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Death, Commemoration and Patronage in fourteenth-century Oxfordshire: the chantry chapels at Cogges, Witney and Ducklington



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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

VOLUME ONE

Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis, entitled *Death, Commemoration and Patronage in fourteenth-century Oxfordshire: the chantry chapels at Cogges, Witney and Ducklington* is my own.

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Abstract

This inquiry concerns a cluster of sculpturally-embellished chantry chapels in Oxfordshire at the neighbouring parish churches of Cogges, Witney and Ducklington. Each is distinguished by a fine funerary monument and other, high-quality carvings—sacred and profane—in the Decorated style. The fabric is much battered and the monuments no longer identify those they commemorate but they testify nonetheless to imaginative, even unique image programmes, expressing patronal concerns in highly individual ways. Furthermore, the ‘tomb-scape’ in each case includes proximity to a medieval charnel crypt, where the bones of the parish dead were cared for until Judgement Day, an overlooked feature of commemoration at parish church level.

The phenomenon of the chantry (at its height between 1250 and 1350) coincides with the ornate Decorated period in English ecclesiastical architecture. Both have been explored in terms of aesthetic, social and religious expression. However, gentry foundations in rural parish churches remain under-researched. The study operates in this gap, taking up the challenge of studying incomplete, undocumented material and demonstrating the value of researching parish-level art. The methodology is holistic and multi-disciplinary, applying art-historical approaches that foreground the surviving fabric, combined with archival research and reference to recent trends in archaeology and social history. The study sites are shown to demonstrate different models of patronage: male, female, individual, familial and corporate. They reveal the influence of devotional books and demonstrate a sophisticated relationship with liturgy as well as a concern for social display. Innovative Decorated techniques (such as combining figure sculpture with window tracery) usually associated with great churches are employed to good effect, employing light, location and sightlines to amplify meaning, serving the interests of both patron and parish in tailor-made ways. The findings contribute to our understanding of Decorated-era chantry provision in Oxfordshire in particular, and to the field of commemoration studies more generally.

Contents

VOLUME ONE.....	2
Declaration.....	3
Copyright.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Abstract.....	5
Abbreviations.....	12
INTRODUCTION.....	14
0.1 The Sites.....	16
Cogges.....	16
Witney.....	17
Ducklington.....	18
0.2 Aims and intent.....	19
0.3 Structure of the thesis.....	20
CHAPTER 1: Background.....	22
1.1 Art-historical and ideological context.....	22
1.2 The parish context.....	23
CHAPTER 2: Methodology.....	26
2.1 Identifying surviving material.....	26
2.2 Identifying damaged and missing material.....	28
CHAPTER 3: Challenges.....	31
3.1 Physical and archival challenges.....	31
3.2 Female agency.....	35
3.3 Attribution.....	36
CHAPTER 4: Review of the scholarship.....	40
4.1 Scholarship on the study sites.....	40

4.2 Scholarship on the themes of the thesis	43
Parish-based chantries	43
Parish chancel houses: an under-recognised feature	49
Women’s involvement in commemoration.....	58
The influence of books of hours.....	61
Seeing and Meaning.....	65
4.3 Summary	67
CHAPTER 5: The north-east chapel at Cogges	68
5.1 Cogges in the medieval landscape.....	68
5.2 Church overview.....	71
5.3 The chancel and crypt	73
5.4 The north-east chapel (exterior)	78
Description of the exterior	78
The chapel roof	79
The east window and sculpture	81
The north windows	82
5.5 Dating the chapel fabric	83
5.6 Dating the windows.....	85
5.7 Early function	88
5.8 The north-east chapel (interior)	89
Description of the interior.....	89
The frieze and corbels	90
The monument.....	92
Screens.....	97
5.9 Stained glass.....	98
The east window	98
The lost heraldic glass	99
5.10 Margaret Oddingseles: patron	102

Biography	103
A roll call of the deceased	110
Margaret's date of death	111
Margaret's connection with Cogges.....	114
Local precedents	118
5.11 Iconography.....	122
The marginal frieze.....	122
Noisemakers.....	130
Summary	138
5.12 Presenting Margaret	139
The Evangelists in late-medieval piety	139
Surrounding imagery.....	140
Location.....	143
The exterior sculpture	144
Inside/outside	146
5.13 Summary	147
CHAPTER 6: The north transept at Witney.....	149
6.1 Witney in the medieval landscape	150
6.2 The church: building chronology	153
6.3 The north transept	155
North-east buttress, lower niche	156
North-west buttress lower niche	157
North-east buttress upper niche.....	157
North-west buttress upper niche	158
The lost upper chapel.....	159
The lost lower chamber.....	160
6.4 The monument.....	168
Female effigy.....	169

Male effigy	169
6.5 The patrons	174
Richard de Stanlake of Witney	175
John de Croxford of Kidlington.....	177
6.6 A shared chantry	182
6.7 Interpreting the sculpture	192
The female sinner.....	195
The male sinner.....	200
Justice and Mercy.....	204
6.8 Summary	206
CHAPTER 7: The north aisle at Ducklington.....	207
7.1 Historical background.....	208
7.2 The church: building chronology	210
7.3 The north aisle: exterior	212
The north aisle windows	212
The north porch	213
The crypt	213
7.4 Dating the north aisle.....	214
7.5 The north aisle: interior.....	215
7.6 The monument.....	216
Incised slabs	221
7.7 The Marian sculpture	225
The Coronation of the Virgin.....	226
Recesses 1 and 2	227
Recess 3. The Annunciation	228
Recess 4. The Visitation.....	228
Recesses 5 and 6. The Nativity and Adoration	229
Recesses 7 and 8	231

Recess 9.....	232
7.8 The patrons	233
The Dyve family.....	234
Stained glass.....	236
Martha	241
Thomas de Lenham	242
John de Dyve.....	242
Martha’s circle	244
7.9 Dynasty and devotion to the Virgin.....	246
The Jesse Tree	247
Connection with liturgy.....	249
Connection with lay devotion: the wall panels	252
The Coronation of the Virgin.....	255
7.10 Penance.....	260
7.11 Missing Imagery	263
7.12 Summary	265
CONCLUSION.....	267
BIBLIOGRAPHY	273
Primary sources (unpublished).....	273
Primary sources (published).....	274
Secondary sources	278
Online resources	305
APPENDICES.....	307
APPENDIX 1.....	307
Mass licence granted to John de Grey in May, 1304, for the house at Cogges	307
APPENDIX 2.....	308
Documents relating to the chantry at Witney c. 1331	308
a) Patent Rolls, 1331	308

b) Inquisition ad Quod Damnum, 1331–32.....	308
APPENDIX 3	309
Documents relating to the chantry at Witney c. 1347–61	309
a) Register of Bishop Edington, 1347.....	309
b) Feet of Fines, 1347–48	309
c) Patent Rolls, 1348	310
d) Patent Rolls, 1361	311
e) Close rolls, 1361	311
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	312
VOLUME TWO (Illustrations).....	339

Abbreviations

BL The British Library, London

Bodl The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Ch. Rolls Calendar of the Charter Rolls. See Bibliography – Primary Sources (published)

Cl. Rolls Calendar of the Close Rolls. See Bibliography – Primary Sources (published)

CM *Church Monuments*, the journal of the Church Monuments Society

CP *The Complete Peerage*. See Bibliography – Secondary Sources.

CRSBI The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland. References in the text are to the online resource available at <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/>

CVMA Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi

EETS Early English Text Society

HRO Hampshire Record Office

I. Misc. Inquisitions Miscellaneous. See Bibliography: Primary Sources (published)

IPM *Inquisitions Post Mortem*. See Bibliography: Primary Sources (published)

IQD *Inquisitions Quod Damnum*. See Bibliography: Primary Sources (published)

JBAA *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*

NOAHS North Oxfordshire Archaeological Society

OAS Oxfordshire Archaeological Society

OAHS Oxford Architectural and History Society

ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. References in the text are to the 2004 online edition available at <https://0-www-oxforddnb-com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/>

OHS Oxford History Centre

OAS Oxfordshire Archaeological Society

Pat. Rolls *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*. See Bibliography: Primary Sources (published)

PML Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, USA

PRO Public Record Office

SGC St George's Chapel Archives, Windsor

TMBS *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*

TNA The National Archives, Kew

V&A The Victoria and Albert Museum, London

VCH *The Victoria County History*. References in the text are to the online volumes available at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch>

Walters The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, USA.

In the footnotes, primary sources (published) are referenced using an italicised, abbreviated title; secondary material is indicated by the author's name and date of publication. The bibliography gives full references for each.

INTRODUCTION

A great many medieval parish churches survive in England and Wales, perhaps as many as nine thousand.¹ Yet more have been demolished, ruined or reclassified while those that stand are largely denuded of their medieval contents. The scale of losses wrought by time, trends in religious practice, vandalism, purposeful removal and re-ordering has been vividly described by Warwick Rodwell, Eamon Duffy and many others.² Nonetheless, a corpus of artefacts survives, albeit broken and battered, which testifies to the visually complex, sensually rich environment of the late medieval parish church, no two of which were exactly alike.³ Interest in the field is high amongst art historians, attested by a recent conference at the Courtauld Institute, London, which turned the spotlight away from cathedrals and great churches onto the parish church, acknowledging its potential as a site for innovation and expression.⁴ The conference was organised in response to Paul Binski's rallying cry to art historians to rise to the challenge of the parish church, voiced as early as 1995.⁵ Since then, scholars have done much to develop our understanding of the art and architecture of medieval parish churches, demonstrating the active relationship that existed between viewer and image.⁶ Meaning was created not simply through

¹ Warwick Rodwell, *The Archaeology of Churches* (Stroud, 2012), 36.

² Rodwell (2012); Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud, 2004); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–c.1580* (New Haven and London, 1992).

³ An idea of the extent of these is given by national surveys such as the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland; the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi; the East Anglian rood screen project; the Norfolk medieval graffiti survey, and the Survey of Historic Wall paintings in the British Isles (see bibliography).

⁴ 'Towards an Art History of the Parish Church, 1200–1399' (Conference: Courtauld Institute, London, June 2017). Transactions forthcoming.

⁵ Paul Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art in the Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem', *Studies in Iconography*, 20 (1999), 1–25.

⁶ See for example Virginia Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (eds), *Women's space: patronage, place, and gender in the medieval church* (Albany NY, 2005); Marks (2004); Richard Marks and Paul Williamson (eds), *Gothic: Art for England 1400–1547* (London, 2003); Mary Carpenter Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds), *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2003); Kathleen Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages* (New York, 2002) and Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, 1993).

the depiction of an identifiable subject but through its location, choice of material, interaction with other artefacts, its patronage, the audience it addressed and the activities that took place in its vicinity. Imagery was multivalent and interactive, influencing behaviour and creating and reflecting social identities as well as devotional ideas. This is particularly evident in the combination of devotion and display embodied by funerary monuments and the often richly embellished chantry chapels in which they were encountered.⁷ The choices made for these ‘waiting rooms for the soul’, where Masses were offered for the dead, reveal a mix of idealising self-representation and pious desire for the afterlife; expressing the personal concerns of deceased individuals while enhancing liturgical provision for the whole parish and prompting penance and intercession.⁸ Recent scholarship collected in Luxford and McNeill’s edited volume *The Medieval Chantry in England* demonstrates the range of approaches—archaeological, architectural and anthropological—used to explore these culturally redolent spaces.⁹ In Oxfordshire, a handful of parish chantry chapels have been the subject of informative studies, for example, the Cornwall chantry at Asthall, licenced in 1320; the de la More family chantry of c. 1350 at Northmoor; and two grander foundations: those of Elizabeth Wilcote at North Leigh, founded 1438, and of Alice de la Pole (d. 1475), Duchess of

⁷ See for example Jessica Barker, *Stone Fidelity. Marriage and Emotion in Medieval Tomb Sculpture* (Woodbridge, 2020); Christian Steer (ed.), *The Monuments Man, Essays in Honour of Jerome Bertram* (Donington, 2020), Brian and Moira Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies. The evidence from Yorkshire to 1400* (Oxford and Philadelphia, 2019); Ann Adams and Jessica Barker (eds), *Revisiting The Monument: Fifty Years Since Panofsky’s Tomb Sculpture* (Courtauld Books Online, 2016) <https://courtauld.ac.uk/research/courtauld-books-online/revisiting-the-monument> [accessed 20 July, 2020]; Zoë Opačić, ‘Nova Civitas: Edward I and the Making of New Winchelsea, Sussex’, *Setkávání. Studie o Středověkém Umění Věnované Kláře Benešovské* (Prague, 2015), 297–318; Sally Badham and Sophie Oosterwijk (eds), *Monumental Industry: The Production of Tomb Monuments in England and Wales in the Long Fourteenth Century* (Donington, 2010); Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford, 2009). Scholarly articles on medieval monuments appear regularly in the journals *Church Monuments* and *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*.

⁸ John McNeill, ‘A pre-history of the chantry’ in Julian Luxford and John McNeill (eds), *The Medieval Chantry in England* (Leeds, 2011), 1–38 at 14.

⁹ Luxford and McNeill (2011).

Suffolk, at Ewelme, founded in 1437.¹⁰ Yet large numbers of lesser-known parish examples remain unexamined.

This thesis takes as its subject three such chapels in neighbouring parish churches a mile or two apart in west Oxfordshire, namely Cogges, Witney and Ducklington (0.0:1). Dating to the first half of the fourteenth century, they are distinguished by fine curvilinear windows of similar design and are much embellished by striking figurative sculpture, inside and out. This is somewhat mutilated but still attests to innovation in design and skill in execution. Each chapel houses an elaborate funerary monument and is positioned alongside a crypt, two of which have been identified as charnel chambers. These shared characteristics justify treating the three buildings as a group. At the same time there are significant differences between them. The architectural settings are distinct; the subjects of the carving are different; the monuments take different forms, and the parishes in which they are located vary in size, wealth and character, making each one unique and worthy of investigation in its own right. They raise interesting questions about the physical embodiment of chantry provision in late-medieval Oxfordshire yet have largely escaped scholarly attention. I propose to interrogate the art and architecture of this neglected group of chapels in an attempt to throw some light on this and related aspects of parish experience. The following brief description will introduce the sites and highlight some of their more distinctive features.

0.1 The Sites

Cogges

The chapel at Cogges is located north of the chancel. It contains a large tomb chest carved with evangelist symbols and the recumbent effigy of a woman in fourteenth-century clothing, her head supported by angels, her foot on a lion. Around her are the remnants of a rich programme of decoration (0.1:1–4). Outside, a prominent haloed

¹⁰ Katharine Mair, 'The Cornwall Chapel of St Nicholas Church, Asthall', *Oxoniensia*, 1997, 241–67; Sally Badham, 'The de la More effigies at Northmoor (Oxfordshire) and related monuments at Winterbourne (Gloucestershire)', *Church Monuments*, 23 (2008), 14–44; Kate Heard, 'Death and Representation in the Fifteenth Century: The Wilcote Chantry Chapel at North Leigh', *JBAA*, 154, 1 (January 2001), 134–49; John Goodall, *God's House at Ewelme: Life, Devotion, and Architecture in a Fifteenth-Century Almshouse* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, Vt, 2001).

head, identified by John Goodall as a Head of Christ, is carved into the apex of the east window.¹¹ Inside, the window displays the remains of a design in fourteenth-century stained glass, originally combining stars and sunbursts with heraldry and saints.¹² A sculptured frieze runs around the inside of the chapel at eaves height. It is densely populated with cavorting grotesques, variously sticking out their tongues, snarling and banging gongs to the accompaniment of animals playing musical instruments. The carvings have been called ‘hunting scenes’ and described as ‘delightful’, descriptions which I believe do not reflect their value in this context.¹³ Drawing on current discussions about marginalia in devotional manuscripts, I propose a more complex reading in which the frieze is an essential rather than an ornamental feature of the chapel; part of an integrated image programme designed to assist the salvation of the deceased.

