum surrexerit pene
terram. *ix. Oblatio*
dne mitte que nullum
et uide afflictione ppli
tu sicut locutus es



The Benfield Hours

Southern Netherlands, Bruges
c.1400, with early fifteenth-century English
additions

Provenance

Unidentified English female owner
Benfield Family of Hangleton, Sussex, by 1414
Harries Family of Micheldever, Hampshire,
early 16th century
Stanesby Family of Micheldever, Hampshire,
by descent, from c. 1548 – 1602
Henry Edmund Guise Tyndale M.B.E. (1887–
1948), sold at Sotheby's, 28 June 1948, lot 218
'The Property of a Gentleman', sold at
Sotheby's, 10 November 1952, lot 76
Frederick Fermor-Hesheth (1916–55), 2nd
Baron Hesketh
Private collection until 2010

195 × 130 mm (folio); illuminated
manuscript in Latin, with Middle English
additions, on parchment, 126 folios, 16
full page miniatures, considerable signs of
wear throughout, with some miniatures
very significantly rubbed, but others in
good condition. 16th century binding gilt
tooled binding of dark brown leather

Exhibited

The Bowet Hours: A Masterpiece for Bruges,
Bruges, Groeningemuseum, 19 December
2014 – 22 March 2015



This manuscript was made in Bruges for the English market, as indicated by the Use of Sarum. The first 8 pages are filled with English texts and tables, including a list of the kings of England from Arthur to Henry IV (r.1399–1413) and a planetary table with the days of the week written in Middle English. Additionally, the last few gatherings (fols.110–26) were added in England and includes one 8-line historiated initial depicting St Veronica holding her veil with the image of Christ's face (p. 245). These main additions date to the first or second decade of the fifteenth century and were likely made by the first or second owner of the manuscript after it reached England. The calendar has also had many additions from English families throughout the centuries, providing a rare and vivid document of the use and ownership of Books

Literature

M. Smeyers, *Vlaamse Miniaturen voor Van Eyck (ca.1380–ca.1420): Catalogus, Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 6 (Leuven, 1993).

M. Smeyers, *Flemish Miniatures from the 8th to the mid-16th Century* (Turnhout, 1999).

S. Hindman et al., *Illuminations in the Robert Lehman Collection* (New York, 1997).

of Hours in Medieval England.

In the original Bruges section, each major text contains an eight-line foliate initial against a burnished gold ground and with a four-sided foliate border. The added English sections have one 6-line initial with two-sided border (p.223) and one 5-line initial with three-sided border (p.21).

The sixteen full-page miniatures, each within a frame and sparse foliate border, belong to the Pink Canopies (or Rose Baldechins) group, which was first studied in detail by Maurits Smeyers and more recently by Sandra Hindman. Apart from the present manuscript, the group consists of four codices and a single leaf in institutional collections, and four more that have passed through the London market in the past 100 years.

The subjects of the large illuminations are: St George and the Dragon (p. 40); St Christopher carrying the Christ-Child (p. 46); St Margaret emerging from the belly of the dragon (p.50); the Annunciation (p.54); the Agony in the Garden; (p.64); Betrayal and Arrest of Christ (p. 80); Christ before Pilate (p.84); the Flagellation (p.90); Christ carrying the Cross (p. 96); the Crucifixion (p.102); the Deposition (p.108); Entombment (p.114); Virgin and Child of the Apocalypse (p.118); Man of Sorrows and Arma Christi (p.136); A Funeral Service (p.164); St Jerome in his study (p.208);

Characteristic features of this group of manuscripts are the pink framing devices from which it derives its name (exemplified in the present manuscript by the St Jerome and Funeral Service miniatures), the patterned backgrounds, often predominantly black and gold (all except the Virgin and Child, Man of Sorrows, and Funeral Service miniatures in the present manuscript), repetitive patterning for backgrounds, floors, and some other features (such as the cloth over the bier in the Funeral Service miniature), expressive figures, their flesh often modelled with a greenish under-layer, and luxuriantly folded draperies (see especially the St Jerome miniature). A curious feature of the present manuscript is the artist's apparent dislike of depicting feet: many figures have their feet obscured by a foreground object, or else have their feet hidden by heavily folded draperies.

Although some questions about this manuscript remain, the volume is a very interesting combination of Flemish and English elements, with most of the illumination by a member of an important group of 'pre-Eyckian' Bruges illuminators, and an unusually extensive series of medieval English additions and annotations.



puella
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The Rugby Missal

England, probably Lincolnshire
c. 1550–75

Provenance

John Chaunterell of Westcheap, London, bequeathed to St Giles, Northampton in 1509 Rugby School, Warwickshire: their MS Add. 3, with their armorial bookplate, deaccessioned in 2018

410 × 270 mm (folio); illuminated manuscript in Latin on parchment, 204 folios, lacking a Canon miniature and some folios, an illuminated initial excised from pp. 213–4, a few fore-edge margins cut in the Middle Ages to create page-markers, in its original chemise binding, formerly red, as seen on the turn-ins, now faded to off-white, decorated with metal bosses, lacking two bosses on upper cover and the fastenings at the fore-edge.



This noted missal, with an extremely rare example of a medieval chemise binding, contains numerous finely illuminated initials and borders, with eleven 4 to 6-line illuminated foliate initials with marginal sprays that mark the major feasts such as Christmas, Epiphany and the Resurrection, and two 6-line puzzle initials, one in blue, green and red for the feast of St Michael (p. 329). The illumination in each initial is remarkably varied, but typically consists of a large foliate form, and the predominant palette is green modelled with yellow, orange with yellow dots, blue modelled with white, and two shades of pink, all against a highly burnished gold field, extending into a partial border of painted foliage and pen-drawn sprays terminating in various flower-bud forms.

The text includes marriage vows written in Middle English (p. 396) and the inclusion of the sequence 'Spirat odor renouatus' in the Sanctoral for the translation of St Hugh of Lincoln suggests that the missal was made for Lincoln. The rubric introducing the Translation of St Hugh in the present manuscript states that it is not part of the Sarum

Literature

R.W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge, 2012).

J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Ashgate, 1999).

Use but is used in the diocese of Lincoln: *'In translatione sancti Hugonis Lincolnensis episcopi et confessoris, non Sarum, tamen infra diocesis Lincolnensis ...'*. Though R.W. Pfaff has concluded that the unique sequence for the Translation of St Hugh cannot be taken as evidence of a discreet 'Use' of Lincoln – it demonstrates that the manuscript was adapted for use in Lincolnshire. ¹

Although chemise bindings were common in the Middle Ages (as can be seen from numerous depictions in 15th-century painting and manuscript illuminations), they are now exceptionally rare. Perhaps one in a hundred medieval manuscripts preserves its medieval binding, and only one in a hundred of these preserves a chemise.

Rather like a dust-jacket on a modern book, their purpose was to protect the book inside, the loose flaps being wrapped around the edges to prevent water, dirt, or rodents spoiling the leaves. Their construction (again, similar to a dust-jacket) meant that they were usually easy to remove and discard once they became too dirty or worn. ² Chemises were typically only put on books that needed extra protection, either because they were expected to be carried about (e.g. private devotional books) or because they were left kept on a lectern (e.g. Missals), where they might be more exposed to accidents, but the loose flaps meant that they were not at all well suited to upright storage on a bookshelf, and thus the flaps were often cut off if their function changed and they were stored in a library. Perhaps the most famous example of a medieval chemise binding is the Ormesby Psalter in the Bodleian Library, which we know from an inscription was to be kept in the choir of the cathedral for use by the sub-Prior.

1, R.W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 502–03.

2, J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Ashgate, 1999), pp. 164–66, with plates and diagrams.