Witney

The chapel at Witney is at the north end of the north transept. It is also embellished by marginal sculpture, this time on the outside. The carvings are concentrated around a pair of double-decker image niches housed within buttresses, and include a pair of tormented sinners, one male, one female. Inside, a funerary monument containing effigies, also male and female, is set into the wall beneath the fine north window (0.1:5–6) The male wears legal attire and rests his foot on a woolsack, a potentially unique example of this combination of attributes in monumental sculpture.¹⁴ I will argue that the setting was a two-storey charnel house comprising a chantry chapel above and semi-underground bone chamber below. In this lower chamber, disinterred human remains in the form of clean, de-fleshed bones were carefully laid out and made available for viewing as part of the range of post-mortem activities performed by the living to ease the purgatorial sufferings of the dead. Known as ‘charnelling’, this under-explored aspect of late-medieval religious practice is the

¹¹ John Goodall, ‘A Study of the Grotesque 14th–Century Sculpture at Adderbury, Bloxham and Hanwell in its Architectural Context’, *Oxoniensia*, 60 (1995), 271–332 at 319.

¹² Peter Newton and Jill Kerr, *The County of Oxford: A Catalogue of Medieval Stained Glass*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi: Great Britain, 1 (London, 1979), 69–70.

¹³ Undated copy of newspaper article in church folder; John Blair and John Steane, ‘Investigations at Cogges, Oxfordshire, 1978–81: The Priory and Parish Church’, *Oxoniensia*, 47 (1982), 37–125, 94.

¹⁴ Sally Badham, personal comment, 24 July, 2018.

subject of recent research by Elizabeth Craig-Atkins, Jennifer Crangle and others and is discussed in detail below.¹⁵ Their findings contribute greatly to my understanding of the Witney chapel which I propose was intentionally located above the bone chamber for spiritual advantage. Most of the exterior sculpture has been lost but two prominent image brackets remain at the upper level, carved with grotesques representing sinners in torment. In the context of a charnel house, I shall argue that these are penitential carvings and that, together with the effigies inside, including that of a lawyer, they indicate a theme of divine justice and mercy.

Ducklington

Empty buttress niches along the north aisle at Ducklington indicate that exterior figure sculpture was intended here too but none has survived. However, the remnants of an extensive array of sculpture remain inside, concentrated at the east end of the north aisle which is furnished as a chantry chapel (0.1: 7–8). A sculpture of the Coronation of the Virgin is incorporated into the tracery of the east window, a most unusual feature. An equally unusual funerary monument in the form of a Tree of Jesse is set into the north wall beneath another window. At eaves height and above are the remains of two series of sculpture panels depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin. I will argue that, seen together, the sculpture reflects contemporary prayer practices, creating a sense of permanent intercession offered for the deceased.

The main approach to the Ducklington chapel is over a small charnel chamber located under the north porch.¹⁶ I will argue that the close relationship between crypt and chapel was intentional, as it was at Witney. A crypt under the chancel at Cogges has been filled in. Its purpose cannot now be determined but the possibility of another charnel chamber should not be dismissed. The thesis includes a consideration of the potential value to patrons of proximity to these bone deposits.

A further strand to the investigation is the identity of the patrons, who have not so far been named. I will demonstrate that the patron at Cogges was Margaret Oddingseles,

¹⁵ Elizabeth Craig-Atkins *et al.*, 'Charnel Practices in Medieval England: New Perspectives', *Mortality*, 24, 2 (3 April, 2019): 145–66; Jennifer Crangle, 'A Study of Post-Depositional Funerary Practices in Medieval England' (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 2016).

¹⁶ The crypt retained bones until 1910. *Witney Deanery Magazine*, 1910, 4.

who held the manor in dower from 1311.¹⁷ At Witney, the patron of the monument was local lawyer John de Croxford of Kidlington, joint holder with Richard de Stanlake of Witney of a chantry licence, granted in 1331.¹⁸ At Ducklington I will argue for a member of the Dyve family, proprietors of Ducklington manor between the late twelfth and mid fourteenth century, and holders of the advowson.¹⁹ Despite the obvious quality and expense of the commissions, none of these individuals belonged to the magnate or noble classes. Instead they were members of the gentry. Emerging in the early fourteenth century as a clearly defined, socially aspirational group, these were the lesser knights and landowners, many of whom were lawyers and administrators employed by wealthy magnates and the crown in land management and local government, and active in their local parishes.²⁰ Their contributions to the upkeep of the church and its fittings were evidence of status but also enhanced the religious experience of their fellow parishioners—on whose intercessory prayers they relied. This symbiotic relationship with less visible members of the parish community is thus also included in the inquiry.

0.2 Aims and intent

With their once-rich decoration and fittings, these chapels embody the fruitful combination of artistic endeavour, heightened spiritual impulse and self-promotion that typified lay religious involvement in the parish church in the early fourteenth century. Personalised by intriguing and unusual sculptural decoration, they express the concerns of patrons who were preparing for the ordeal of Purgatory and the Last Judgement that would follow. Exploring these evocative sites will reward both art-historical and social inquiry, offering a glimpse of the experience of a hitherto unnoticed group of gentry men and women and the parish communities to which they belonged as they contemplated this all-important rite of passage. The project will demonstrate the value of studying incomplete material in the context in which it

¹⁷ *Cl. Rolls*, 1307–13, 393.

¹⁸ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 194.

¹⁹ *Eynsham Cartulary*, 1, ed. Herbert Salter (Oxford, 1907), 85; Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, f. 147–48.

²⁰ Nigel Saul, *Lordship and Faith: The English Gentry and the Parish Church in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2017), throughout, summarised at 7–8; Peter Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge, 2009), chaps 1 and 2.

occurs (in this case, the emotionally intense setting of a parish chantry chapel), rescuing items that are of social as well as art-historical significance from obscurity. It will explore the innovative funerary choices made by individual patrons expressing their particular concerns. More generally, if the study chapels can be taken as representative of local trends as well as personal expression, it will add to our understanding of Decorated-era patronage and chantry provision amongst the parish gentry of rural Oxfordshire, if not across the country.

0.3 Structure of the thesis

The study sites provide a snapshot of post-mortem provision at a clearly defined place and time. However, they are much altered from their original appearance and supporting documentation is missing, complicating identification and interpretation. For this reason, the research is presented in two parts and moves from the general to the particular. Chapters 1–4 make up the first part. They draw on existing scholarship on the ideology and patronage of chantry chapels and build a broad contextual base against which to measure the study sites, which are treated in detail in the second part. Chapter 1 introduces the visual and devotional character of parish-based chantries in the Decorated era. Chapters 2–3 identify the physical and archival challenges involved in researching undocumented material and demonstrate how these might be addressed. Chapter 4 provides a review of the literature. This is also presented in two sections. Little has been published on the study chapels themselves, and this is covered in a short first section. However, some of the matters I wish to pursue have been discussed in relation to chantries and chantry chapels elsewhere. These include parish-based chantries and their settings, the role of women in commemoration, and some less familiar subjects such as the connection with charnel crypts and the cross-over between books of hours and chantry space. A second more extensive review section summarises recent scholarship on these topics. They emerge again in relation to the study sites which are treated in detail in the second part of the thesis: chapters 5–7 deal with Cogges, Witney and Ducklington individually as separate case studies while highlighting the threads that connect them to one another and to commemorative traditions more widely. Each chapter follows the same format, starting with a brief history of the whole church and then a detailed description of the chapel in question, its architecture and ornament. This is followed

by a consideration of the likely patrons, based on the physical evidence and supported by documentary research. The next section deals with iconography, presenting new interpretations of the imagery at the study sites, showing it to be individualised, locked into local circumstances and closely related to patronal interests and audience response. The concluding chapter will summarise how these findings contribute to our understanding of late-medieval memorial practices at parish level and highlight some directions for further research.

CHAPTER 1: Background

1.1 Art-historical and ideological context

The highly ornamental style of English gothic art and architecture known as the Decorated, which flourished from the later thirteenth to around the middle of the fourteenth century, found expression in parish churches in elaborate curvilinear window tracery, complex mouldings, stained glass, painted decoration, statuary and marginalia. The same kinds of embellishment reappeared at scale on smaller architectural fittings: sedilia, piscinae, aumbries and sepulchral monuments fitted with elaborate canopies ornamented with gables, crockets and finials.²¹ This outburst of creative activity coincided with an expansion of aristocratic patronage to embrace the lower knightly classes and well-to-do civilians, including those of the middling country gentry.²² At the same time, lay engagement in religious practice increased dramatically in response to the improvements in clerical education and pastoral care initiated by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. These included the requirement for the laity to receive the sacrament of Penance annually, the formalisation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi in 1245, and the gradual consolidation of the doctrine of Purgatory, notably at the Second Council of Lyon in 1274.²³ Death and the afterlife were central to medieval Christianity. Religious practice was eschatological, oriented towards the Four Last Things, that is, death, judgement, heaven and hell. Purgatory was defined as an interim state between death and judgement whereby those who died repentant but without having atoned for their sins were ‘purified after death by purgatorial or cleansing punishment; which punishment can be lightened by the prayers of the living’.²⁴ One of the consequences of the increase in religious participation was a

²¹ The literature on the Decorated era is vast. See for example Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style, 1290–1350* (New Haven; London: 2014); Paul Frankl and Paul Crossely, *Gothic Architecture* (London, 2000); Nicola Coldstream, *The Decorated Style: Architecture and Ornament 1240–1360* (London, 1994); Jean Bony, *The English Decorated Style: Gothic Architecture Transformed, 1250–1350* (Ithaca, 1979).

²² Binski (2014), 97–99.

²³ This process is succinctly described by McNeill (2011a), 3.

²⁴ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 2001), 186. Le Goff identifies the source of this description as a letter of Pope Innocent IV written to the papal legate in Cyprus in

rise in the numbers of chantries established in parish churches: a chantry being an endowment supporting a priest or priests who would offer Mass and other prayers for the well-being of named individuals in life and more particularly for their souls after death, hastening their passage through this purgatorial suffering. Another was the attendant increase in the amount of commemorative artefacts, including extravagant funerary monuments, that were commissioned by the better-off laity for the same purpose.²⁵ Reaching a peak in the years between 1300–48, most chantries were located in parish churches rather than monasteries or cathedrals, where their effectiveness relied on interaction with the parish community.²⁶ Part of the reason for what Paul Binski describes as ‘the eye-catchingly vulgar, colourful, pleasing and memorable object domain of the Decorated Style: chantries, tombs and any installations including memorials of the dead’, was that audiences had to be ‘pleased, brought round, softened up’ in order to further what he calls the ‘domain of love and persuasion’ that bound the living to the dead.²⁷ The architecture, monuments and sculpture considered in this study belong firmly within this appealing category.

1.2 The parish context

The lives of medieval people are often shadowy, leaving only tantalising hints behind. I have chosen the parish church as the context for my research as it is an arena that can shed light on their experience, including that of women whose lives were less well documented than those of their male counterparts and are consequently less visible to history.²⁸ I have sought to avoid out-dated assumptions about women’s lack of agency, scrutinising documentary sources for snippets of biographical and anecdotal information about all the individuals involved in the three chantry chapels, female as well as male. This gives strong indications of female

1254, the gist of which was subsequently included in an appendix to the constitution *Cum sacrosanta* of the Council of Lyon, 1274. Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1986), 283–85.

²⁵ Saul (Oxford, 2009), 36–37.

²⁶ Clive Burgess, ‘Chantries in the Parish, or “Through the Looking Glass”’ in Luxford and McNeill (2011), 100–129 at 101.

²⁷ Binski (2014), 92.

²⁸ Katherine French, *The People of the Parish* (Penn, 2001); Kim Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540* (Manchester, 2003), 185–194.

participation, not in opposition to male patronage but as part of shared memorial projects. It has also disclosed social networks connecting the patrons to each other and to other influential figures further afield, identifying likely routes for artistic exchange.

Since the publication of Eamon Duffy's seminal *Stripping of the Altars* in 1992, scholars have continued to debate the vitality/moribundity of the medieval parish as a social and a religious unit, and the private/corporate nature of the religious experience of its members. A representative sample of the range of positions held by writers on the complexities of these and related topics was published in 2002 in *The Parish in Late Medieval England*.²⁹ While bearing in mind George Bernard's caution that the historical record attests to the actions of the pious, not the indifferent, the church building that emerges from this body of scholarship is the beating heart of the medieval parish community; a unique amalgam of the marvellous and the mundane where, as well as encountering the divine in the Mass, social identities were constructed, power relations played out and significant life events marked.³⁰ Chancies were an essential feature of this social exchange. Although principally aimed at securing the salvation of the founders, chancies also contributed to the overall number of Masses that were celebrated in a church, increasing liturgical opportunities for the whole parish.³¹ This was seen as an act of charity while those who prayed for the founders were acting charitably in return. Founders often linked other charitable bequests to their chancies as well, donating funds for church maintenance, providing food, clothing and alms for the poor and education for the sons of parishioners, increasing the benefit to the community while demonstrating their own largesse.³² While some chancies were founded by parish groups pooling resources, for example craft guilds, individual chancies were the preserve of the

²⁹ Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy (eds), *The Parish in Late Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington, 2006).

³⁰ George Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability before the Break with Rome* (New Haven, 2012), ix.

³¹ McNeill (2011a), 14; Burgess (2011), 110.

³² For an overview of the concept of *memoria*, that is, the complex of liturgical and social acts that connected the living with the dead, see Sally Badham, *Seeking Salvation: Commemorating the Dead in the Late-Medieval English Parish* (Donington, 2015).

better-off members of a community.³³ In a rural parish, this was by and large the local gentry. The subject of gentry patronage of the parish church is thoroughly explored by Nigel Saul in *Lordship and Faith*. The concept is elastic and embraces the wealthy and influential lord of the manor, holder of the advowson and owner of a string of properties at one end, and the lesser gentry with limited land holdings at the other.³⁴ This characterisation is apt in relation to the study chapels where a similar range of patrons was active. Saul's lower group includes the self-made men, the professional lawyers, administrators and civil servants who aspired to position and respectability by acquiring landed wealth and practising the kind of patronage associated with more established families. They are exemplified by Richard de Stanlake and the lawyer John de Croxford at Witney, while the knightly proprietors of de Grey at Cogges and Dyve at Ducklington occupy a position further up the scale. Saul finds the gentry patron closely involved with the parish church, attending regularly and collaborating with other stakeholders on church building projects.³⁵ He notes that patrons contributed for various reasons such as spiritual return and seigneurial pride, as might be expected, but also out of a sense of duty, responsibility and belonging. Chancies, he claims, are an expression of this, implicating the founder in a continuing, close relationship with the building and with the community that used it, 'helping to structure local society and consolidate local identities'.³⁶ The description is helpful in understanding the motives of the patrons at the study sites where, as I will demonstrate, the location, the layout and the ornamentation of the chantries they founded were designed to benefit the wider parish as well as the deceased and their immediate circle.