The Spicer Hours

England, probably London
c. 1460

Provenance

William Spicer (d. 1469), or a close friend/
relative

Walter Sandys, 16th century

Sir Philip Sydenham (c. 1676–1739), 3rd
Baronet Sydenham of Brympton, Somerset,
with his fine 18th century armorial bookplate.
"S.F.(?) Shaten(?), from her affectionate
Father, Jan. 16, [18]32

Miss Hilda May Perkins (d. 1962), RRC (Royal
Red Cross), of Wookey, Somerset, sold at
Christie's, 19 December 1956, lot 119

Sotheby's, 24 June 1980, lot 82

Private collection, USA, until 2000

Private collection, UK

205 × 140 mm (folio); illuminated
manuscript in Latin on parchment, 165
folios, 13 large initials with full borders,
complete, minimal stains and a few
offsets, in very fine condition throughout,
in a very fine late 17th century London gilt
tooled binding of red morocco.



This fine Book of Hours is decorated by thirteen large six-line illuminated foliate initials accompanied by full borders of lush foliage in a colour palette of greens, blues and pinks. The large initials introduce each Hour of the Virgin and other major texts and a smaller four-line initial with a three-sided border introduces the Five Sorrows.

The style and range of foliage and penwork forms have much in common with two manuscripts in public collections: New York, Morgan Library, MS G.9 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. e Mus. 42, both argued to probably come from London. ¹ In 1980 the Sotheby's cataloguer misdated the manuscript 'c. 1430–50' and misread the word 'd(omi)nical(is)' in William Spicer's obit as 'Doncaster', falsely suggesting a northern English provenance. Given his surname, it is perhaps more

Literature

K. L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490* (London, 1996).

K. L. Scott, *Dated and Datable English Manuscript Borders, c. 1395–1499* (London, 2002).

likely that William was involved in the spice trade based at, or at least relying for imports on, the port of London. The London book-trade was based adjacent to St Paul's cathedral, especially along Paternoster Row, less than 10 minutes' walk to the west of Bucklersbury, where the spicer-apothecaries' shops were concentrated. Archival research might allow William to be identified in the records of one of the relevant London guilds, such as the Guild of Pepperers, who by 1316 had been joined by the Spicers, and ultimately became the Grocers' Company (so-called because they dealt in goods en gros).

The calendar has a number of exceptionally rare entries (such as '*Crux dat lucia civis et karismata dia / Quod sit in angaria quarta feria*', 11–12 Feb.), and an unexplained number '43' calligraphically written in blue, apparently by the main scribe, in the lower left corner of the Calendar page for February (fol. 1v; this has previously been proposed to represent the year of writing, [14]43, but this cannot be right). This is an unusual book in many ways, and was produced at a time when a high proportion of Books of Hours were imported from the Netherlands (especially Bruges) rather than made on home soil. This type of illumination is little studied and this manuscript is a rare testament to the creativity of medieval illuminators working in England in the fifteenth century.

1, For MS G.9 see K. L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490* (London, 1996), cat. no. 108; for MS e Mus. 42, see Scott, 2002, pp. 88–89.

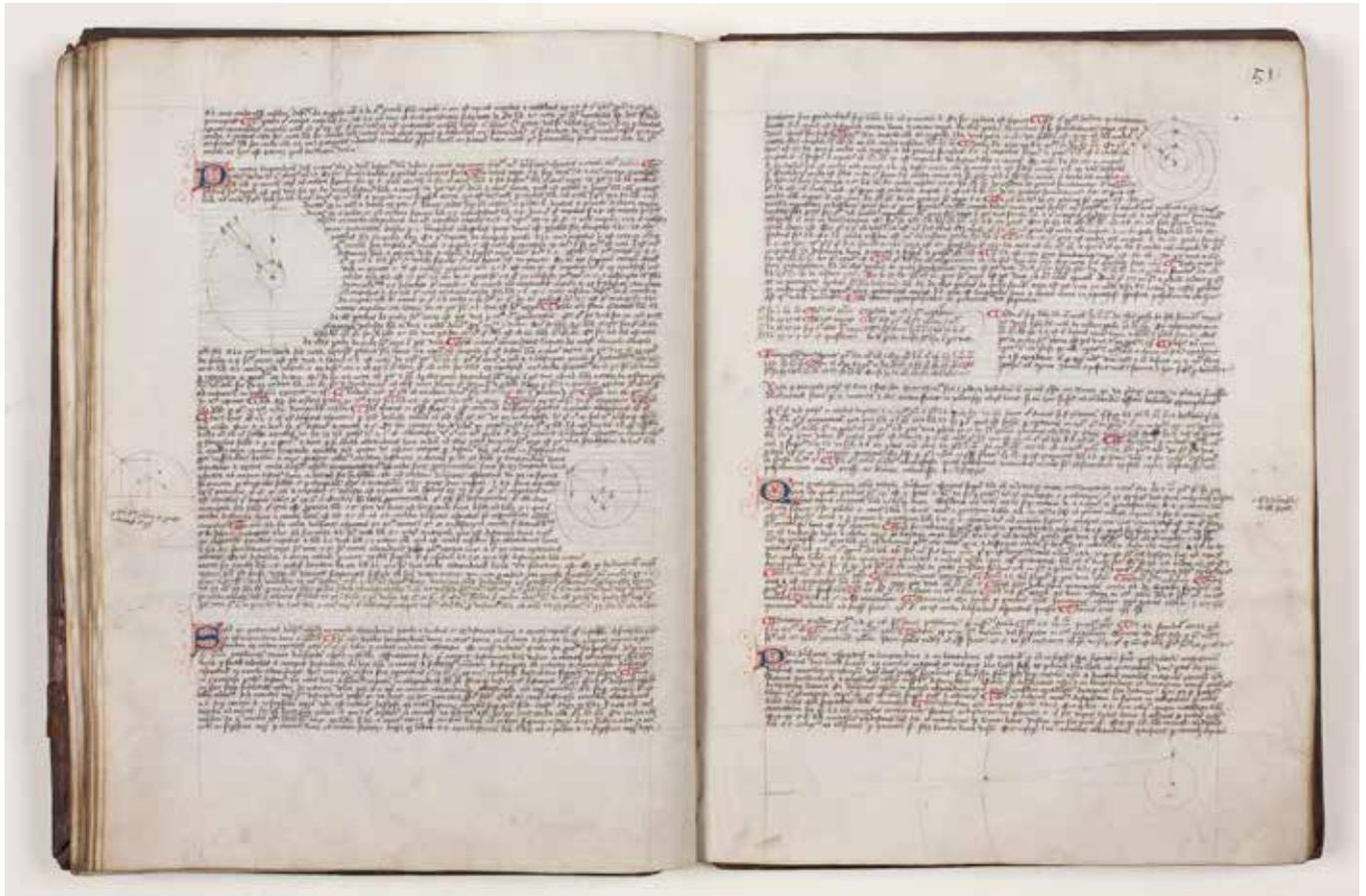
Lewis of Caerleon, Collected Scientific Works

England, probably London
c. 1495 (after 1485)

Provenance

Likely a Presentation Copy for Cambridge University
Sir Henry Spelman (1563/4 – 1641), purchased 11 April 1606
Sold 28 November 1709 by London bookseller John Harding
Walter Clavell (1676–1740)
William Jones (1675–1745)
George Parker, 2nd Earl of Macclesfield (1697–1764), and by descent to Richard Timothy George Mansfield Parker, 9th Earl of Macclesfield (b. 1943)
Maggs Brothers Ltd., before 2009

c. 445 × 330mm (folio); decorated and illustrated manuscript in Latin on parchment, 64 folios, 23 astronomical and mathematical diagrams, complete, although lacking one flyleaf at the front and two at the back, the lower margin of p.58 and a piece of p.67 cut away, minor water-staining not affecting legibility, otherwise in very fine condition throughout. In the original medieval blind stamped leather binding, recently restored.



Made under the direct supervision of Lewis of Caerleon and with his annotations, this magnificent and complete manuscript survives with its original binding. Not only do many of the Latin titles and texts refer to the author in the first person but many texts also end with his signature in English 'Lewys'.¹ Lewis of Caerleon was doubtless born at Caerleon, near Newport in Wales, probably in the 1440s. He was admitted to study medicine at Cambridge University in 1465/6, and by 1481 he had been made an M.D. by an English university. His medical patients numbered several members of the royal family, including King Edward IV's widow, Elizabeth Woodville; Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond; and her son Henry, the future King Henry VII.

The fact that the present volume is so handsome, and so much larger

Literature

B.C. Barker-Benfield and R. Hunt, *Manuscripts at Oxford: An Exhibition in Memory of Richard William Hunt (1908–1979)*. (Oxford, 1980).

P. Kibre, 'Lewis of Caerleon, Doctor of Medicine, Astronomer, and Mathematician (d. 1494?)', *Isis*, 43 (1952), pp.100–08.

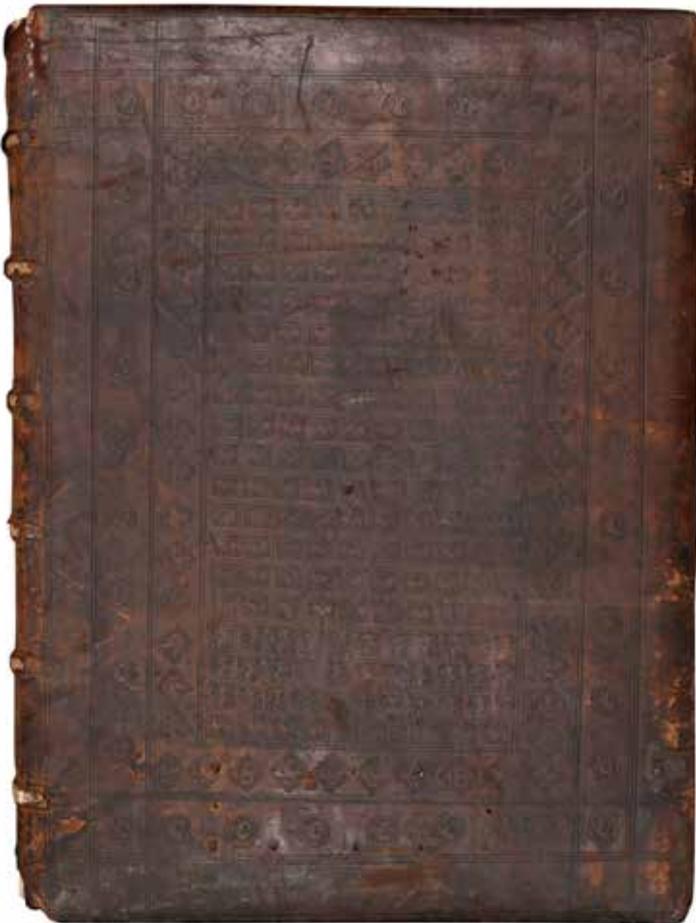
R. Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997).

than any other surviving copy of Caerleon's works (the copy in the Royal collection is about a quarter of the size of this one), suggests that he may have intended it as a presentation copy, perhaps to his patron the King, or one of his other royal clients, or perhaps most likely for the University of Cambridge. Cambridge is mentioned in the text several times and the binding has the traces of a chain-staple, indicating that the manuscript was in an institutional collection. Caerleon was himself a graduate of Cambridge and copies of his works are recorded in the medieval libraries of Clare College, Cambridge and Merton College, Oxford, but neither copy survives in those collections today.

The text covers various astronomical and mathematical topics, including Caerleon's work on solar and lunar eclipses, tables to calculate the height of an object by comparing the length of its shadow with the length of the shadow of a smaller object of known height, and texts and tables concerning equinoxes. Stylistically, the manuscript can be compared to others by Lewis of Caerleon, such as MS Savile 38 (Bodleian Library), MS 12 G.i. (British Library, MS Ee.III.61 (University Library, Cambridge), and MS 41 (St John's College, Cambridge).²

The binding is contemporary to the manuscript and an exceptionally rare example of Medieval English bookbinding. Sewn on five alum-tawed bands laced into slightly bevelled oak boards, covered with polished brown calf, both covers are densely decorated with blind stamps. Each cover includes a central panel filled with square stamps depicting a fox with large pointed ears, which is surrounded by lozenge-shaped stamps depicting a basilisk(?), and circular stamps depicting a scorpion.

1, E.g. pp.32 (erased), 33, 36, 51, 53, 54, 55, etc.; the same signature is in Bodleian Library, MS Digby 178, reproduced in B.C. Barker-Benfield and R. Hunt, *Manuscripts at Oxford: An Exhibition in Memory of Richard William Hunt (1908–1979)*. (Oxford, 1980), p. 120 fig. 89.
2, For more, see R. Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997), pp.367–68.



Nicholas Hilliard (1547–1619)

A young lady in a gold and crimson dress with a high-standing ruff

England, London

Dated 1605

Provenance

T. Whitcombe Greene Esq.

Sotheby's, London, 7 July 1932, lot 120

With Leo R. Schidlof, from whom acquired
by Ernst Holzscheiter in Paris, 21 May 1938
(inv. nos. MD/0163 and 290)

By descent until 2018

Oval, 51 × 41 mm; pigments and gum arabic
on vellum, in a later silver frame with spiral
cresting and a central hanging loop.

Inscriptions

Inscribed and dated in gold on the blue
background

'An[n]o D[omi]ni 1605. / Ætatis sua[e].'

Published

Daphne Foskett, *A Dictionary of British
Miniature Painters* (New York and Washington,
1972), illustrated in colour, plate VII, fig. 22.

Exhibited

Geneva 1956, no. 210, illustrated.

Edinburgh 1975, no. 28.



Although painted well after all of the other works represented in this catalogue – at a moment in time that could never be called medieval – this portrait miniature belongs to an aesthetic tradition that encompasses manuscript illumination, and can be seen as the inheritor of the great legacy of miniature painting that had been laid down in this country by England's medieval scribes and illuminators. It was painted right at the beginning of the seventeenth century by London's foremost limner Nicholas Hilliard, the 'undisputed doyen of court portraiture'.¹ Hilliard lived through the reign of four English monarchs and worked extensively for two of them: Elizabeth I whose patronage, as well as that of many of her courtiers, the painter enjoyed over 30 years; and James I, amongst whose circle he was forced to jockey for favour during the transition to a new monarchic regime. Yet it is clear that like his predecessor, James too was a supporter of Hilliard's career from the very start, since as far as can be determined Hilliard was the first artist at the English court to whom the King granted a sitting, a mark both of his privileged position, and his potential value for the monarch as an official portraitist.²

The restrained but extraordinarily assured approach to the shading of the facial features of our portrait, as well as the almost total absence of green and black pigments in any of the flesh tones, are autograph characteristics of Hilliard's late style (he describes precisely these techniques in his unpublished *Treatise concerning the Arte of Limning*, of c. 1600), and are two of the key features that differentiate his work from that of his similarly famous contemporary Isaac Oliver.³ Two other portrait miniatures firmly attributed to Hilliard's hand and inscribed, like ours, with the date 1605 are known to survive; one in the collection of the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House, and the other in the Musée du Louvre, Paris.⁴ Stylistically, the present example is closely linked to both, incorporating the same use of shell-silver for the highlights of the pearl necklace that can be found in the Hatfield portrait, and an almost identically fashioned and painted coif to that shown in the Paris miniature.

The identity of our sitter remains unknown, not only because of a lack of identifying attributes or adornments, but also because, very curiously, the painter omitted to include her age at the end of the inscription. This could be because the portrait was painted well before its intended delivery to a suitor or potential partner, because the patron had it mounted before completion, or, as is less likely, because the age of the sitter was not known at the time of its execution. In any case, it seems to be a unique example of this omission in the whole of Hilliard's oeuvre.