³³ For medieval guilds, see Gary Richardson, 'Craft Guilds and Christianity in Late-Medieval England: A Rational-Choice Analysis', *Rationality and Society*, 17, 2 (May 2005), 148–52.

³⁴ Saul (2017a), 6–7.

³⁵ Saul (2017a), particularly chapters 9 and 10.

³⁶ Saul (2017a), 159.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

Inevitably, the architecture and artefacts at the study sites are in degraded and incomplete condition. The architectural context has been much altered over time obscuring its medieval function and status, and supporting documentation is scarce. The problems are not intractable but they do mean that the material responds better to an archaeological, contextual and comparative approach than to the more traditional form of art-historical inquiry focussing on questions of authorship, design and production. While the project is driven by interest in the visual features of the chapels, I have adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to interpretation, borrowing from archaeology and anthropology, manuscript and sound studies; a strategy that is suited to the damaged condition of the material and to the multi-sensory, multi-functional character of its medieval setting. Backed up by archival research, the investigation will demonstrate the value of the method in rescuing from obscurity artefacts of intrinsic art-historical value that were clearly also of great significance to those who commissioned and encountered them. As well as findings at the sites themselves, the method will offer a useful model for future research.

2.1 Identifying surviving material

The surviving fabric at each site is described in detail to provide a sound basis for dating the buildings and establishing their function as chantries before attempting to analyse the imagery. The chapels are all embellished in distinctive ways suggesting close patronal involvement and they embody different modes and degrees of interaction with the parish community. This is attested by the fabric but unsupported by written records. I therefore consider the chapels in relation to other, more complete buildings elsewhere which exhibit similar characteristics, and those that are documented or have already benefited from research. Pamela Graves uses this approach in her study of medieval parish churches in Norfolk and Devon, explaining, ‘I have used selected parallels with documented churches to suggest strategies which may have been deployed in less well documented parishes.’³⁷ My approach is similarly comparative. I provide two or more corroborative exemplars to support the

³⁷ Pamela Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief: An Archaeology of the Lay Experience of Religion in Medieval Norfolk and Devon*, BAR British Series, 311 (Oxford, 2000), 134.

identification and interpretation of problematic material and to reveal local trends. I also go beyond the visual and architectural traditions of the parish church into the broader cultural landscape of late-medieval life, including its songs, stories and sermons, where further relevant imagery is to be found. Writing on the marginal sculpture at the parish church of Heckington (Lincs), built during the early fourteenth century, Veronica Sekules shows how this can be done. Amongst the profusion of grotesques decorating the exterior, Sekules finds references to local tradition and folklore as well as to vernacular preaching about sin and penance.³⁸ Consequently, she claims, the carvings speak to a wide audience and carry layers of meaning that are entertaining as well as didactic. The arrangement is not systematic and does not point to a single, identifiable anterior text. Instead, it draws on a range of broadly familiar sources to deliver its messages in an episodic, informal way. The carvings signify singly and in groups as well as in relation to the whole overarching scheme. Sekules identifies this scheme as purgatorial, ruled over by Christ in Judgement, depicted on the porch gable. It continues inside the church in the chancel with sight of the sacrament shrine carved with Christ's resurrection, and the memorial set into the wall alongside which together promise resurrection and eternal life through the Eucharist (2.1: 1–4).³⁹ In other words, the subversive subjects carved outside were employed to attract attention but contributed to an orthodox message. Sekules ascribes the programme to a collaboration—undocumented but inferred—between the rector Richard Potesgrave (a royal appointee), the lady of the manor Isabella de Vesci and her sister-in-law Alice de Beaumont. Both women were wealthy widows with royal connections. They owned property in the parish and may have lived there.⁴⁰ Sekules' holistic approach provides a model for interpreting the carvings at the three study chapels which, I will argue, exhibit a similar range of devotional and cultural influences, as well as integrating exterior and interior features to create a redemptive journey for the beholder.

³⁸ Veronica Sekules, 'Beauty and the Beast: Ridicule and Orthodoxy in Architectural Marginalia in Early Fourteenth-Century Lincolnshire', *Art History*, 18, 1 (March, 1995), 37–62 at 48–54.

³⁹ Sekules (1995), 54–57.

⁴⁰ Sekules (1995), 39–40, 54.

2.2 Identifying damaged and missing material

Heckington is rare in retaining much of its marginal sculpture in reasonable condition. In order to identify certain subjects at the study chapels, where key parts of the sculpture are damaged or missing, I have looked at Heckington but also at securely identifiable images in other media and settings. For example, four of the sculpture panels at Ducklington contain figures with no heads. By comparison with similar compositions in illustrated manuscripts they can be securely identified as scenes from the life of the Virgin. At Witney, marginal figures on the exterior are both less well preserved and less familiar. A pair of large image brackets carved with male and female grotesques stand out. Given the chantry context, and by comparison with complete examples on mainland Europe, I will demonstrate that the female figure is a *femme-aux-serpents*, traditionally interpreted as depicting the punishment of sin, particularly lust.⁴¹ Its male companion can be assumed to depict sin as well, by association, although its details are no longer clear. Comparisons carry particular weight where the patrons were known to one another. One example is the Stapleton chantry at North Moreton (Oxon) with its almost intact stained glass of c. 1310–1330.⁴² The chantry was founded in 1299 by Miles Stapleton, retainer of the king's cousin Aymer de Valence.⁴³ Anna Eavis has revealed the relationship between the images in stained glass in the east window and sculptures of the family's patron saints, once displayed alongside. The glass itself combines scenes from sacred history with sophisticated architectural designs and juxtaposes heavenly motifs such as stars and sunbursts with family heraldry, the whole ensemble expressing the deceased's spiritual and social concerns.⁴⁴ The influence of the Stapleton chantry may be inferred at Cogges where surviving fragments and records of lost heraldic

⁴¹ Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France. Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Âge* (Paris: 1922) 374; Anthony Weir and James Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches* (London and New York, 2013), 58–74.

⁴² John McNeill (2011a), 19–21; Anna Eavis, 'St Nicholas, Charles Winston and Conservation at North Moreton', Panel of the Month, *Vidimus*, 25 (2009) <<https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-25/panel-of-the-month/>> [accessed 20 April, 2020]; Fiona M. Whyte, 'The East Window of the Chapel of St Nicholas at All Saints Church, North Moreton', *The Journal of Stained Glass*, 19, 2 (1991), 105–32.

⁴³ Anthony Musson, 'Stapleton, Miles, First Lord Stapleton (d. 1314), Baron and Administrator' <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/26301>> [accessed 9 March 2020].

⁴⁴ Eavis (2009).

glass indicate a similar design (2.2: 1–2). The Stapleton family were likely to have been known to the de Greys, the manorial family at Cogges, whose main seat, Rotherfield, was nearby, some fifteen miles to the east. Both families brokered advantageous marriages between their eldest sons and the daughters (and co-heirs) of Brian Fitzalan (d. 1304) of Bedale (Yorks). Gilbert Stapleton (1290–1321) married Agnes (d. 1348); John de Grey (1300–1359) married her younger sister Katherine (d. by 1324).⁴⁵ The putative link between the families provides a possible route for the transmission of courtly styles into the provinces where they would be adapted by local craftsmen. While we cannot now recover the details of the lost glass at Cogges, comparison with Eavis’s interpretation of the scheme at North Moreton shows how its subjects may have worked with other surrounding imagery to express patronal concerns.

Sally Badham’s account of the de la More chantry chapel at Northmoor provides another useful comparator. There are no obvious connections with the patrons at the study sites but there are similarities in the design of the monuments. The chapel in the north transept at Northmoor contains twinned recesses under a window (similar to the setting at Witney and Ducklington) containing a pair of male and female effigies (2.2: 3). The walls, including the backs of the recesses are covered in murals of *c.* 1350, now badly deteriorated.⁴⁶ Badham demonstrates that the painted subjects around and within the monument included heraldry, soul-bearing angels, the Virgin and Christ, and members of the de la More family kneeling in adoration. Christ in Majesty is shown on the west wall. Like the Stapleton chantry, this chapel was decorated to identify the founders, establish their earthly status and ensure their spiritual salvation. Comparisons between integrated, mixed-media image complexes like North Moreton and Northmoor help evoke the kind of symbolic environment likely to have existed at the study chapels—which are undocumented and where parts of the image programme have been lost. Proposing the likely theme, if not the actual subject, of missing material based on comparisons is a legitimate approach but

⁴⁵ Musson <<https://0-www-oxforddnb-com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/>>[accessed 9 March, 2020]; Henry Summerson, ‘Grey, John, First Lord Grey of Rotherfield (1300–1359), Soldier and Courtier’ <<https://0-www-oxforddnb-com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/>>[accessed 9 March, 2020].

⁴⁶ Badham (2008), 23–25.

inevitably requires the occasional deductive leap. Where these occur, I present my suggestions as plausible possibilities rather than firm facts.

CHAPTER 3: Challenges

3.1 Physical and archival challenges

Modifications to the buildings that have occurred since the fourteenth century naturally present some challenges. At Witney the vault between the upper and lower chambers has been removed and the subterranean area filled in, masking the existence and function of a charnel crypt.⁴⁷ The crypt at Cogges has also been filled in, while that at Ducklington survives intact but has been cleared. At Witney, the alterations have rendered the funerary monument inaccessible, making close observation impossible without a ladder. The monuments at Cogges and Ducklington no longer display any identifying details and no contemporary documentation relating to chantry foundation at these sites has surfaced. This a further hindrance but does not negate the project. Instead, it foregrounds the fabric, encouraging close looking, contextual interpretation and exploration of other archival sources, firstly to establish that the installations were indeed chantries, and secondly to identify the patrons. Specific records such as chantry ordinances or references in wills may be missing but a range of supplementary sources exist which can help to fill the gap. Land transactions recorded in the feet of fines, and entries in legal records such as plea rolls, close and patent rolls, and in bishops' registers will often provide enough circumstantial evidence to indicate a probable patron.⁴⁸ As for monuments without distinguishing marks, Nigel Saul points out that, although ultimately inconclusive, 'if the documentary sources point to the presence in a village of a wealthy freehold proprietor, then there is every likelihood that that individual will be the person

⁴⁷ George Cook, *The English Mediaeval Parish Church* (London, 1956), 117.

⁴⁸ The feet of fines was a legal record of the conveyance of freehold land and other property, kept almost continuously from 1195–1833. Chris Phillips, 'A Short Introduction to Feet of Fines', *Foundations Journal*, 4 (2012), 45. The close rolls record private letters issued by Chancery to individuals, conveying orders and instructions and closed by the great seal <<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C3614a>> [accessed 22 March, 2020]. The patent rolls record open letters on matters of public interest, e.g., letters of protection, liberties, offices, privileges, lands and wardships; presentations to livings; special and general pardons; licences and pardons for alienation; and licences in mortmain <<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C3626>> [accessed 22 March, 2020].

represented'.⁴⁹ The likelihood increases where the church was on the landowner's principle manor or their main place of residence, or if they held the advowson (i.e., the right of appointment to the living).⁵⁰ However, it is not a hard and fast rule, as Saul demonstrates in a recent article on the early fourteenth-century, unfinished south aisle at Little Baddow (Essex). He argues convincingly that the unidentified tomb recesses at the east end, and the slightly later, wooden effigies they contain represent a commemorative project that was started by the lords of the manor but taken over by another, unrelated family when their line died out.⁵¹ In other words, local circumstances should be taken into consideration in each case.

To some extent, for the art historian focusing on matters of style and production or iconography, the question of patronage may be an aside, as the anonymity of a commission need not be a bar to interpretation. However, it is a different matter when considering artworks in the parish church which were influenced by religious and cultural as well as aesthetic considerations. This is especially true of memorials. They gave the deceased an identity relating to their status in life and stood as proxies for them in death, intended to perpetuate their memory and garner *pro anima* prayers until Judgement Day. Putting a name to a monument and exploring the circumstances of its display humanises historical inquiry and contributes an important social dimension to our understanding of how and why a memorial appears as it does. As Julian Luxford has put it in relation to the late fifteenth-century Howard brass at Aylsham, Norfolk,

In practical terms, its ability to signify was closely related to where it was, what stood near it, how much ritual centred on it and who was buried under it. This is why knowledge of local context is so important to historical analysis of these objects.⁵²

⁴⁹ Nigel Saul, 'Review', Brian and Moira Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies. The Evidence from Yorkshire to 1400* (Oxford, 2019), in *CM*, 34 (2019), 196–201, 199.

⁵⁰ Saul (2017a), 170–71.

⁵¹ Nigel Saul, 'The Medieval Wooden Tomb Effigies at Little Baddow (Essex)', *CM*, 32 (2017), 19.

⁵² Julian Luxford, "'Ex terra vis": The Cadaver Brass of Richard and Cecily Howard at Aylsham, Norfolk', *TMBS*, 20 (2019), 64–79, 76.

Therefore, I have sought to identify the patrons and to interpret their post-mortem projects in light of what can be recovered of their life experience as well exploring the physical setting of the parish church in which they chose to be remembered. For the same reason I consider the potential identities of unattributed coats of arms in records of lost stained glass. Heraldry was an important part of the commemorative landscape, helping identify the deceased but could also express wider concerns about ancestry and the importance of extra-familial relationships.

It should be noted that even where medieval documentation does exist it may not be entirely reliable. For example, bequests made in wills were not always fulfilled. This could be for a number of reasons such as inadequate funding or the failing of an investment.⁵³ In 1345 the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of London complained to the dean and chapter of St Paul's Cathedral that 'there are but few chaplains to sing there, in proportion to the chantries which in the said church have been founded.'⁵⁴ Fear that his chantry would vanish in the same way is vehemently expressed by Thomas Leghe (d. 1344), clerk of Oxford. In his will, Thomas curses his children violently should they fail to maintain the chantry that he had established some five years earlier in his parish church of St Michael at the Southgate.

Item, for God's sake, to my children one and all, I enjoin that at the peril of their souls they cause no hindrance to the chantry lately founded by me and Joan my wife in the said church of St Michael, or by their assent or consent allow others to do so, under the penalty of the curse of God and me, which curse, and especially mine, I wish may cover him as a raiment and come into his bowels like water and like oil into his bones, and let it be unto him as the cloak that he has upon him and as the girdle that he is always girdled withal, if the chantry be hindered or opposed in any way by artifice or contrivance; but rather let them support and maintain it.⁵⁵

⁵³ Kathleen Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain* (Cambridge, 1965), 43, 88.

⁵⁴ *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: F, 1337–1352*, ed. by Reginald Sharpe (London, 1904), f. ciii.