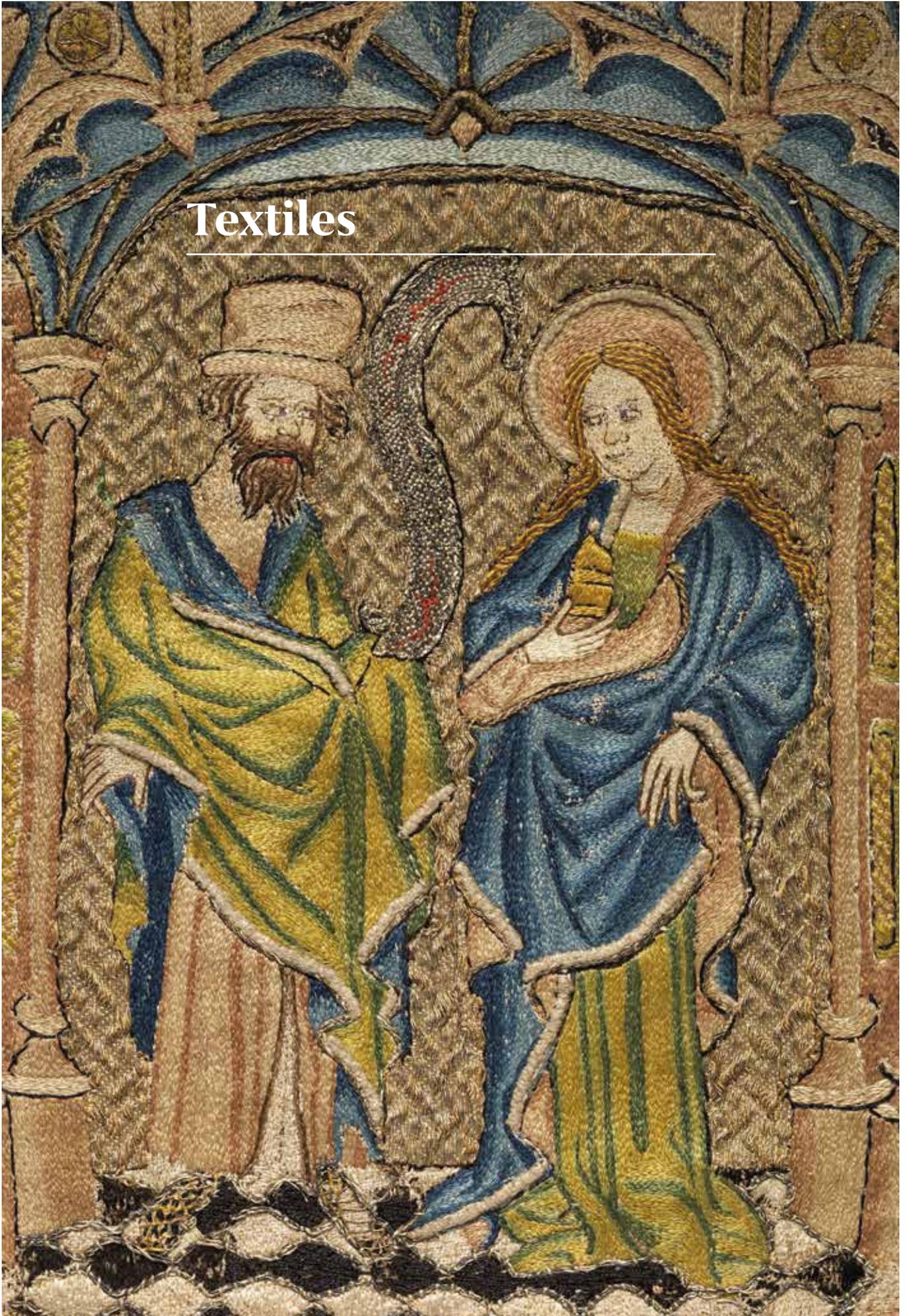
1, For the most recent analysis of Hilliard's life and work, see E. Goldring, *Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist* (New Haven and London, 2019).

2, *Ibid.*, p. 252.

3, Daphne Foskett, *A Dictionary of British Miniature Painters* (New York and Washington, 1972), p. 329.

4, We are grateful to Céline Cachaud for bringing both of these miniatures to our attention, written correspondence, 4th February 2019.

Textiles



A panel of *opus anglicanum* with Mary Magdalene and a male prophet

England
c. 1400

Provenance

A German royal collection, until their sale, Hugo Helbing, Munich, 23 November 1927, lot 122
Charles Ratton (1895–1986), Paris, acquired c. 1930

32.7 × 19.5 cm: Embroidery of silver-gilt metal-wrapped thread and coloured silks on linen. Some restorations to the figures' faces, to floor tiles and to elements of the architectural surround, particularly the darkest (black and dark brown) threads.

This delicate medieval embroidery is one of three surviving panels of *opus anglicanum* from what must have been a stupendous liturgical vestment. It depicts Saint Mary Magdalene and an unidentified prophet standing in a shallow architectural space constructed on a polygonal plan with a black and white tiled floor. Slender columns rising on either side of the figures support a vaulted hexagonal canopy surmounted by ogival arches and cusped ornament that terminates above their heads. Gold thread, laid in rows and couched into a diaper pattern, forms a dense, shimmering backdrop. The figures' clothing – in each case a full-length garment covered by a mantle worn over the shoulders and gathered across the body – is created using a palette of red, green and blue silks laid in tight split stitch. Multiple hues of each silk are laid side by side to evoke the interplay of light and shadow across long folds and swags of material. Hemlines, delineated in metal-wrapped thread twisted into two-ply cords alongside raised, padded linen, may originally have been strung with pearls.

Literally translatable as 'English work', *opus anglicanum* (as it is described in early accounts and inventories) is a form of embroidery made in English workshops from the twelfth to early sixteenth centuries. Associated particularly with London, it represents one of the most significant international contributions by English artists to the cultural heritage of Europe during the Middle Ages. Textiles and vestments embroidered in English workshops were commissioned by a wide cross-section of the European princely and ecclesiastical elite, and many were given as gifts to the Continent's greatest cathedrals and treasuries. Our panel can be securely dated to the years around 1400, when *opus anglicanum* was enjoying its last great period of production. Shortly after this date, the motif of a fine ogival framing arch sprouting crocket-like leaf fronds that appear to grow sinuously out of the architectural canopy, fell out of fashion in favour of blockier geometric forms. The elegantly clad and elongated figure-types also present parallels to a number of English works of art surviving from this date across a variety of media, and it is likely that it was designed by, or with recourse to the work of, contemporary painters or book illuminators (compare figs. 1 and 2). Indeed, recent scholarship has revealed that there was a sophisticated level of exchange and contact between embroiderers of *opus anglicanum* and practitioners in these art forms. A set of nine orphreys in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 3) follow the same format as our panel, though the absence of delicate foliate crockets on their arches, and the coarser treatment of the shading on the figures' garments, suggest their execution at a later date. It is highly possible, however, that they were made either in the same workshop as ours or in one that enjoyed close links to the same artistic personalities responsible for their design.



1, L. Monnas, 'The Making of Medieval Embroidery', in C. Browne, G. Davies and M.A. Michael, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicum* (New Haven and London, 2016) p.12.

2, M. A. Michael, 'Creating Cultural Identity; *Opus Anglicum* and its Place in the History of English Medieval Art', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, (2017), esp. pp. 32ff.

3, P. Johnstone, *High Fashion in the Church* (Leeds, 2002), p. 49.

4, For the dating of the Abingdon paintings see N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (London,

1966), p. 52; for the Winchester College Chapel windows see P. Williamson, Michael, *English Medieval and Renaissance Stained Glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 2003), p.138, no. 31.

5, See E. Wetter in C. Browne, G. Davies and M.A. Michael, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicum* (New Haven and London, 2016), pp.