⁵⁵ *Liber Albus Civitatis Oxoniensis: Abstract of the Wills, Deeds and Enrolments contained in the White Book of the City of Oxford*, ed. by William Ellis and Herbert Salter (Oxford, 1909), 28. The curse is from Psalm 109 (108): 17–19.

Despite the curse, Thomas' chantry lasted only twenty years in the form he envisaged. By 1359 in the period following the Black Death when rents had fallen and chaplains were hard to find, his son had granted the assets to Oriel College, merging the chantry with one served by the college chaplains. In 1353, Elizabeth Knappehalle of Oxford took steps to ensure that her daughter would fulfil her request to set up and maintain a perpetual chantry in St Martin's church by requiring her to take an oath before the archdeacon 'under the penalty of the greater excommunication'.⁵⁶ There is no further record of this chantry, leaving its existence in doubt. The extreme measures taken by these testators to ensure their wishes were carried out and the uncertain fate of the foundations they envisaged demonstrates that reference to chantry provision in a will is no guarantee that it was either implemented or maintained. Conversely, the absence of documentation does not mean that a chantry did not exist. Records may have been lost or never have existed in the first place. Without documentation, the existence of a chantry may be inferred from the fabric. For example, at Cogges and Ducklington, a grand monument juxtaposed with liturgical fittings in an embellished side aisle with heraldic windows provides compelling evidence that one existed or was at least intended.

Where chantry records do survive, they often lack the kind of detail that historians require. Take for example the licence granted to Richard de Stanlake and John de Croxford in 1331 for a chantry at Witney.⁵⁷ It lists the chantry assets; it tells us that three chaplains were to be appointed and that Mass was to be celebrated daily in perpetuity. However, it does not say where the Masses were to take place nor to which saint the chantry was dedicated. It does not specify what other duties the chaplains were required to perform nor on what terms they were to live. Nor does it explain the relationship between the two patrons who have different names. The information provided by the licence thus needs to be supplemented by further archival research and close examination of the fabric if we are to get a glimpse of its significance.

⁵⁶ *Liber Albus*, 55.

⁵⁷ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 194, and Appendix 2.

3.2 Female agency

If there are problems regarding male patrons and the details of their commissions, the problem is compounded when it comes to female involvement as women are under-represented in the documentary record. Women are memorialised by effigies at Cogges and Witney, and probably also by the Ducklington monument which, with its twinned recesses and genealogical theme suggested by the Jesse Tree, may indicate a married couple. However, there is nothing on the monuments themselves to help with identification, and finding out about women from archival sources is not straightforward. What little documentation exists is often legal, relating to land ownership for example, thus representing only a small section of the female population. This does not indicate their absence from other social spheres, only that their activities were not formally recorded. Such records as do exist rarely contain personal information and what there is can be missed entirely or misconstrued by later historians. Take for example, the churching in 1300 of Margaret Oddingseles (widow of John de Grey of Rotherfield), whose monument stands in the chapel at Cogges. The event is recorded but only incidentally, as evidence of the coming of age of Margaret's eldest son, John. His birth was recalled in 1321 at an inquisition held to verify his age. A number of local men testified to the boy's baptism on the morrow of the feast of Saints Simon and Jude (28 October), three days after his birth, and to his mother's churching a month later on the feast of St Andrew (30 November). This was a particularly memorable occasion

because of the great feast which John de Grey made at Rutherefeld on the day of St Andrew next after the said heir's birth, when the said Margaret purified herself from the said heir; which feast is still notorious in those parts because the abbots, priors and almost all the other good men of those parts were present'.⁵⁸

The cloths alone for this sumptuous feast cost £6 and extra provisions were bought in from Henley market. In an account of this event published in the *Victoria County History* in 2011, the authors reference the inquisition but ascribe the feast to John's birth and baptism, not to Margaret's churching.

⁵⁸ *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 204–05.

In 1300 a lavish banquet was held to celebrate the birth and baptism (at Rotherfield Greys) of John de Grey, ‘which feast is still notorious (...).’⁵⁹

The difference in time is insignificant in terms of providing a date for John’s birth and his inheritance but it has the misleading effect of removing Margaret from the picture when in fact she was central to it. The ceremony of churching and the feast which followed were to celebrate her achievement in successfully giving birth to a son, so important for the continuation of the male line and securing the family estate. It was an opportunity to give thanks for the survival of both mother and child and to mark Margaret’s return to society and the church, after a period of lying-in.⁶⁰ The misattribution reduces the reader’s appreciation of women’s crucial, dynastic role in late-medieval society, their public profile and the relationships they had with friends and neighbours, including in this case with influential men. This makes it easier to underrate Margaret as an individual and thus to underestimate her agency in later life, overlooking what I will argue is clear evidence of her patronage of the chapel at Cogges.

3.3 Attribution

An enthusiasm for sculptural display is evident at each of the study sites, no doubt fuelled by the ready supply of local stone. Quarries at Burford, Wheatley, Taynton and Bladon were active in the early fourteenth century.⁶¹ There are similarities between the design and mouldings of the window tracery at the three chapels (3.3: 1–5). Earlier writers have drawn comparisons with prestigious buildings of similar date in the vicinity which have comparable windows.⁶² These include the Latin chapel at Christ Church Cathedral (Oxford), St Peter-in-the-East (now the library of St Edmund Hall, Oxford), and the collegiate church of St John the Baptist at

⁵⁹ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol16/pp266-302#fm374>> [accessed 7 March, 2020].

⁶⁰ Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Boydell Press, 2012), 183.

⁶¹ Horsfield (2017), 4–8; Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 354–55.

⁶² Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 588; Richard Morris, ‘The Gothic Mouldings of the Latin and Lady Chapels’, *Oxoniensia*, 53 (1988), 169–184, 180–81, 245; Nigel Saul, ‘Shottesbrooke Church: A Study in Knightly Patronage’, in *Windsor: Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture of the Thames Valley* ed. by Lawrence Keen and Eileen Scarff (Leeds, 2002), 265–81.

Shottesbrooke (Berkshire) (3.3: 6–7; 3.3: 8–9). The latter houses a double tomb of *c.* 1340s. It comprises end-to-end recesses under a single canopy built into the end wall of the north transept and combined with a grand window. It recalls the setting of the transept monument at Witney and the north aisle monument at Ducklington, as well as a handful of others in the region.⁶³ This body of work has led Nigel Saul to argue for an Oxfordshire-based group of masons active in the early fourteenth century, and for an Upper-Thames-Valley style of monument.⁶⁴ However, there are subtle differences in the window designs. For example, the shallow, ripple-like cusps at the top of the main lights at Cogges and in the large mouchettes at Witney do not appear at the other churches. The monuments are also treated very differently; the fabulous canopy at Shottesbrooke is not replicated at either Witney or Ducklington. The combination of twinned recesses with an end-of-transept window also occurs further afield at this date, as for example in the south transept at Northborough (Cambs, soke of Peterborough)—which, like Witney, is constructed over a crypt (3.3: 10–11).⁶⁵ Thus, while these designs are prevalent locally, they cannot easily be assigned to a particular workshop.

Discussing Decorated architecture and sculptural ornament over a period of around forty years in north Oxfordshire, John Goodall also proposes a local workshop (or shops), responsible for the profusion of carvings at Adderbury, Bloxham and Hanwell.⁶⁶ It has not proved possible to connect this work directly with the study sites either—which are in any case a little later. Very few of the same figure subjects recur, and neither the window tracery nor the carving style is noticeably alike (3.3: 12–15; 3.3: 16–18) Some similar ideas are used, *i.e.*, figure sculpture integrated into traceried windows, but treated very differently, suggesting a shared sculptural tradition rather than the output of a particular workshop.

⁶³ See the transept monuments at Northmoor, Sparsholt (Berks) and Minchinhamstead (Glos). An earlier example occurs in the south aisle at Swalcliffe (Oxon).

⁶⁴ Saul (2002), 267.

⁶⁵ The Ducklington version, combining twin recesses with an aisle rather than a transept window, is also found further afield, for example at Little Baddow, and Kirklington (North Yorks).

⁶⁶ Goodall (1995), 271–332.

The names of only two craftsmen associated with the area have come down to us: master mason Thomas of Witney (*fl.* 1292–1342) and the sculptor Alexander of Abingdon (*fl.* 1291–1317). Thomas of Witney’s toponymic suggests he originated or trained in the town. He perhaps worked for the bishop of Winchester, lord of Witney, but, while he is widely documented at Winchester, Westminster, Tewkesbury, Exeter, Bath and Wells, there is no record of his employment locally.⁶⁷ Alexander of Abingdon (active 1290–1325) was responsible for the memorial effigy of Aveline de Forz (*c.* 1295) at Westminster Abbey and the Eleanor Crosses between 1291 and 1294.⁶⁸ There are suggestions that he continued to work locally as well. He is accredited with a life-size statue of the Virgin and Child of *c.* 1295–1325 found in a house in Newbury (Berks) in 1980.⁶⁹ Arthur Gardner notes his influence if not his actual hand in the effigy of Joan de la Beche at the parish church at Aldworth (Berks) (3.3: 19–21).⁷⁰ There are some superficial similarities between these sculptures and the effigy at Cogges (3.3: 22). The three recumbent effigies all had kneeling angels at the head, and the fabric of the long, loose gowns is treated in the same fluid way—but these are not exclusive details: angel supporters, for example, are found on stone monuments across the country from the late thirteenth to the fifteenth century.⁷¹ Furthermore, the gown on the Cogges effigy falls in distinctive tube-like folds which do not appear on the other pieces. None of the well-crafted sculptures at the study sites is therefore directly attributable. They nonetheless support the existence of local craftsmen absorbing the influence of courtly styles into established local traditions, and an enthusiasm amongst the local gentry and professional class for the same types of artistic patronage practised elsewhere by

⁶⁷ John Harvey and Tim Ayers, ‘Witney, Thomas (*fl.* 1292–1342), master mason’ <<https://0-www-oxforddnb-com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/>> [accessed 10 March, 2020].

⁶⁸ Veronica Sekules, ‘Abingdon, Alexander (*fl.* 1291–1316), sculptor’ <<https://0-www-oxforddnb-com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/>> [accessed 10 March, 2020].

⁶⁹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, ‘Attributed to Alexander of Abingdon | Virgin and Child | British | The Met’ <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/474389>> [accessed 19 July, 2019].

⁷⁰ Arthur Gardner, *English Medieval Sculpture. The original handbook revised and enlarged with 683 photographs* (Cambridge, 1951), 167.

⁷¹ More than sixty examples survive in Yorkshire alone. Brian Gittos and Moira Gittos, *Catalogue of medieval effigies in Yorkshire* <https://books.casematepublishers.com/Interpreting_Medieval_Effigies_Online_Appendices.pdf> [accessed 25 July, 2020].

those of magnate status. The stylistic affinities provide important information for dating the sculpture at the study sites, and for identifying possible routes for the transmission of ideas. However, the wider questions they invite about authorship and production in the region are outside the scope of the present inquiry where the focus is on iconography and function.

CHAPTER 4: Review of the scholarship

4.1 Scholarship on the study sites

Beyond comments acknowledging the quality and intriguing character of their architecture and sculpture, and brief accounts of the funerary monuments, none of the study chapels has attracted much scholarly attention on its own account. They each appear in Sherwood and Pevsner's Oxfordshire volume of the *Buildings of England* series.⁷² There are longer entries in the *Victoria County History* containing essential information about local landownership—and thus potential patrons—and architectural descriptions of the main building phases of each church.⁷³ These are essential reading but are not comprehensive. For example, the existence of crypts at Witney and Ducklington and a filled-in crypt at Cogges is noted but not discussed. Nor is there mention of the legal attire worn by the male effigy at Witney. In their account of the north aisle at Ducklington for *VCH* in 1996, Baggs and Chance were puzzled by the setting of the sculpture, describing the wall panels as 'inexplicably high', and the monument as 'much altered and possibly wholly reset'.⁷⁴ These accounts leave unanswered questions and invite further inquiry.

The church at Cogges is the only one of the study sites to have been the subject of closer, scholarly attention. Between 1978–81 John Blair and John Steane conducted an extensive archaeological exploration of a small alien priory (now a private house) adjacent to the church. Their account gives valuable insights into the close relationship that existed between it and the parish, both institutions sharing the church.⁷⁵ They conducted a survey of the church at the same time, providing a building chronology and a short description of the north chapel and its sculptured frieze, and including an account of the effigial monument—which they note has been

⁷² Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 550–51, 588–89, 843–45.

⁷³ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol12/pp69-72#p13>>; <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp130-144#p33>>; <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p18>> [accessed 10 March, 2020].

⁷⁴ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p19-22>> [accessed 10 March, 2020].

⁷⁵ Blair and Steane (1982), 45–47.

misassembled.⁷⁶ Based on records of lost heraldic glass, the authors demonstrate conclusively that the monument represents Margaret de Grey who held the manor of Cogges in dower after the death of her first husband, John de Grey of Rotherfield, in 1311.⁷⁷ Margaret was an heiress in her own right and married twice, her second marriage to Robert Moreby (d. 1336) lasting longer than her first.⁷⁸ I use her natal family name of Oddingseles to acknowledge these facts and avoid confusion with other de Grey wives. I am much indebted to Blair and Steane's insightful report but interpret some key findings differently. For example, they assign patronage of the monument and chapel to Margaret's son whereas I will argue that the whole project was Margaret's own. I reach a different and more detailed conclusion about the original appearance of the monument. I also argue for an overlooked building phase of c. 1200 demonstrating that the chapel in which the chantry was housed occupies an existing space, remodelled rather than newly built in the mid fourteenth century.

In January 2012, Sally Badham published a short piece on the monument at Cogges for the Church Monuments Society.⁷⁹ She follows Blair and Steane regarding patronage and the re-ordering of the tomb but makes two salient observations about its design that have not previously aroused comment. Firstly, she notes there is a lion at the foot of the effigy, an unusual feature as most contemporary effigies of women show them with pet dogs. Secondly, she states that the tomb chest may be unique in having relief carvings of the Evangelists placed prominently along the sides as the main feature of the design. These details raise the already fine tomb out of the ordinary, inviting further investigation.

The monuments in the other two chapels were also prestige items. Neither has been the subject of individual research but both are mentioned by writers working on other memorials.⁸⁰ As noted earlier, in an extensive article on William Trussell's (d.

⁷⁶ Blair and Steane (1982), 88–91.

⁷⁷ Blair and Steane (1982), 109.

⁷⁸ Oswald Barron, *The Ancestor: A Quarterly Review of County and Family History, Heraldry and Antiquities*, 10 (1904), 32–51 at 33; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, 2, ed. by Ethel Stokes and Lucy Drucker (London, 1939), 87.

⁷⁹ Sally Badham <<https://churchmonumentsociety.org/monument-of-the-month/the-monument-of-lady-margaret-grey-d-1330-at-cogges-oxfordshire>> [accessed 1 April, 2020].

⁸⁰ A shorter version of my findings at Witney appears in *CM*, 34 (2019), 77–103.