91–104; M. A. Michael in *Ibid.*, pp. 61–76; and M. A. Michael, 'Creating Cultural Identity; *Opus Anglicum* and its Place in the History of English Medieval Art', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, (2017), pp. 48–54.

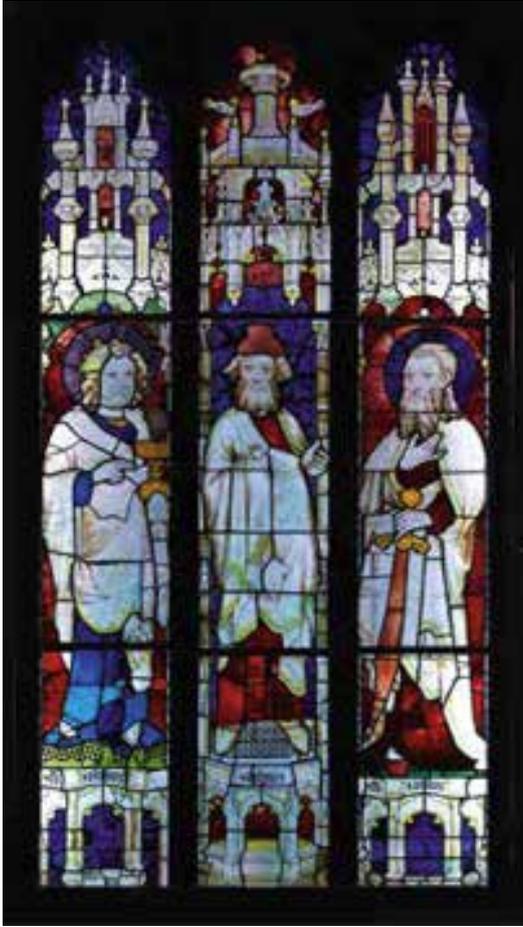


Fig. 1
 Stained-glass window of the
 Prophet Ezekiel flanked by
 Saints John the Evangelist
 and James the Less, from
 Winchester College Chapel
 England, c. 1393
 Victoria and Albert Museum,
 London, inv. 4237:1 to
 9-1855



Fig. 2
 Painted roof panels in Saint
 Helen's church
 Abingdon, Berkshire
 c. 1390-95



Fig. 3
 Nine orphrey panels
 England, c. 1430-60
 Victoria and Albert Museum,
 London, inv. T.157-1970

Two *opus anglicanum* orphrey panels embroidered with images of the Crucifixion and standing saints

England
c. 1490

Provenance

The Adler Collection, Sotheby's London,
24 February 2005, lot 67

123 × 64 cm (cruciform panel); 123 × 48 cm (straight-sided panel); Embroidery of silver-gilt metal-wrapped thread and coloured silks on linen. Some restorations to the figures' faces and to elements of the architectural surround, particularly the darkest (black and dark brown) threads. The outer gold-thread braid a modern addition.



Orphrey panels are decorative bands made with silk and metal threads and used to decorate the chasubles, dalmatics and copes worn by bishops and priests during Mass celebrations. The shape of these two orphrey sections indicates that they once decorated the front and back of a medieval chasuble. The cruciform panel, which would have adorned the back of the garment, shows the image of Christ on the cross between two angels who hold out chalices in order to collect the blood running from his nail wounds. Below him in individual architectural compartments are the Virgin, shrouded in an ermine-lined mantle, and Saint John who holds his hands clasped in a mixture of prayer and grief. Above Christ's head is a large, white, haloed dove, holding the titulum inscribed with the traditional letters INRI in its claws. The counterpart panel is embroidered with single figures standing, like Mary and John, in individual niches, and holding attributes that identify them from top to bottom as Saint James (with

his pilgrim's hat and staff), Mary Magdalene (holding the ointment pot with which she anointed Christ's wounds), and Saint Andrew (with his x-shaped cross).

The vivid, shimmering effect made by the silks on these panels was achieved by laying unwound threads, also known as floss, across the surface of the support before couching them down in a few sporadic places, so that the fibres appear to float and billow from the surface. This was a time-saving exercise adopted by embroiderers of *opus anglicanum* in the latter half of the fifteenth century, but one that simultaneously created dazzling results. Thus, instead of having to meticulously pull each individual thread through the lining fabric like the previous example in this catalogue, the embroiderer was able to capitalise on the texture and sheen of the silk while economising their time in a period that saw an almost industrial and mass-produced level of production.

A cope at Arundel Castle incorporates very similar fleurs-de-lys at the top of each of the ogival arches on its orphrey panels, along with a similar format of crenelated architecture and blocky, faceted supporting pillars (fig. 1). We know from the rebus incorporated onto its red velvet that it was commissioned by or for John Morton (c. 1420–1500) and was one of a number of luxury English embroideries owned by this wealthy ecclesiastic. Since Morton became a cardinal in 1493 and included a cardinal's hat in his rebus following this appointment, it must date to before this moment due to the absence of this motif.¹

1, C. Browne, G. Davies and M.A. Michael, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicanum* (New Haven and London, 2016), p. 263.



Fig. 1
Detail of a cope
England
Before 1493
144 × 287 cm: Embroidery
of silk and metal-wrapped
threads on red velvet
Arundel Castle, on loan from
the Roman Catholic Diocese
of Arundel and Brighton

The Berger Cope

A red velvet cope with *opus anglicanum* embroideries and orphrey panels

England
c. 1480–1500, with later additions and alterations.

Provenance
Collection of William M. B. Berger (1925–1999) and Bernadette J. J. Berger (1940–2015), Denver
On loan to the Denver Museum of Art, 1998–2015.

142.2 × 289.5 cm: Embroidery of silver-gilt metal-wrapped thread and coloured silks on linen and red velvet. Most of the coloured silks reinforced, particularly the dark blue, black and dark brown threads. The watered-silk lining, crewel-work braid and green velvet trimming used to frame the orphreys and the hem of the cope are eighteenth-century additions.

Published
R. Strong, T. Standring et. al., *600 Years of British Painting: The Berger Collection at the Denver Art Museum* (Denver, 1998), pp. 14–15.



A massive red velvet cope lavishly embellished with orphreys and motifs of *opus anglicanum*. Like the two isolated panels in this catalogue (**cat. 58**) the orphreys on this cope were created using a technique in which untwisted silk threads are laid down over a linen support in rows, and only couched down sporadically in order to achieve a shimmering, voluminous surface full of unadulterated colour. The backgrounds of each figurative niche were embellished with gold metal-wrapped thread and in other places metal spangles are sewn onto the surface to create solid discs of reflected light. But it is only with the retention of its red velvet and a visual program of floral sprays, seraphim, and the scene of the Ascension of the Virgin embroidered at its centre, that we are fully able to understand the startling visual impact and potential for iconographic narrative of a richly ornamented medieval vestment. Such garments were produced in large numbers for powerful individuals of church and state (such as Cardinal John Morton, whose cope is illustrated in the preceding entry), and were generally used in grand churches and cathedrals. They were, as Linda Woolley notes, some of the most “colourful and conspicuous symbols of ecclesiastical power” of their age.¹

The loving restorations to its threads, and the addition of an ornate crewel-work braid and velvet trim around its borders, have served to

alter the original effect of the garment. But rather than masking it, these additions evidence a layered history of reuse and alteration, and highlight the afterlife of medieval opus anglicanum and the manner in which, in most cases, it has been able to survive up until the present day.

1, R. Marks and P. Williamson eds, *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* (London, 2003), p. 369.



Ceramics



Globular jug with incised decoration

England, East Anglia
c. 1450–1550

18.5 cm (height) × 12 cm (base diameter);
red earthenware with very dark lead glaze,

Provenance
Jonathan Horne, 2010

Condition
Intact and unrestored, slightly bowed base.



A wheel-thrown jug of stout globular form, with some knife trimming evident on the belly of the vessel. It has an exaggerated pinched spout, a strap handle and a bib of very dark lead glaze decorated with shallow, incised motifs.