1363) collegiate church at Shottesbrooke, Nigel Saul draws a comparison between the design and setting of Trussell's monument and that at Witney.⁸¹ Building on this, I will argue that transmission of the design was facilitated by an unsuspected association between the patrons: Trussell at Shottesbrooke and the hitherto unidentified John de Croxford at Witney. Elsewhere, Saul discusses monuments to lawyers, although Croxford's was unknown to him.⁸² The Witney monument can be added to his list of legal effigies as it clearly shows the deceased in the attire of a professional man of law.⁸³ His research, and the earlier work of John Baker who also treats the legal attire of medieval lawyers, provide what amounts to a survey of legal effigies, providing a corpus against which Croxford's can be evaluated.⁸⁴

Jessica Barker's research into memorials to couples allows for a detailed excursion into the role of marriage as a marker of social and religious value.⁸⁵ It is of particular relevance to the twinned monument at Witney and the genealogically-themed twinned monument at Ducklington, both of which suggest the burial of relatives, if not married couples. Writing about an unusual, early fourteenth-century example of a double, side-by-side monument at Lowthorpe (Yorks) designed around a tree motif, Barker draws comparison with the roughly contemporary Jesse Tree monument at Ducklington.⁸⁶ Her research indicates that at this date arboreal imagery was not yet used to create a visual 'family tree' in the modern sense but was used as a metaphor in discussions of marriage and the family in pastoral and legal literature.⁸⁷ The Jesse Tree, depicting Christ's ancestors and culminating in an image

⁸¹ Saul (2002), 266–70.

⁸² Saul (2009), chapter 11.

⁸³ Saul (2009), 275–81.

⁸⁴ John Hamilton Baker, *The Order of Serjeants at Law: A Chronicle of Creations with Related Texts and a Historical Introduction*, Selden Society Supplementary Series 5 (London: Selden Society, 1984), 67–72.

⁸⁵ Barker (2020); Jessica Barker, 'Invention and Commemoration in Fourteenth-Century England: A Monumental "Family Tree" at the Collegiate Church of St. Martin, Lowthorpe', *Gesta*, 56, 1 (March, 2017), 105–128; Jessica Barker, 'Legal Crisis and Artistic Innovation in Thirteenth-Century Scotland', *British Art Studies*, 6 (2017) < <http://britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-6/crisis-innovation> > [accessed 2 April, 2020].

⁸⁶ Barker (2017a), 113–15.

⁸⁷ Barker (2017a), 115–18.

of the Virgin and Child, was primarily a sacred symbol, not a family tree. However, its reference to Christ's lineage, and the symbolism of a tree, gave it dynastic overtones, making it readily adaptable to a family memorial. Her findings provide useful background for my interpretation of the monument at Ducklington where both the tree motif and Marian imagery occur, but in a new and distinctive combination.

John Goodall's article mentioned above on early fourteenth-century grotesque sculpture in Oxfordshire focuses on the sculpture-encrusted churches of Adderbury, Bloxham and Hanwell, some twenty miles north of the sites in this study.

Nonetheless he makes a number of astute observations about them, seeing them as generically if not directly related to the north Oxfordshire group. He suggests that certain compositional devices—such as the 'Head of Christ' motif, carved into a traceried window in combination with other sculptural embellishment—were adopted into the local repertoire. His proposal that the sculptured head at Cogges is a later manifestation of this trend helps greatly with my own interpretation.⁸⁸

As the above shows, scholarship relating specifically to the three study chapels is limited and little of it is current. Where they are mentioned, it is primarily as comparators for other material, not as objects of study in their own right. This provides invaluable context but leaves certain questions unresolved, inviting the reassessment of existing findings and providing scope for investigation into the themes identified earlier, i.e., the physical setting of parish-based chantries; their association with charnel houses; the influence of women on commemorative projects; the link with illustrated prayer books, and the responses of the wider parish community. It will be helpful to consider existing research on these topics before turning to the study sites themselves.

4.2 Scholarship on the themes of the thesis

Parish-based chantries

Chantries were first founded at monasteries and cathedrals, and continued to be so, but from the mid thirteenth century onwards, as chantry patronage expanded, especially among the laity, the majority were located in parish churches. While the

⁸⁸ Goodall (1995), 315–19.

particular combination of architectural setting, monumental and decorative sculpture, iconography and circumstances found at the chapels in this study is unique to each one, it will be helpful to look at the phenomenon of the parish-based chantry more broadly, in order to appreciate the conventions that governed it and its role in parish life.

‘Soul Masses’ were part of the devotional landscape of every parish church, designed to elicit favour with God and speed the souls of named individuals through Purgatory. Founders might require their chaplains to celebrate daily, weekly, annually, for a specified length of time or, for wealthier patrons, in perpetuity.⁸⁹ They could be celebrated at a side altar or in a dedicated chantry chapel.⁹⁰ The extent of chantry provision at Witney, the largest of the three churches in the study, can be gauged by a probable ten side altars in place in the mid fourteenth century (6.2: 8).

Kathleen Wood-Legh’s book, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain*, published in 1965 remains definitive for the insights it provides, especially into the often arcane financial arrangements by which perpetual chantries were maintained.⁹¹ After 1279, the Statute of Mortmain required those assigning land in perpetuity to the ‘dead hand’ (*la morte main*) of the church for chantry purposes to apply and pay for an often expensive licence to compensate the Crown for loss of revenue.⁹² In 1331 Richard de Stanlake and John de Croxford paid a hefty £10 for theirs. Mortmain licences were enrolled in the patent rolls and provide the historian with much useful information. However, as Paul Binski points out, ‘Licensing was costly, bureaucratic and hard to obtain, and tended to be circumvented by expedients such as time limitation’.⁹³ Other methods included ‘tenure by divine service’, that is, appointing a chaplain as trustee in return for religious services; or granting assets to a third party in return for an annual pension that would support a chantry.⁹⁴ Property could be managed in this way indefinitely, its beneficiaries and their heirs establishing and

⁸⁹ George Cook, *Mediaeval Chantries and Chantry Chapels* (London, 1963), 10, 12.

⁹⁰ McNeill (2011a), 13; Cook (1963), 86–88.

⁹¹ Wood-Legh (1965).

⁹² Wood-Legh (1965), 6; Burgess (2011), 119.

⁹³ Binski (2014), 93.

⁹⁴ Wood-Legh (1965), 16, 40.

maintaining a chantry for the grantor from the proceeds.⁹⁵ These practices help explain the discrepancy between the small number of recorded chantries with the much larger number that must have existed, attested by the physical evidence but for which supporting documents are lacking.

By appointing trustees (*feoffees*), the land did not actually pass into the ‘dead hand’ of the church, so it could continue to benefit its holders. Records of enfeoffment and other more informal endowments given as gifts survive only patchily and do not necessarily identify their chantry purpose. Emilie Amt’s account of the prodigious chantry provisions made by Ela Longespée (d. 1298), Countess of Warwick (and great-aunt of Margaret Oddingseles) reveals that much of it was in the form of ‘rich jewelles’ and other ‘riche giftes’, rather than land.⁹⁶ This may have been to avoid the attentions of the escheator (the official charged with administering the licences) but was also perhaps for cultural reasons.⁹⁷ Women habitually bequeathed personal possessions to the church, partly because they were, generally speaking, less financially independent than men (at least until widowhood) and could dispose of their own belongings more easily than land, but also in order to gain a kind of virtual access to parts of the church and the administration of its sacraments from which they were barred on account of their sex.⁹⁸ Their gifts often reveal a sense of thrift and practicality, consistent with their role as managers of the household.⁹⁹ This trend may explain aspects of the chapel at Cogges which I will argue has the hallmarks of a female commission.

Wood-Legh’s research was based on perpetual chantries, costly to install and maintain, and thus the preserve of the wealthy elite. She saw them as essentially

⁹⁵ Wood-Legh (1965), 49.

⁹⁶ Emilie Amt, ‘Ela Longespee’s Roll of Benefits: Piety and Reciprocity in the Thirteenth Century’, *Traditio*, 64 (2009), 1–56, 25; *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535–1543*, 5 vols, ed. by Lucy Toulmin Smith (London, 1907), 1, 124. Margaret Oddingseles’s biography is given in Chapter 5.10.

⁹⁷ <<http://www.inquisitionpostmortem.ac.uk/contexts/the-escheator-a-short-introduction/>> [accessed 27 July, 2020].

⁹⁸ Nicola Lowe, ‘Women’s Devotional Bequests of Textiles in the Late-Medieval English Parish Church, c. 1350–1550’, *Gender & History*, 22, 2 (2010), 407–29.

⁹⁹ French (2003), 156–73, 161–62.

private in character, serving the interests of the founders above all else.¹⁰⁰ This view was shared by Colin Richmond and others who interpreted them as individualistic, benefiting a limited number of socially elevated patrons carving out private space within the church for their own social and spiritual needs.¹⁰¹ A more nuanced understanding of the medieval parish church in general and parish-based chantries in particular has since been reached. Eamon Duffy's revisionist approach repositions the parish as a corporate, cooperative institution whose members were engaged in the shared project of seeking salvation. Chantries, he claims, were an expression of this: mutually supportive foundations that were inextricably bound up with the late-medieval sense of community, providing benefits for the founders but also for the living who enjoyed an increase in liturgical provision and expected as a matter of course that chantry priests would join in with parish worship.¹⁰² Equally, parishioners were expected to attend chantry services and this is spelled out, as Marie-Hélène Rousseau shows, in the will of Nicholas de Farndone (d. 1334), mayor of London, buried at St Paul's Cathedral. He requested that his chantry should be located at the altar of St Dunstan in the New Work so that others could attend (*per la vewe de mes prochains*).¹⁰³ At parish level, Wood-Legh notes that Masses were timed to maximise lay attendance and staggered so as not to clash with High Mass on a Sunday or saint's day, to ensure that those parishioners who took the opportunity to hear a chantry Mass were not drawn away from the main parish service but could attend both.¹⁰⁴ The inference is that parishioners, grateful for the increase in liturgical opportunity, would pray for the souls of those commemorated.

The same motivation as Farndone's was behind bequests made by Oxford testators. In his will of 1324, Robert de Wormenhale, burgess and one-time mayor of Oxford, bequeathed funds for a perpetual chantry in the church of St Peter-in-Baily whose chaplain was to say matins and the canonical hours daily and Mass as often as

¹⁰⁰ Wood-Legh (1965), 65, 271.

¹⁰¹ Colin Richmond, 'Religion and the Fifteenth-Century English Gentleman', in Barrie Dobson (ed.), *The Church, Politics, and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1984), 193–208.

¹⁰² Duffy (1992), 132, 139–41.

¹⁰³ Marie-Hélène Rousseau, *Saving the Souls of Medieval London: Perpetual Chantries at St. Paul's Cathedral, c. 1200–1548* (Farnham, 2011), 46.

¹⁰⁴ Wood-Legh (1965), 291–93.

possible. Wormenhale also left an annuity to Joan Adynton on condition that she find two more chaplains immediately after his death to celebrate a daily Mass for his soul in the same church. He left further annuities and rents to his executors from which they too were required ‘to provide chaplains to celebrate Mass in the church of St Peter-in-Baily and also to expend it on other pious uses well pleasing to God and healthful for my soul’. Ellis and Salter estimate that, even without the rents, the executors would obtain at least £3 10s from these annuities, enough to pay two priests for a year.¹⁰⁵ Added to Joan’s two priests and Wormenhale’s own chaplain, this would mean five priests, each potentially celebrating Mass every day: a considerable increase in the services that parishioners could attend.

Without adopting an overly idealistic view, it is clear that there was a degree of interdependence between chantry patron and parish community. Simon Roffey’s archaeological investigation of parish chantry chapels in the west country is built on this premise. He uses interior sightlines and spatial relationships between memorials and other parts of the church to develop a theory of ritual topography, demonstrating how the location and orientation of chantry chapels could be used to draw in the parish community while simultaneously expressing the individual interests of the patron.¹⁰⁶ He sees the interpenetrating architecture of parish churches and the chapels within them as embodying the mutually beneficial nature of the late-medieval parish-based chantry. His findings inform my analysis of the study sites which I will argue have been organised to facilitate similar sightlines.

As well as offering intercessory Masses for their patrons, chantry chaplains were required to assist with the daily recitation of the divine office and the celebration of parish Masses, especially on feast days, and to perform other parish services as required.¹⁰⁷ Writing about parish chantries in Bristol in the century or so before the Reformation, Clive Burgess reveals that individuals and groups of parishioners established chantries with the express purpose of benefitting the broader community in these ways. His inquiry is into urban churches and the low-cost chantries often of

¹⁰⁵ *Liber Albus*, 4–6.

¹⁰⁶ Simon Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel: An Archaeology* (Woodbridge, 2007), chapter 6.

¹⁰⁷ *The Chantry Certificates and Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. by Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Society, 1919), xiv, xvi, xviii, xxi; Wood-Legh (1965), 271–76.

short duration that proliferated at side altars, set up by parishioners with limited means. He positions this type of foundation against the perpetual foundations of the wealthy, celebrated at reserved altars in often extravagantly furnished side chapels, whose motives he suggests would have been ‘poles apart’.¹⁰⁸ However, it is not clear to me that the intentions of wealthy patrons were so very different from those of their fellow parishioners. The sequestered space of a side chapel was ambiguous in character, simultaneously separate from, and part of, the main body of the church. As John McNeill puts it,

The chapel is not entirely private and its services are not exclusive. It enhances the church in which it is sited, increases the quantity of divine service, and its priest will be expected to help with other services. But nor is it entirely public, as its screens and lockable doors often testify [...] it is also a perfect metaphor for purgatory; a type of waiting room for the soul – and it is difficult to believe this was not consciously received – an intermediate place, neither entirely within the church nor without.¹⁰⁹

The chantry chapels at Cogges, Witney and Ducklington are in the same category as this kind of high-end institution. They clearly embody the patrons’ wealth and status and their spiritual aspirations but I will argue that they were otherwise no more self-serving than the simpler parish chantries discussed by Burgess. Rather than exclusivity and isolation, the surviving fabric indicates a considerable measure of engagement with other church users through sightlines and soundscapes such as those noted by Roffey, encouraging the *vewé des mes prochains* that Nicholas Farndone desired. In fact, Burgess allows for this possibility in relation to even the most self-aggrandising form of chantry chapels in the conclusion to his essay:

If ‘parish chantries’ deserve re-evaluation, one inevitably wonders whether cage chantries too, for all that they are usually interpreted as pinnacles of personal aspiration, would better be understood as high-grade liturgical gifts that embellished already sophisticated

¹⁰⁸ Burgess (2011), 100–01.

¹⁰⁹ McNeill (2011a), 14.

regimes and provided additional liturgists.¹¹⁰

Patrons who established their chantries in a parish church clearly expected the relationships they had built up in life with their fellow parishioners to continue after death, to their mutual benefit. This was evidently the case at the three study chapels where, as I show below, the patrons had close links with the local area, and where the physical setting of the chantries they founded encouraged the devotional attention of the whole parish community as well as the few sequestered within.

Parish charnel houses: an under-recognised feature

All three of the study chapels are built in close proximity to a crypt. Several of the chapels surveyed by Roffey were likewise located alongside or above crypts.¹¹¹ He suggests that this represents a possible ‘continuation of earlier mortuary practice’ but does not pursue the matter. However, recent research has shown that these underground chambers are far more significant than has so far been supposed in relation to parish post-mortem provision. The widespread identification by earlier writers of parish church crypts as ossuaries or bone stores has fallen out of favour over the last half century, dismissed by such influential writers as Warwick Rodwell as ‘generally fallacious’.¹¹² Rodwell states that while they may have been appropriated for this use in later centuries it was ‘not the usual purpose for which crypts in small towns and villages were constructed’. However, new research by Jenny Crangle and Elizabeth Craig-Atkins suggests that that is exactly what they were: custom-built, medieval charnel chambers; the expense and complexity of the undertaking signalling their importance. As this revisionist idea has only recently been published and in view of its relevance to the study chapels, I summarise their findings here, supplemented by my own research.

Focussing on the crypt at Holy Trinity, Rothwell (Northants), one of only two intact English parish church crypts with medieval bone deposits to have been excavated, Crangle and Craig-Atkins claim that both the numbers of such spaces and their

¹¹⁰ Burgess (2011), 125.

¹¹¹ Roffey (2007), 102.

¹¹² Rodwell (2012), 87–88.; Norman Pounds, *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge, 2000), 423.

devotional significance have been greatly under-estimated.¹¹³ Despite wide-ranging research into the complex attitudes of medieval Christians towards death and the after-life, the practice of charnelling at parish level has gone largely unrecognised in Britain.¹¹⁴ A number of charnel houses survive intact and in use in other parts of the world but here they fell foul of changing religious ideas, particularly after the Reformation.¹¹⁵ While some were repurposed, most were dismantled and the ground filled in. With little tangible evidence, their existence has faded from memory.¹¹⁶ Crangle points out that until now the only charnel houses that have been seriously investigated were free-standing structures in cathedral cemeteries, leaving parish arrangements unexplored. This has led to the mistaken impression that they were not a major feature of post-mortem practice at parish level and to the consequent misinterpretation of what she describes as overwhelming evidence, both archaeological and documentary, of their existence and function.¹¹⁷ Crangle's research shows that a significant number of semi-subterranean charnel crypts were constructed beneath churches from the mid thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth century, following the concretisation of ideas about Purgatory. Their purpose was closely related to that of chantries; a charnel providing for the souls of the nameless dead of a parish, while a chantry was dedicated to the salvation of an individual.¹¹⁸ A miniature accompanying the Office for the Dead in a French book of hours of c. 1460s visualises the relationship between the two and shows how time spent in Purgatory could be lessened through Mass, prayer and almsgiving (4.2: 1). In the

¹¹³ Craig-Atkins *et al* (2019), 145.

¹¹⁴ Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (Oxford, 1981); Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England* (London, 1997); Roberta Gilchrist and Barney Sloane, *Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain* (London, 2005); Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London, 1992); Nicholas Orme, 'The Charnel Chapel of Exeter Cathedral' in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Exeter Cathedral*, ed. by Francis Kelly, BAA Conference Transactions, 11 (1991), 162–171.

¹¹⁵ A selection can be seen at <www.atlasobscura.com/lists/definitive-gui85-de-to-ossuaries-crypts-and-catacombs> [accessed 23 November, 2018].

¹¹⁶ Jennifer Crangle, 'Why did England change its mind?', in *Anthropological Reformations – Anthropology in the Era of Reformation*, ed. by Hannah Wälzholz and Anne Eusterschulte (Göttingen, 2015), 371–382 at 377.

¹¹⁷ Crangle (2016), 170–1, 223–24.

¹¹⁸ Crangle (2016), 161–71; 226–27.

upper register a funeral Mass takes places with kneeling laymen and hired mourners in attendance around the body of the deceased who lies on a draped bier. Another man gives alms to beggars at the church door. In the lower register, men and women suffer in the flames of Purgatory. Two are received by angels who lead them up to the gates of heaven. As Virginia Reinburg has pointed out, the two-tier representation recalls the construction of a charnel house, with the cleansing fires of Purgatory represented as if in the crypt below a chantry chapel.¹¹⁹

This is not to claim of course that every parish crypt was a charnel. Fully-subterranean chambers may have been relic chapels, treasuries, baptisteries, or housed significant burials. Where a church was built on sloping ground it may have been expedient to construct a crypt to support the building above, as occurred under the chancel at St John's, Yeovil.¹²⁰ Nor is the discovery of human bones in these spaces sufficient to identify them as charnels. Without dating, such remains cannot be assumed to be medieval as the crypts may have been used as ossuaries in post-Reformation times or repurposed as burial vaults. Some underground chambers were constructed later as personal or family mausolea. These can be readily distinguished from medieval charnel chambers. They are fully underground, without windows and were bricked up when full. A local example is the vault under the chancel at Witney, built for the rector, William Freind and his family in 1752 and closed in 1866.¹²¹

The anachronistic description of charnel chambers as 'bone holes', used by Cook and others, implies the haphazard treatment of human remains, moved out of necessity once a graveyard became full over time, and stored in jumbled fashion in little more than a pit.¹²² This may have been so in later centuries. In 1653–4, the churchwardens of St Mary's church, Warwick spent a shilling on 'a scuttle for the gravemaker to gather up bones', and paid another shilling to 'John Glendall and his

¹¹⁹ Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400-1600* (Cambridge and New York, 2012), 169.

¹²⁰ Thanks to Moira and Brian Gittos for this example.

¹²¹ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 217, f. 35

¹²² Cook (1956), 129; Charles Lynam, 'The Crypts of the Churches of St. Peter in the East, and of St. George within the Castle, Oxford', *Archaeological Journal*, 68, 1 (1911), 203–217 at 203; Alexander Thompson, *The Ground Plan of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge, 1911), 63.

boyes for piling up the bones in the bonehouse'.¹²³ However, Crangle claims that, in medieval England, charnel chambers were highly regarded devotional spaces which enabled living members of the community to perform their Christian duty towards the dead, physically and spiritually. She notes that they were sited beneath spaces where the liturgy was conducted—the Rothwell crypt for example is beneath the south aisle which is furnished with a piscina and altar space—and describes the regulated, compassionate manner in which disinterred, de-fleshed and disarticulated bones were sorted and displayed, with long bones, skulls and other parts all in separate heaps (4.2: 2). She therefore characterises the charnel chamber as a place where human skeletal remains were devotionally 'curated' for display as opposed to being merely collected or conveniently relocated.¹²⁴

There is evidence that some charnel crypts contained devotional imagery, providing them with a chapel-like character. A recess in the east wall at Rothwell retains traces of a mural (4.2: 3). Antiquarian reports of 1855 and 1878 identified it as an altar backdrop depicting the Resurrection, dating to around 1300.¹²⁵ Miriam Gill puts it a little earlier, sometime between 1250–80.¹²⁶ A second probable image niche is recorded in the west wall at Rothwell.¹²⁷ There was both an image niche and a stoup beside the door in the charnel chamber at Norwich Cathedral.¹²⁸ In the crypt at St Olave's parish church, Hart St, London (another possible charnel chamber) there are scraps of paint on the west wall and two recesses, a tall rectangular one at the entrance, perhaps for a standing saint, and a deeper, square one at the bottom of the stairs. The presence of sacred imagery in charnel crypts emphasises their

¹²³ Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the fourteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century* (London, 1913), 170.

¹²⁴ Crangle (2016), i–ii, 208–20.

¹²⁵ Matthew Bloxam, 'On the charnel vault at Rothwell, Northamptonshire, and on charnel vaults elsewhere', *Associated Archaeological Society reports and papers* (Northampton, 1855), 1–8 at 5; Samuel Sharp, 'The Rothwell Crypt and Bones', *Archaeological Journal*, 36, 1 (January 1879), 56–69 at 58.

¹²⁶ Miriam Gill, personal comment, June 2019.

¹²⁷ Crangle (2016), 208–09.

¹²⁸ Crangle (2016), 172; Francis Blomefield and Charles Parkin, *An essay towards a topographical history of the county of Norfolk*, 4, pt. 2: *The history of the city and county of Norwich* (London, 1805), 58.

resemblance to chapels and suggests that the bones of the dead collected there were thought of as a kind of community who would derive spiritual benefit from ‘seeing’ them. This is a similar conceit to the devotional murals in individual burial chambers such as those at Westbury-on-Trym (Somerset) and St Albans Cathedral, and painted burial cists in the Southern Netherlands.¹²⁹ Above-ground examples include the monument of the Black Prince (d. 1376) at Canterbury Cathedral which has the Trinity painted on the tester base for the effigy of the prince to pray to, as it were.¹³⁰ The cadaver tomb of Alice de la Pole at Ewelme has an Annunciation on the underside of the raised tomb, inches away from the face of her corpse effigy lying beneath.¹³¹ There are paint traces in the undercroft at Witney.¹³² If medieval, they may also be the remnants of salvific imagery. At Rothwell, Crangle and Craig-Atkins note an aperture in the floor in front of the altar in the chapel above the crypt. It emerges in the chamber below, at the top of the arch over the Resurrection painting in the east wall. It was perhaps intended to direct light onto the image for those ‘semi-present’, as the authors put, in the crypt while permitting the sound of Mass celebrated in the upper chapel to percolate from one chamber to the other, allowing both living and dead to participate in its saving ritual.¹³³

There was clear spiritual advantage for the nameless dead represented by the bones in locating the charnel chamber directly beneath a chapel where regular Masses were said. Crangle records a significant number of chantries founded in upper chapels, suggesting that the benefit flowed in both directions and that proximity to the charnel was not disgusting but desirable.¹³⁴ Amongst the most important features of a

¹²⁹ John Goodall and Linda Monckton, ‘The chantry of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester’, in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology*, ed. by Martin Henig and Philip Lindley, BAA Conference Transactions, 24 (Leeds, 2001), 231–55 at 234–36; Anna Bergman and Ilona Hans-Collas, ‘Awaiting eternal life: Painted burial cists in the Southern Netherlands’, *CM*, 28 (2013), 13–32. Many thanks to Philip Lankester for these references.

¹³⁰ Marie Louise Sauerberg, Ray Marchant and Lucy Wrapson, ‘The Tester Over the Tomb of Edward, the Black Prince: The Splendour of Late-Medieval Polychromy in England’, in Badham and Oosterwijk (2010), 161–86 at 166.

¹³¹ John Goodall (2001), 187.

¹³² See chap. 6.3: The lost lower chamber.

¹³³ Craig-Atkins *et al* (2019), 160.

¹³⁴ Crangle (2016), 171, 223–25.

medieval charnel chamber are that it should be prominently positioned (ensuring maximum attention); have permanent access (for example via an external door or trapdoor leading to stone steps); and be open to visitors.¹³⁵ Antiquarian accounts of Rothwell and recent archaeological evidence from the dismantled church of St Peter, Leicester show that the skeletal material was arranged in rows on either side of the crypt with a walkway between (4.2: 4–5).¹³⁶ Rousseau notes that in 1302 the duties of the chaplain of the charnel house at St Paul’s Cathedral included opening for ‘pilgrims’ on Fridays, on the Feast of the Dedication of the cathedral, and on the Feast of the Relics. He was to meet the costs of repairs, provide candles for the chapel and collect the doles offered by the pilgrims.¹³⁷ A charnel house was evidently a devotional destination. Rousseau also finds that charnel houses were places of preaching and were linked with confession and penance.¹³⁸ In 1381 John Holland, Duke of Exeter, founded a chantry in the cathedral charnel chapel in expiation of murder. One of his chantry priests was to hear confession and give penance to parishioners.¹³⁹ Charnel houses were therefore gathering places as well, with a range of functions benefitting both the living and the dead.

Some charnel crypts retain altars, indicating that the liturgy was conducted amongst the charnel itself, presupposing a congregation of some kind attending chantry services.¹⁴⁰ This is attested by documentary references as well as physical remains. At Norwich Cathedral charnel house, built by bishop John Salmon (d. 1325), one of the charnel house chaplains celebrated Mass daily in the lower chamber for the bishop, members of his circle, ‘for the dead in general and in particular for all those whose bones were repositied in the vault of this charnel’. In 1421 Sir John Wodehouse founded his chantry ‘in honour of the Holy Trinity and the five wounds of Christ in the lower chapel of the charnel’ where he and his wife were buried.¹⁴¹ At St Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Tyne and Wear), the north transept chapel of St

¹³⁵ Crangle (2016), 175–76.

¹³⁶ Crangle (2016), 216–20; Craig-Atkins *et al* (2019), 154–55.

¹³⁷ Rousseau (2011), 75.

¹³⁸ Rousseau (2011) 65.

¹³⁹ Cook (1963), 24.

¹⁴⁰ Cook (1956), 128–30; Crangle (2016), 189–90, 224–25.

¹⁴¹ Blomefield (1805–10), 4, pt 2, 55–58.

George is raised over a charnel chamber which has a piscina and an aumbry, indicative of liturgical function.¹⁴² At Burford the crypt altar has disappeared but an altar recess remains, let into the east wall (4.2: 6–7).¹⁴³ In 1860, visitors to Witney noted that the remains of its crypt were

of the same character as that at Burford where the vaulting is still perfect and the original floor-level and altar space are still visible. They are so nearly alike as probably to have been the work of the same person.¹⁴⁴

The Witney crypt was probably therefore also furnished with an altar.

The association between charnel and saints' relics noted at St Paul's Cathedral is emphasised by the setting and appearance of surviving charnel house buildings. At Rothwell, the aperture linking the upper chapel with the lower charnel chamber recalls the opening beneath the altar at Wing (Buckinghamshire) which provided a view of the crypt and its contents: apparently an Anglo-Saxon shrine and relics.¹⁴⁵ Roberta Gilchrist has remarked that, from the outside, low-level foiled windows within deep circular embrasures on the charnel house at Norwich give it the appearance of a shrine or even a reliquary studded with jewels.¹⁴⁶ Crangle notes that the same may apply to the small, low-level windows onto parish charnels as well. See for example the oval lights low to the ground at Carew Cheriton; quatrefoil versions at the Sailors' Chapel, Angle (both Pembrokeshire), and the larger round window with wheel tracery at St Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (4.2: 6, 8, 9). Crangle suggests that resemblance to reliquaries would help justify the unburied storage of bones and encourage devotional attention, while the action of kneeling

¹⁴² Eneas Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the town and county of Newcastle Upon Tyne Including the Borough of Gateshead*, 1 (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1827), 247–49.

¹⁴³ Nicholas Cooper, 'Burford Parish Church Building Analysis' <www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/sites/explore/files/explore_assets/2010/03/19/Burford_church_for_EPE_site.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2018]; OAHs, *Proceedings*, 1 (Oxford, 1864), 186.

¹⁴⁴ OAHs (1864), 186.

¹⁴⁵ John Crook, *English Medieval Shrines* (Woodbridge, 2011), 74–76.