The coarse sandy red earthenware indicates that it was most likely made in Essex or East Anglia and the lack of ornament and practical shape suggests that it was probably in daily use for the storage of ale or for carrying water. The freely drawn incised design under the bib of glaze may have signified the use to which it was to be put within a domestic household.

A comparable jug found in Prince's Street, Norwich, and now in the Castle Museum has been dated to the 13th century, but recent archaeological evidence suggests this jug belongs to the southern tradition of East Anglian redwares, dating to the late medieval period, such as are found in Colchester, Essex.

A number of different production centres were making these wares which are visually similar and can only safely be differentiated by chemical analysis. Despite the wide distribution and production of these redwares, few kiln sites have been found and it is therefore difficult to assign this jug to a specific production centre. This is because potters in East Anglia continued to use 'clamp' kilns, where the earthen base of a shallow pit is spread with brushwood or gorse fuel and pots stacked on top and covered with more fuel and earth. Such a bonfire leaves little archaeological trace, and so may remain undetected.

Literature

J. P. Cotter, 'Post-Roman Pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-85', *Colchester Archaeological Report 7* (Colchester, 2000), p. 109, fig. 120, and p.179 for a vessel of similar form.

B. Rackham, *Medieval English Pottery* (London, 1948)

1, Bernard Rackham,
Medieval English Pottery,
London, 1948, Pl.18, p.11

Rounded jug with dipped glaze

England, Malvern
c. 1450–1550

20.2cm (height) × 10.5 cm (base diameter);
red earthenware.

Provenance

Mr & Mrs F B Watkins of Flaxley Abbey,
c. 1970s

Condition

slightly oxidised, with white slip and
honey coloured lead glaze, old accession
number C 528 marked in ink on upper
body, intact.



A handsome wheel made jug with a pinched spout and a short rod handle. Its brilliant bib of orange has been achieved by applying a layer of white slip and then dipping the whole top and front of the vessel into the glaze, which is still found around and inside the rim of the jug.

Stylistically, this jug belongs to the Malvern tradition of late medieval pottery. Since the twelfth century, the Malvern Hills had a long tradition of making pottery for everyday use and were still supplying Bristol, Hereford and Worcester in the late medieval period. At this period, licenses record that clay digging and the collection of wood was afforded to potters on the Malvern Chase, causing alarm to at least one landowner.¹

In 1973, this jug featured in a *Country Life* article, photographed on the refectory table of Flaxley Abbey on the edge of the forest of Dean, formerly a Cistercian monastery founded in the twelfth century (fig. 1). It is not so unreasonable to imagine that it could have been used by the Cistercian monks, though there is no evidence linking it to the Abbey prior to the 1970s.

Literature

C. R. J. Currie and N.M. Herbert eds., *A History of the County of Gloucestershire: Vol. 5*

J. Lees-Milne, 'Flaxley Abbey', *Country Life* (29 March 1973), p. 844.

M. R. McCarthy and C. M. Brooks, *Medieval Pottery in Britain AD900–1600* (Leicester 1988), pp. 462, 470–3, No.2356.

¹, M. R. McCarthy and C. M. Brooks, *Medieval Pottery in Britain AD900–1600* (Leicester 1988), p.471.



Fig. 1
The refectory at Flaxley Abbey

An Alphabet Tile

England, Nottingham
c. 1320–50

12.8 × 13 × 2.5 cm; two-colour
earthenware tile with lead glaze.

Provenance
Jonathan Horne, 2003

Condition
Loss to upper right corner, glaze worn
in places.



This tile with its alphabet design in white inlay on a dark brown body was made by the medieval tilers of Nottingham, who were unique in presenting the alphabet in a grid on a single tile. The craftsmen responsible for these designs were most likely illiterate and often failed to reverse the design when cutting the stamp. This inaccurate representation of the letters is an idiosyncrasy of the Nottinghamshire tilers that contrasts with the care taken by tilers working in other regions.

Antiquarians working in the nineteenth century discovered several kiln sites in the Midlands making Nottinghamshire style designs such as this one. Thanks to the present state of archaeological knowledge, Nottingham itself can be named as the most likely source for the alphabet design seen here. The dating of the Nottingham Group tiles rests on the discovery of examples belonging to this school at the Augustinian friary in Hull, which was founded in 1317. More Nottingham Group tiles were found in the chancel of Holy Trinity, Hull, which was built c. 1320–1370.

Literature

J. Stopford, *Medieval Floor Tiles of Northern England; Pattern and Purpose: production between the 13th and 16th centuries* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 37, 41, No. 133 for similar design, pp. 207–8

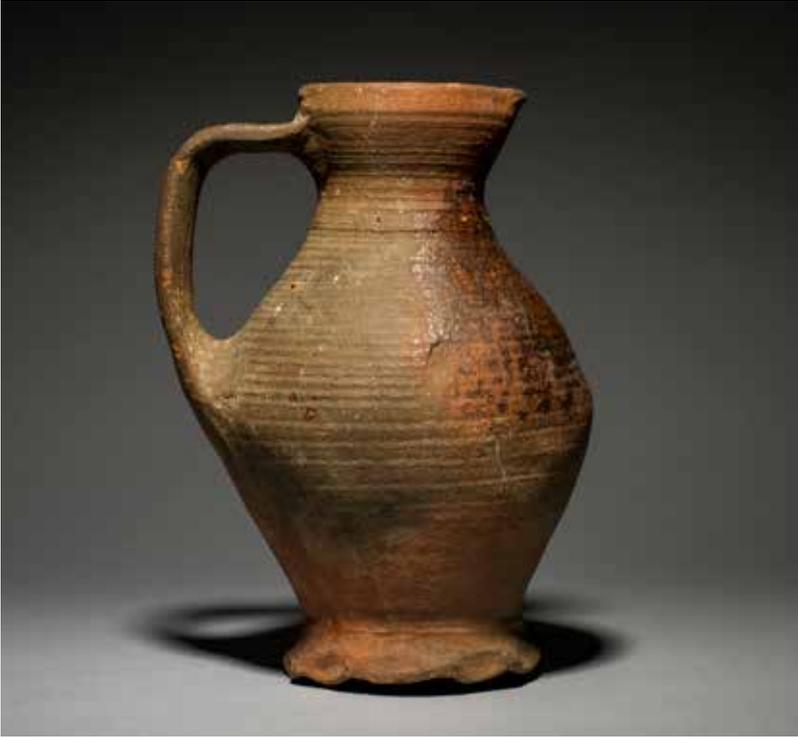
Baluster jug with thumbed base

England, Dorset or Somerset
c. 1450–1550

28 cm (height) × 11.5 cm (base diameter);
red iron-rich earthenware with lead glaze.

Provenance
Private collection

Condition
Intact and unrestored.



An elegant wheel-thrown jug with a thumbed base, pinched spout and an angular strap handle with a central groove. The body of the jug is ridged and a splash of lead glaze has been applied under the spout.

The distinctive angular handle points to the South West of Britain in the late medieval period. In areas such as Dorset and Somerset, country potteries producing jugs like this one continued the medieval pottery tradition into the seventeenth century and beyond. One such industry is centred on the heathlands of Verwood, east Dorset, where traditional wood-firing techniques for pottery making continued into the twentieth century. Although no medieval kilns have been found, place-name evidence indicates that potting was taking place from at least the 1280s, when it was known as Potterne or Wimborne Potterne.

Literature

J. Draper and with P. Copland-Griffiths, *Dorset Country Pottery: The kilns of the Verwood district* (Marlborough, 2002), No. 13, pp. 36–37

R. Coleman-Smith and T. Pearson, *Excavations in the Donyatt Potteries* (Chichester, 1988)

A Tudor Green face jug

England, Surrey
Late fourteenth or fifteenth century

29 cm (height) × 12 cm (base diameter);
buff-white earthenware with no visible
inclusions with copper-stained lead glaze.