¹⁴⁶ Roberta Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close: The Evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape* (Woodbridge, 2005), 105.

and looking down through a window into an underground space would have prompted thoughts of Purgatory.¹⁴⁷

There is evidence at both cathedral and parish level that some charnels were publicly funded. The charnel house at St Paul's Cathedral is one.¹⁴⁸ The parish charnel at High Wycombe (Bucks), not included in Crangle's research, is another. Both these were supported by the town community as well as by individual donations and they housed several chantries.¹⁴⁹ At Wycombe, a chantry to the Virgin, founded in the upper chapel before 1273, was generously supported over the next two hundred and fifty years by a number of unrelated individuals. By 1358 it had three dedications, to the Virgin, the Trinity and All Souls, evidence of multiple foundations.¹⁵⁰ All three chantries survived until the Dissolution, richly furnished with plate, linen, books and vestments, providing two daily Masses for the townspeople and for 'laborers by the way'.¹⁵¹ Another charnel house not included in Crangle's dataset is at Binsted (Hants). More than one foundation can be surmised here too as the north transept chapel, raised over a charnel chamber, contains two altars and two piscinae. One was founded by Richard de la Bere in 1322, who enlarged the transept at the same time.¹⁵² His choice of location was presumably motivated by proximity to the charnel and the intercessory prayers this would generate. Similar circumstances may have applied at Llanblethian (Glam). The south transept is furnished for Mass with an altar recess and piscina. It houses two graves, one in a wall recess and one, of a priest, under the floor next to a trapdoor to a semi-underground crypt.¹⁵³ There is an external door and the porch adjoining it to the west has large, high level arches in the shared wall, now blocked but suggesting windows to the chapel. The whole complex

¹⁴⁷ Crangle (2016), 190–91.

¹⁴⁸ Rousseau (2011), 75.

¹⁴⁹ Rousseau (2011), 75; William Hope, *Notes on the Architectural History of Wycombe Parish Church* (Aylesbury, 1904), 18–21.

¹⁵⁰ Hope, 18–21.

¹⁵¹ *The Edwardian Inventories for Buckinghamshire*, ed. by Francis Eeles (London, 1908), 131–52; <www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/bucks/vol3/pp112-134> [accessed 26 April, 2020].

¹⁵² Saul, *Lordship and Faith*, 152.

¹⁵³ Many thanks to Madeleine Gray for this reference.

bears the hallmarks of a medieval charnel house, perhaps built by the priest whose burial position connected him so closely with the crypt, its ‘inhabitants’ and visitors.

Crangle and Craig-Atkins characterise charnel houses as communal chantries benefiting both the named and the unnamed dead.¹⁵⁴ While this seems likely at Llanblethian, and can be assumed where there were multiple and general chantries, as at Binsted and High Wycombe, it is explicitly stated at Norwich Cathedral where in 1325 the chaplains said daily Mass not only for the bishops, past and present, and their families but for the dead in general and in particular for those whose bones lay in the vault.¹⁵⁵ In all the quoted examples, the charnel houses are substantial buildings in large parishes. Crangle suggests that such facilities may have housed the bones from smaller, poorer churches as well as their own, a situation that is documented at Norwich Cathedral, where the charnel attracted visitors, bringing in revenue in the form of pilgrims’ offering.¹⁵⁶ The grand two-storey charnel house at Witney may have performed a similar service for other churches in the vicinity. The practice may also explain the presence of a crypt at the much smaller church of Ducklington which had burial rights for the neighbouring township of Cokethorpe as well as its own parishioners but only a small churchyard.¹⁵⁷

Crangle bases her research on fifty-five confirmed examples of charnel houses in England and Wales. None of the three sites in the present study features in her research, nor do those at High Wycombe or Binsted. Semi-subterranean crypts beneath chantry chapels at Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester-upon-Thames (Oxon), St Aldate’s, Oxford, St Olave’s, and Llanbledian are probable medieval charnel chambers as well, contributing to Crangle’s already compelling evidence that parish charnelling was widespread and that, far from being a distasteful expedient, the careful storage of de-fleshed bones was a devotional act associated with soul care. A charnel house provided physical and spiritual services for all the faithful departed, not just the few who could afford chantry services, and was a significant, even

¹⁵⁴ Crangle (2016), 186; Craig-Atkins *et al* (2019), 160.

¹⁵⁵ Blomefield (1805–10), *Norwich*, 4, pt 2, 55.

¹⁵⁶ Crangle (2016), 184–85.

¹⁵⁷ *The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280–1299*, 8, ed. by Rosalind Hill, Lincoln Record Society 76 (Lincoln, 1986), 173–75.

prestigious feature for a parish church, bringing benefits to the whole community. Her findings make an important contribution to our understanding of late-medieval post-mortem practice. The status of charnel, its association with relics and its role in the process of salvation is attested by individuals choosing burial within and near the charnel house, wishing to benefit from proximity and from the frequent prayerful attendance of parishioners and other visitors. I will argue that the patrons of the chapels in this study were similarly motivated in their choice of chantry location.

Women's involvement in commemoration

Recent research into medieval women's lives has done much to improve our understanding of the experience of women in medieval Europe and how their agency was controlled, enabled, reinforced and enacted in society.¹⁵⁸ In a wide-ranging collection of essays published in 2012, Therese Martin *et al* looked specifically at female patronage, emphasising the collaborative nature of medieval art-making, and extending the meaning of the term 'maker' to include artisan, donor and even recipient, highlighting the multiple roles played by women in establishing the form taken by commissioned objects.¹⁵⁹ While it remains uncontested that women occupied a secondary position to men institutionally, current scholarship demonstrates that they exercised agency and influence in a variety of often unrecorded ways, at court, in the home, in the parish and through patronage, including commemoration.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Recent developments were showcased at two conferences dedicated to the subject: 'Gender, Identity, Iconography: Gender and Medieval Studies Conference' (Conference: University of Oxford, January 2018); and 'Women, Status and Power in medieval England' (Conference: University of Lincoln, July 2017).

¹⁵⁹ Therese Martin (ed.), *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture*, 2 vols, (Leiden, 2012).

¹⁶⁰ Loveday Lewes Gee, 'Patterns of Patronage: Female Initiatives and Artistic Enterprises in England in the 13th and 14th Centuries', in Martin (2012), 1 and 565–631; Katherine French, *The good women of the parish: gender and religion after the Black Death* (Philadelphia, Pa, 2008); Erler and Kowaleski (2003); Loveday Lewes Gee, *Women, Art, and Patronage from Henry III to Edward III: 1216–1377* (Woodbridge, 2002) and Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450–1550* (Amsterdam, 2018).

Barbara Harris's research focuses on aristocratic women during the period leading up to the Reformation. This is a different social group and later period than in the present study but aspects of her research relating to the commemoration of women apply nonetheless. She finds that commissioning a memorial gave women a number of opportunities for self-expression. Choosing the design and the material of the tomb, selecting the liturgical and decorative objects that surrounded it, specifying the liturgy and who should attend were all means by which women could manage the way in which they were presented and remembered.¹⁶¹ The choice of burial location, in respect of either natal or marital relationships, provided ways for women to self-identify as did the inclusion or exclusion of heraldry, particularly where it acknowledged their parentage as well as their spousal connections. Harris claims that by commissioning a tomb to their own specifications, acknowledging their natal lineage and providing for their own souls after death, female patrons were able to achieve a measure of selfhood that was unlikely to have been available to them in life.¹⁶²

Discussing a smaller group of women who chose to be buried independently of either husband or family, Jennifer Ward comes to similar conclusions, finding that individualised commemoration, tailor-made to their own interests, in a place of their own choosing gave women visibility and spiritual advantage, and ensured they got the memorials and settings they wanted.¹⁶³ In some cases they planned ahead with targeted financial transactions made during their lifetime; perhaps because they feared funds would not be forthcoming if left to male executors. For example, Joan de Mohun (d. 1404) made sure of her prestigious burial in the crypt at Canterbury Cathedral with generous contributions to its rebuilding during the 1360s and 1370s, well in advance of her death.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Harris, 19.

¹⁶² Harris, 46.

¹⁶³ Jennifer Ward, 'Who to Commemorate and Why', in *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies 20 (Donington, 2008), 104–116, 107.

¹⁶⁴ Diane Heath, 'Tombscape: The Tomb of Lady Joan de Mohun in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral', in *Gender in Medieval Places, Spaces and Thresholds*, ed. by Diane Heath, Victoria Blud, and Einat Klawfter (London, 2019), 185–202.

There are two early fourteenth-century examples of this trend in the vicinity of the study chapels, both involving widows. Joan Fitzalan (*fl.* 1337) established an elaborately-furnished chantry at Asthall parish church (Oxon) in 1320, alienating land and rents to support its chaplain.¹⁶⁵ Elizabeth de Montfort (d. 1354) founded hers at St Frideswide's Priory (now Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford) in 1345, where she was an established and generous benefactor.¹⁶⁶ These foundations and the monuments in them have been the subject of research by Katherine Mair and Ann McGee Morganstern, respectively.¹⁶⁷ Their findings provide useful comparative material against which to measure the undocumented chantry chapel at Cogges which houses the memorial of a woman who was also buried independently in an expensively embellished setting.

Despite the advantages that individual burial could bring, most women were commemorated with their husbands or natal families, as seems to have been the case at Witney and probably Ducklington as well.¹⁶⁸ As Harris has shown, this did not preclude their involvement in decisions relating to their memorials. In her discussion of monuments to couples, Jessica Barker demonstrates that women played a prominent role in commissioning double tombs, an arena which gave women and widows an opportunity to exert influence over their own representation as well as that of their husbands, especially if they were married more than once,

For women who had been married multiple times, the many registers of representation on a memorial – effigy, images, inscriptions and heraldic devices – offered a means of commemorating different identities simultaneously.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ TNA, CP 25/1/190/18, no. 5; CPR, 1317–1321, 495.

¹⁶⁶ *CP*, 9, 207–82; *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St. Frideswide at Oxford*, ed. by Spencer Wigram (Oxford, 1896), 1–13.

¹⁶⁷ Mair (1997), 241–268; Anne McGee Morganstern, 'The tomb as prompter for the chantry: four examples from Late Medieval England' in Elizabeth Valdez Del Alamo and Carol Stamatiz Pendergast, *Memory and the Medieval Tomb* (Oxford, reissue 2018), 163–185, and Anne McGee Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship in France, the Low Countries, and England* (Pennsylvania, 2000), 3–4, 107–08.

¹⁶⁸ Ward (2008), 107–11.

¹⁶⁹ Barker (2020), 213–14.

Again this is pertinent to the study chapels. Margaret Oddingseles at Cogges was twice married as was Martha Dyve at Ducklington.¹⁷⁰ Barker notes that there is no identifiably ‘feminine’ quality to the design of monuments commissioned by women as they used the same artists, materials and imagery as their male counterparts, co-opted to their own needs. This contributes to the difficulties we have in recognising female involvement. Scholars still tend to understate women’s influence in this era, approaching the question of patronage as ‘masculine in origin and intent’, and treating female patrons as a separate, exceptional category rather than part of the norm.¹⁷¹ Yet the role of women, particularly widows, as ‘spiritual housekeepers’, charged with the responsibility of caring for the souls of their husbands in purgatory, meant that they were essential to the efficacy of chantry provision. As Katherine Clarke and others have shown, the ‘good’ widow was expected to be chaste and yet remain linked by the persistent bonds of marriage to her dead husband through acts of remembrance and pious intercession.¹⁷² Cultural formulations such as these point towards a pattern of women’s active involvement in, and influence on, *memoria* that was very much the norm. As women are commemorated by two, and probably all three, of the monuments at the study chapels, my inquiry includes the role of women in the design of the tombs and the settings in which they appear.

The influence of books of hours

The use of manuscript illustrations as sources for imagery in other media including memorial sculpture has been discussed before now.¹⁷³ The same repertoire of subjects and forms reappears in church wall paintings, stained glass and sculpture, a tradition which helps greatly with identifying damaged and incomplete material.

¹⁷⁰ Barron (1904), 33; *Cl. Rolls*, 1330–33, 472

¹⁷¹ Martin (2012), 1–2.

¹⁷² Katherine Clark Walker, *The Profession of Widowhood. Widows, Pastoral Care and Medieval Models of Holiness* (Washington, 2018), 275; Anna Wainwright, ‘Teaching Widowed Women, Community, and Devotion in Quattrocento Florence with Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Antonia Tanini Pulci’, *Religions*, 9, 76 (2018), 2–13.

¹⁷³ Binski (2014), 104; Barker (2017a), 12; Nigel Saul, ‘The Semi-effigial tomb slab at Bredon (Worcestershire): Its Character, Affinities and Attribution’, *JBAA*, 170 (2017), 61–81 at 61 and 70; Michael A. Michael, ‘The Artistic Context of Opus Anglicanum’, in *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicanum*, ed. by Clare Browne, Glyn Davies, and Michael A. Michael (New Haven and London, 2016), 61.

Parish imagery tends to appear in settings which have been largely stripped out, leaving it decontextualised. The closest visual parallels are often to be found in contemporary illustrated prayer texts—psalters and books of hours—many of which have survived virtually intact, including some which exhibit marks of use and ownership. Whilst encountering imagery privately in a prayer book is different in kind to experiencing it carved into the walls of sacred space, such books remain our best model for the active interplay between image and beholder. I note particularly striking parallels at two of the study chapels, Cogges and Ducklington, where the sculpture replicates not just the same type of subject matter as in a book of hours but, I will argue, its placement as well. This suggests that the carvings in their architectural settings functioned in a way that echoes the interactive relationship between image, text and reader in a book of hours, encouraging the performance of particular prayer rituals. By the early fourteenth century, books of hours were the most popular prayer books owned by the laity.¹⁷⁴ They were owned by men and women but were particularly favoured by women and culturally associated with them.¹⁷⁵ They could be personalised to suit the interests of the owner with the addition of bespoke imagery including ‘portraits’ and heraldry, prayers and other material relating to family and secular concerns as well as piety.¹⁷⁶ At two of the three study sites the imagery displayed echoes these same concerns—inviting comparison with books of hours and suggesting female influence in their design.

The work of two scholars, David Park and Catherine Oakes, researching parish church imagery of c. 1270–1340s in the immediate vicinity of the study chapels, is relevant in this regard. The medium they are concerned with is wall painting rather than sculpture but both note close parallels with books of hours. David Park’s

¹⁷⁴ Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240–1570* (New Haven, London, 2006), 12–13; Anne Rudloff Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience* (Philadelphia, 2001), 67.

¹⁷⁵ Joni Hand, *Women, Manuscripts and Identity in Northern Europe, 1350–1550* (Farnham, 2013), 11; Virginia Reinburg, “‘For the Use of Women’: Women and Books of Hours”, *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 4 (2009), 235–40. See also Madeleine Caviness’s interpretation of the role played by books of hours in constructing and controlling female behaviour, Madeline H. Caviness, *Reframing Medieval Art: Difference, Margins, Boundaries* (2001) <<http://dca.lib.tufts.edu/caviness/>> [accessed 27 May, 2020].