Provenance

Excavated in 1954 (A typed label was
attached: "Ancient water jug, circa 1280–1340,
found during excavations in rebuilding 9, S...le
Inn, May 1954")
Private collection by descent until 2013

Condition

Small repairs to rim and body of vessel.



A very fine wheel-thrown baluster jug with pinched spout formed into a bearded face, with a strap handle and wide flared base. Thick copper-stained lead glaze gives a thick lustrous dark green finish to the top half of the body, and a mottled green finish to the rim and neck. This anthropomorphic jug belongs to a type known as Tudor Green, originating from the Surrey Surrey whiteware tradition. Tudor Green was just one fabric within the Surrey/Hampshire industry, but is rare by comparison with the other contemporary whitewares. The type was produced from the late 14th to late 15th century, and often employed two firings, unlike the other Surrey whitewares. In the initial biscuit firing the undecorated jug was achieved, which could then be decorated before a second firing, resulting in a whiter fabric or paste than other whiteware workshops. After the initial firing, the top half of the jug was covered in a rich green glaze, ensuring a deep, even colour in pleasing contrast to the creamy white fabric left exposed below.

Jugs with bearded faces occur on Surrey whitewares from the thirteenth century. The anthropomorphic features of this example consist of two impressed eyes, a prominent nose, short beard and eyebrow ridges. Arms and hands also appear on similar jugs, as seen in a later example in the Museum of London. ¹ Rackham described these features as 'merely barbaric', but there is certainly a charm and humour here which would have been equally appreciated by the medieval mind.

It has been argued that the colour and texture of different types of

Literature

B. Rackham, *Medieval English Pottery* (London, 1948)

J. Pearce and A. Vince, *A dated type-series of London medieval pottery, Part 4: Surrey Whitewares* (London Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1988), Special Paper 10, Figs 37, p.126, no. 584

J. Pearce, *Post-Medieval Pottery in London, 1500–1700 Border Wares* (London, 1992), p. 2

C. G. Cumberpatch, 'Towards a phenomenological approach to the study of medieval pottery', in C.G. Cumberpatch and P.W. Blinkhorn (eds.) *Not so Much a Pot, More a Way of Life. Current Approaches to Artefact Analysis in Archaeology* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 125–151.

Pearce, *Pots and potters in Tudor Hampshire: Excavations at Farnborough Hill Convent 1968–72* (Guildford, 2007), pp.17–18, 21, 65–66

pots was deliberately structured and related to differing perceptions of the relationship between the pottery vessel and the symbolic values attributed to colour and to food and drink. ² The rich green as seen in the glaze on this jug was a common colour on jugs of this period, and colours were clearly enjoyed by medieval people and played a major part in heraldry. Green has been argued to have had links with women as evidenced in medicine and in the medieval theatre, and with fertility and sexuality.

1, B. Rackham, *Medieval English Pottery* (London, 1948), Pl. 48, p.19.

2, C. G. Cumberpatch, 'Towards a phenomenological approach to the study of medieval pottery', in C.G. Cumberpatch and P.W. Blinkhorn (eds.) *Not so Much a Pot, More a Way of Life. Current Approaches to Artefact Analysis in Archaeology* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 126–8.



A panel of seven floor tiles

England, Malvern School
c. 1480–1515

Provenance

Glazeley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, found
around 1990

12 × 12 × 2.8 cm each, two-colour
earthenware tiles, white shallow slip on
red-firing body, with remnants of lead glaze

Condition

The surface much worn in places.



Seven tiles from an elaborate sixteen-tile design most likely from the floor of a domestic building. For inlaid tiles such as these, a stamp is used to make a depressed pattern in the body of the tile which is then filled with clay or slip of a contrasting colour. The complex designs of this group are recognisably those of the Malvern School of tilers. Four of the designs are catalogued in Eames 1980 (design nos. 2969, 2970, 2971, 2972) with specific attributes as follows: stylised rose above vine scroll; a bunch of grapes, vine scroll above a circular band; bunch of grapes, vine scroll pattern in reverse above a circular band; curvilinear motif, interspersed with flowers, between two circular bands.

They compare very closely to one of the sixteen-tile designs from the pavement of a chamber in Canynges House, Redcliffe Street, Bristol dated between 1480 and 1515, and now in the British Museum, London. The Canynges tiles were laid diagonally to the walls, within a border of plain tiles and with each decorated panel separated by plain tiles. Since the pattern is repeated almost identically here it is likely they were laid in the same way, probably also in the chamber of a house.

The Malvern School of tilers were able to make very intricate designs. The Priory at Great Malvern was a cell of Westminster Abbey and expert craftsmen, possibly from Westminster, made tiles for the Priory church when it was refurbished in the middle of the 15th century. After completing their commission, these tilers dispersed to other sites along the Severn Valley and may have set up a tiling closer to

Literature

E. S. Eames, *Catalogue of Medieval Lead-Glazed Earthenware Tiles in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum* (London, 1980)

B. Nenck, *Gothic: Art for England 1400–1547* (London, 2003)

J. Alexander and P. Binski eds, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987)

E. S. Eames, *Medieval Craftsmen, English Tilers* (London, 1992), fig. 75, p. 64.

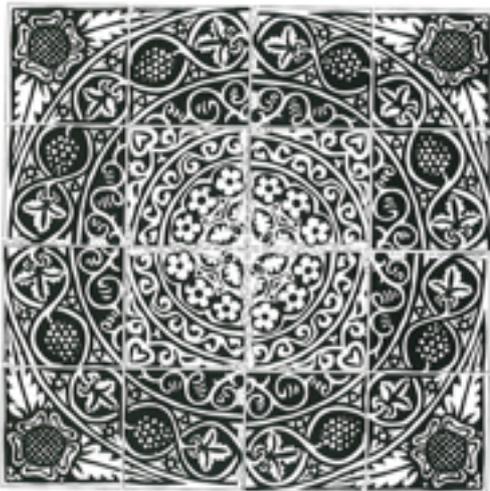
Glazeley, Bridgnorth, where these tiles were found. Indeed there were numerous kilns in Shropshire. ¹ Alternatively, tiles of the Canynges/ Bristol Group may have been produced at a commercial tiling in Bristol and transported up the River Severn. Tiles of this design have been noted in Neen Savage, Shropshire, where the medieval pavement was replaced in a refurbishment of 1881, ² and in use at the house of Lord Walter Hungerford of Heytesbury, Wiltshire. ³

These tiles date to a moment of revival of quality in the late fifteenth century within the main period of production of medieval tiles which spanned from the thirteenth to the mid-sixteenth century. Tiling flourished under King Henry III (1216–1272). See for example floors from the King's Chapel and the Queen's chamber from Clarendon now in the British Museum.

The industry suffered during the fourteenth century perhaps due to the Black Death, but revived itself in the next century. Only to slow again in the latter half of the sixteenth century, not, Eames argues, because a degradation in expertise but rather a change in fashion.

For much of the middle ages in England, these flat hard-wearing floors were hugely popular and decorated pavements in royal palaces, ecclesiastic and monastic buildings as well as castles and prosperous merchants houses. They were an integral part of the decoration of Gothic buildings and as Gothic architecture slowly gave way to new styles of architecture, adornments such as tiles went with it.

1, see E. S. Eames, *Medieval Craftsmen, English Tilers* (London, 1992), p. 4 map.
2, E. S. Eames, *Catalogue of Medieval Lead-Glazed Earthenware Tiles in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum* (London, 1980), pp. 251–2.
3, *ibid.*, p. 242.



Sixteen-tile design from a chamber at Canynges House, Bristol, late fifteenth century.
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

Three tiles forming a Lion

England, Malvern School
c. 1480–1515

Provenance

Glazeley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, found
around 1990

12 × 12 × 3 cm each, two-colour
earthenware tiles, white shallow slip on
red-firing body, with remnants of lead glaze

Condition

Surface worn in places but in very good
condition

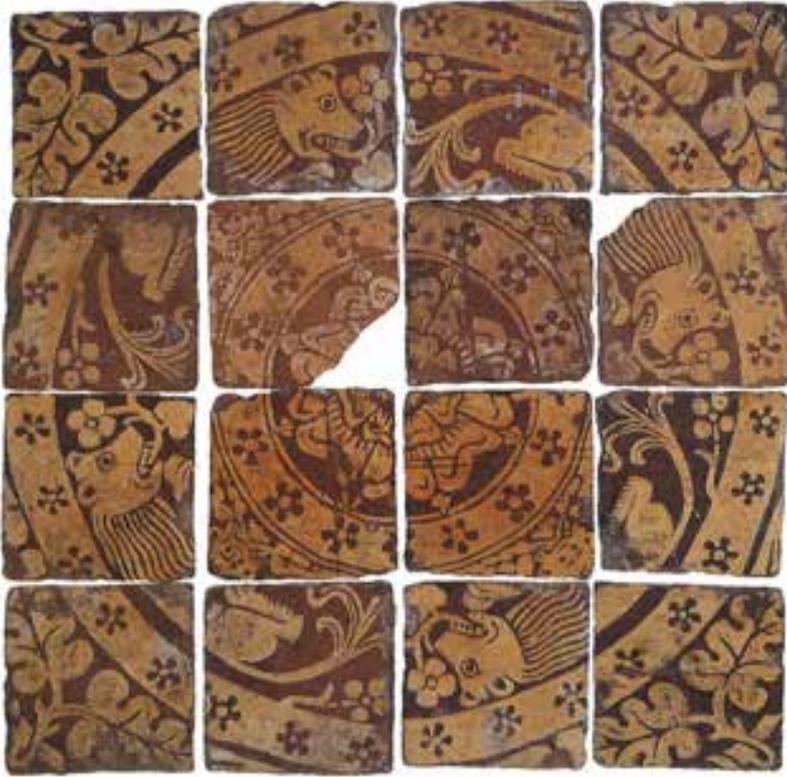


The three designs on these medieval tiles (catalogued in Eames 1980 as design nos. 2919, 2920, 2921) come together to depict a lion facing left and encircled by a thick yellow band interspersed with five-petalled rosettes below a spray of oak leaves. Like the previous set of tiles in this catalogue (**cat. 65**), they are recognisably the work of the famous Malvern School of tilers. They would have formed part of 16-tile pattern nearly identical to a pavement discovered at Canynge House in Redcliffe Street, Bristol, dated between 1480 and 1515.

The Malvern School of tilers were able to make very intricate designs, the Priory at Great Malvern was a cell of Westminster Abbey and expert craftsmen, possibly travelling from Westminster, made tiles for the Priory church when it was refurbished in the middle of the fifteenth century. After completing their commission, the tilers dispersed to other sites along the Severn Valley and may have set up a tilery closer to Glazeley, Bridgnorth, where these tiles were found. Alternatively, tiles of the Canynge/Bristol Group may have been transported up the River Severn from the Bristol area. Tiles of this design have been noted in Neen Savage, Shropshire, where the medieval pavement was replaced in a refurbishment of 1881,¹ and in use at the house of Lord Walter Hungerford of Heytesbury, Wiltshire.²

1, E. S. Eames, *Catalogue of Medieval Lead-Glazed Earthenware Tiles in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities*, British Museum (London, 1980), pp. 251–2.

2, *ibid.*, p. 242.



Floor tiles from Acton Court,
near Bristol
Late 15th century
Each tile 12-18.c cm square
Bristol Museums and Art Gallery
(Q1590, Q1591, Q1592, Q1593)

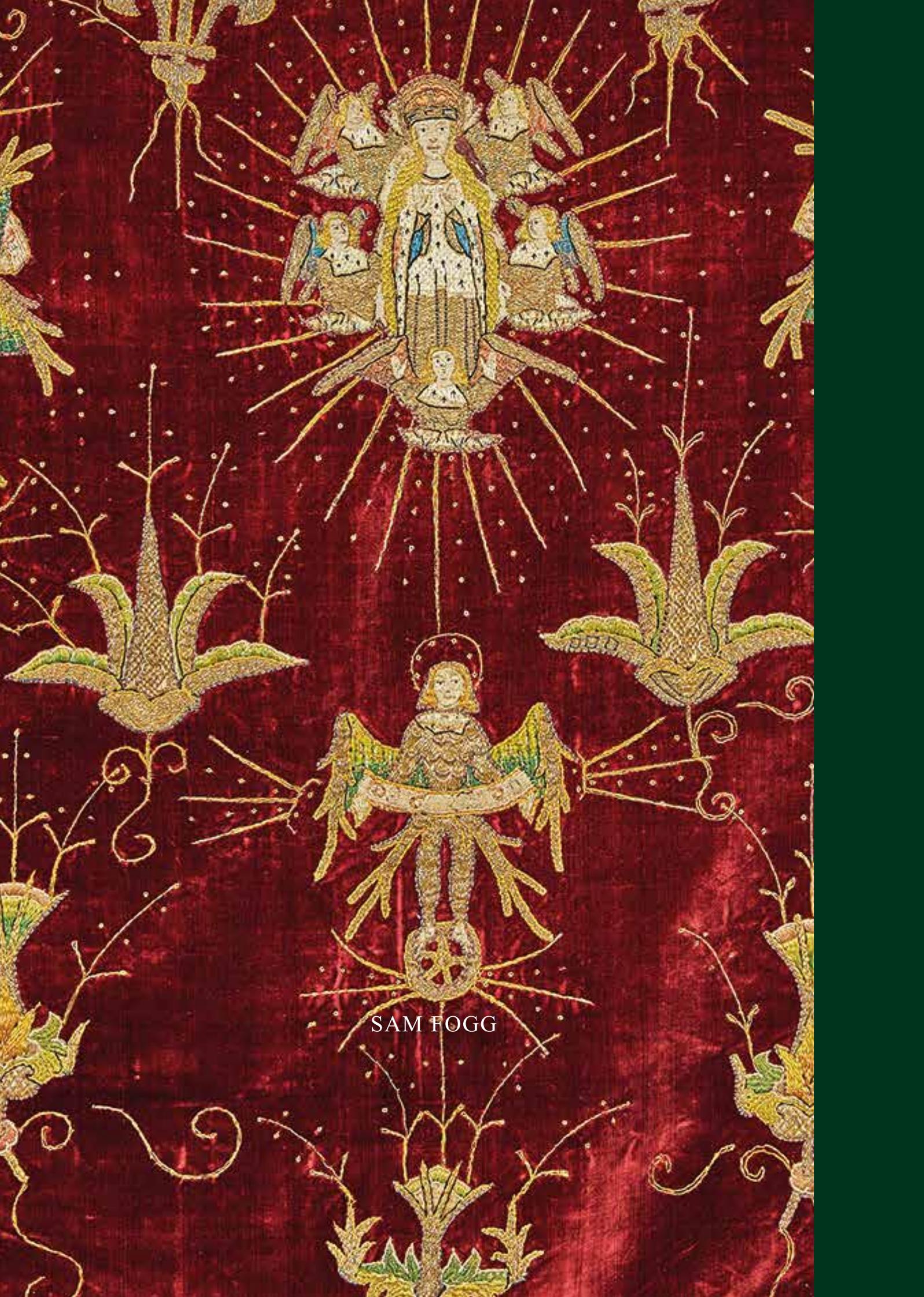
Published to accompany an exhibition by
Sam Fogg Ltd
15D Clifford Street, London W1S 4JZ
www.samfogg.com

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Exhibition Direction
Matthew Reeves

Design
Richard Ardagh Studio

Photography
David Brunetti
Barney Hindle
Todd-White Art Photography



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