¹⁷⁶ Duffy (2006), 6–11, 18–19.

subject is the scheme of *c.* 1270 in the nave at Black Bourton which mixes depictions of saints with penitential, devotional and narrative subjects in images of different shapes, sizes and registers, and includes a prominent donor portrait. Behind the somewhat chaotic effect, Park discerns coherence and layered meaning. He observes that the imagery matches the sequence of penitential and supplicatory prayers that follow the Hours of the Virgin in a book of hours, i.e., the Penitential Psalms (penance); the Kyrie (a cry for mercy) and the Litany (a plea for intercession).¹⁷⁷ More than that, he finds that it resonates with a particular book, the De Brailes Hours (BL, Add. MS 49999), made in Oxford around 1240 by William de Brailes for a female reader whose portrait is included several times.¹⁷⁸ The most striking parallel between the murals and the book is a scene of penance at the west end of the nave that is unique in English wall painting. It depicts two women kneeling with bowed heads while a bishop birches them across the hands. Park notes that this remarkable image closely resembles the image of King David receiving the discipline in the De Brailes Hours (4.2: 10–11). It provides a theme of penance for the whole programme which Park interprets as one of preparation for Mass. Within this programme, other themes are identified by grouping related images together, side by side or opposite each other, or by presenting them in similar frames. This device is also found in books of hours where related images connected by parity of representation are threaded throughout the text, offering the reader opportunities for meditation in addition to those in the text. The Black Bourton paintings pivot around the Coronation of the Virgin prominently placed in the centre of the north wall where it is adored by a kneeling woman (4.2: 12). This was a powerful intercessory image, the Virgin's presence in heaven alongside her son demonstrating her undoubted ability to intercede at the Last Judgement.¹⁷⁹ The performative gesture of the donor at prayer encourages the beholder to pray too and invites intercession for her soul. The church was being rebuilt at around this time and the female exemplars in the

¹⁷⁷ David Park, 'Penance and Praying for Salvation in an Oxfordshire Parish: The Thirteenth-Century Wall Paintings of Black Bourton': (paper presented at 'Imaging Dogma, Picturing Belief: late-medieval mural painting in parish churches across Europe', Courtauld Institute, London, 2009).

¹⁷⁸ Claire Donovan, *The de Brailes Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-century Oxford* (London and Toronto, 1991).

¹⁷⁹ Kathryn Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (London and Toronto, 2003), 59.

paintings may suggest they were sponsored by a female patron.¹⁸⁰ The parallels with the De Brailes Hours raise questions about the transmission of ideas between settings. They may suggest that the wall painting scheme was devised with reference to a book of hours owned or seen by the patron, bringing the same kinds of prompt to prayer that were contained in such a book to a wider parish audience.

Claire Oakes' exploration of the more orderly mural sequence of *c.* 1340 in the chancel at Chalgrove focuses on the doctrinal function of its Marian and Christological subject matter, but she too notes a close relationship with a particular book of hours, in this case Bodl, MS Douce 431 (England, *c.* 1325–30).¹⁸¹ The book opens with a series of diptychs of saints who appear in the same pairs at Chalgrove. These include the familiar pairings of Saints Peter and Paul, and Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, but also the far less common combination of St Mary Magdalene and St Helen. The Hours of the Virgin in the manuscript are introduced by scenes that also appear in the narrative of sacred history displayed on the chancel walls. Like Park, Oakes connects the mural paintings with the Eucharist, observing that the laity used their books of hours during the Mass for personal prayer, only looking up at the Elevation which they would see against the backdrop of the scenes painted on the walls and reflected on the page in front of them.¹⁸² She also notes that the tone of the mural imagery is strongly intercessory, invoking the Virgin's protection for the donors and inviting intercessory prayers on their behalf.¹⁸³ The relationship identified by both Park and Oakes between imagery in books of hours associated with particular prayer sequences and the decoration of three-dimensional space where such prayers might be performed, offers a template for interpreting the sculpture at the study chapels.

¹⁸⁰ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 458. Oseney Abbey held the advowson and may have contributed although this is not documented < <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol15/pp94-99#p6> > [accessed 7 September, 2020].

¹⁸¹ Catherine Oakes, 'Fourteenth-Century Ways of Seeing: The Chancel Wall Paintings at Chalgrove, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 74 (2009), 19–39, 32.

¹⁸² Oakes (2009), 30.

¹⁸³ Oakes (2009), 33.

Seeing and Meaning

The cross-over of imagery between media includes profane as well as sacred subjects. See for example the mural sequence at Great Tew (Oxon) in which hybrids decorate the borders between scenes from the life of Christ; a group of burlesque figures including a naked bottom-scratcher in stained glass in the east window of the Lucy chapel at Christ Church; and a bottom-barer on the chancel arch at Preston Bisset (Bucks) (4.2: 13–15). The chapels at Cogges and Witney are embellished with this type of marginalia: the eye-catching, humorous, absurd, sometimes sacred, sometimes scurrilous inventions that populate the margins of medieval manuscripts and perch on architectural constructions of all shapes and sizes. These intriguing images have prompted much interest amongst scholars with interpretations ranging from the flights of fancy of a creative if cheeky stonemason to a literal bestiary in stone. Most contemporary commentators are agreed on the fluidity of meaning of these fantastical creations and their ability to entertain and record as well as teach.¹⁸⁴ Veronica Sekules' interpretation of the sculptured marginalia at Heckington in this vein has already been mentioned. John Goodall's article is potentially more relevant as it concerns sculptural traditions closer to the study sites. Each of the churches in his north Oxfordshire group is embellished by an exterior frieze of carved grotesques. Noting that marginalia on the painted page could serve as glosses to the text 'wittily illustrating it, depicting it or parodying it', he observes that the same figures in sculpture could perform in a similar way, carrying many layers of meaning. They could be at once didactic, apotropaic, cautionary and humorous. They had 'an ability to convey profound truths without recourse to solemnity' and could be 'tailored to suit the aesthetic, iconographic and financial needs of any commission'.¹⁸⁵ Goodall's concerns are primarily with attribution—of date, patron,

¹⁸⁴ See for example Binski (2014) especially Chapter 8, 'The Pleasures of Unruling'; Michelle Brown, *The World of the Luttrell Psalter* (London, 2006); Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, Essays in Art and Culture (London, 2010); Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (Chicago, 1998); Paul Hardwick, *English Medieval Misericords: The Margins of Meaning* (Woodbridge, 2013); John Lowden and Alixe Bovey (eds), *Under the Influence: The Concept of Influence and the Study of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Turnhout, 2007); Asa Mittman and Susan Kim, 'Monstrous Iconography' in Colum Hourihane (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography* (London and New York, 2016), 518–531.

¹⁸⁵ Goodall (1995), 324.

influence and execution—but a section on iconography and meaning for patron and audience touches on the kind of relationship I wish to consider between sculpture and audience at the study chapels, where we find a similar mix of sacred and secular imagery. For example, at Adderbury, Goodall notes the inclusion of a Coronation of the Virgin amongst a row of noisy musicians and monsters arranged as a frieze along the outside of the north nave aisle (4.2: 16–17).¹⁸⁶ He suggests that the frieze may have acted as a backdrop to outdoor events such as Palm Sunday processions, or celebrations of the Virgin (patron saint of the church) which would have been accompanied by music and other festive activities, secular as well as sacred. The frieze includes only one other sacred scene, a little to the left, that of St Giles and the hind (4.2: 18–19) Goodall proposes that the mix of sacred and secular was ‘a way of emphasizing the chasm between humanity and heaven’.¹⁸⁷ Further layers of meaning may also be inferred. For example, like the Virgin, St Giles was a powerful and popular protector. His feast day was 1 September, a week after the Coronation of the Virgin on 22 August.¹⁸⁸ His inclusion in the frieze suggests that late summer celebrations honouring the Virgin extended to include him as well, thereby engaging the aid of both intercessors for Adderbury’s parishioners. As for the little Coronation panel, it emerges from the tip of a window. The tracery in the window takes the form of a Star of David which Goodall identifies as an apotropaic design, protecting those whose heraldry appeared in the glass.¹⁸⁹ In the interior wall beneath the window is a canopied, early fourteenth-century tomb recess, its gable rising up in front of the window—which no doubt contained stained glass relating to the deceased (4.2: 20). I propose that this setting was of specific benefit to the deceased, connecting the monument with the exterior sculpture by means of the apotropaic window. The sculpture consequently reads horizontally and vertically with the Coronation panel at the intersection. The panel was not visible to those inside but was held in their memory, a vision of heaven and consoling reminder of the Virgin’s intercession. The sculpture can thus signify differently; depending on the occasion, on who is looking and from where, inside or outside. It requires a sophisticated, somewhat gymnastic,

¹⁸⁶ Goodall (1995), 325–26.

¹⁸⁷ Goodall (1995), 326.

¹⁸⁸ David Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford, 1978), 173.

¹⁸⁹ Goodall (1995), 318.

non-linear pattern of looking that relies on memory as well as sight, and an appreciation of the inter-connectedness of the earthly and spiritual realms. Goodall's insights and these further observations on the Adderbury sculpture encourage recognition of similar compositional strategies at the study sites.

4.3 Summary

As opportunities for social, religious and artistic expression, chantries provide fertile ground for inquiry into the lived experience of patron and parishioners. Existing scholarship has greatly increased our understanding of these culturally-significant foundations and establishes the base on which the following case studies rest. By focussing on the visual imagery at study sites that are largely unknown, and on aspects of commemoration that are under-explored, the findings of the present inquiry will contribute to this body of knowledge.

CHAPTER 5: The north-east chapel at Cogges

In this chapter I discuss the north-east chapel at Cogges and show how its distinctive tomb and extensive sculptural embellishment embody the themes of the thesis in ways that evince patronal concerns and local circumstances. Interpretation is complicated by a number of factors: there are strong hints that the fabric is not all of the same build; there are losses to the monument and internal frieze; parts of the exterior decoration are also missing; and an extensive array of armorial glass is known only from incomplete antiquarian records. For clarity I address each of these factors separately, starting with a brief building chronology of the whole church, concentrating on the chancel and north nave aisle as these cells are physically integrated with the chapel, thus providing useful information for dating. This is followed by a more comprehensive description of the north-east chapel itself. Discrepancies which emerge suggest an early thirteenth-century date for the chapel walls and a mid fourteenth-century date for its window tracery and sculpture. A description of the sculpture and lost stained glass follows, evoking as far as possible the fourteenth-century appearance of the whole chapel. I then turn to the question of patronage before returning to the sculpture to discuss its iconography.¹⁹⁰ Before considering these matters in detail, it will be helpful to step back and look briefly at the broad context in which the church sits.

5.1 Cogges in the medieval landscape

Cogges flourished in the early twelfth century as the head manor of the Arsic barony. In *c.* 1100 Manasser Arsic built a castle there, and he and his wife founded a monastery, a cell of Fécamp Abbey, Normandy.¹⁹¹ Its generous endowments included the parish church of Cogges, dedicated to St George the Martyr, and a house alongside which served as the priory.¹⁹² The castle has gone but the priory and

¹⁹⁰ A shorter version of the section on iconography has been accepted for publication in the 2017 conference transactions of 'Towards an Art History of the Parish Church', ed. by Meg Bernstein and James Cameron, to be published by < <https://courtauld.ac.uk/research/courtauld-books-online>>.

¹⁹¹ Blair and Steane (1982), 43–82.

¹⁹² *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, 2, ed. by Henry William Davis, Charles Johnson and Harry Cronne (Oxford, 1956), 94; *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 55.

church remain. In addition, east of the church, Manor Farm (now a museum) incorporates part of a substantial mid thirteenth-century manor house. The three buildings together constitute the nucleus of a settlement of some standing (5.1:1–2).

Blair and Steane have demonstrated that the significance of Cogges monastery lay less in its religious function than as an administrative centre for Fécamp's extensive land holdings in the south and east of England, for which the prior was bailiff.¹⁹³ However, over the course of the thirteenth century, the priory's holdings were dispersed, and its administrative role diminished. By the early fourteenth century its assets amounted to no more than property in Cogges itself and the advowson of the church.¹⁹⁴ The Arsic family died out in the male line in 1230, and by 1241 most of the manor had been acquired by Walter de Grey, archbishop of York (d. 1255).¹⁹⁵ The remains of his court survive as Manor Farm, an extensive and important house of c. 1240s built around two, if not three courtyards.¹⁹⁶ The archbishop left Cogges to his nephew, Walter de Grey (d. 1268) of Grey's Court, Rotherfield (Oxfordshire), whose descendants were the principal lords of the manor of Cogges until the late fourteenth century, using it as a dower property over successive generations—as the Arsics had also done before them.¹⁹⁷ A small share was retained by the Arsics, passing down through the female line to the de la Haye family and thence to the Gardinis and Giffards. It was the smallest and least valuable part of a parcel of three Oxfordshire properties handed down in the same way, assessed jointly as one third of a knight's fee in 1328.¹⁹⁸ The other two—Fringford and Somerton, some thirty miles north of Cogges—included alternate presentation to the parish church and

¹⁹³ Blair and Steane (1982), 50–51. Cogges is one of several Norman houses whose estates were managed like this, staffed by a single monk bailiff. Donald Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and Their English Possessions* (London, 1962), 51–52.

¹⁹⁴ Blair and Steane (1982), 50–52; *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles, Episcopi Lincolnensis, A.D. MCCIX–MCCXXXV*, 1, ed. by William Phillimore and Francis Davis (London, 1909), 183.

¹⁹⁵ *Excerpta è Rotulis Finium*, 1, ed. by Charles Roberts (London: 1831), 193; *Ch. Rolls*, 1226–57, 264–65, 285.

¹⁹⁶ Trevor Rowley and Mélanie Steiner, *Cogges Manor Farm, Witney, Oxfordshire: The Excavations from 1986 – 1994 and the Historic Building Analysis* (Oxford, 1996), 1.

¹⁹⁷ *Ch. Rolls*, 1226–57, 285, 265; *Rotuli Hundredorum Temp. Hen. III & Ed. I*, 2, ed. by William Illingworth (London, 1818), 867; *Cl. Rolls*, 1307–13, 393; *Pat. Rolls*, 1377–81, 334.

¹⁹⁸ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 107.

church-scot at Fringford. In 1338 John Giffard exchanged the Giffard property in Cogges with a de Grey property in Fringford, allowing both families to consolidate their assets.¹⁹⁹ By the mid fourteenth century, therefore, the manor was a well-established de Grey property—and female-owned by tradition. There is no evidence that the Giffard family were resident at Cogges, nor are their arms recorded amongst the heraldry displayed in the church. They seem unlikely therefore to have been much involved as benefactors.

Blair and Steane found no trace of a monastic chapel in the priory. Inventories taken in 1294 and 1324 record no vestments, books or church plate and indicate two and three monks, respectively.²⁰⁰ The authors conclude that by the mid thirteenth century, Cogges Priory was a modest domestic establishment more closely resembling a manor house and working farm than a fully-functioning monastery.²⁰¹ The expansion of the household to three in 1324 took place while the long-serving William de Limpeville (1303–1333) was prior.²⁰² This period may represent a more actively monastic phase in the priory's history. Alternatively, the third man may have been a parish chaplain or chantry priest lodging in the priory.²⁰³

Without a chapel of their own, the monks must have used the parish church to sing their daily office, as happened in similar circumstances elsewhere.²⁰⁴ They probably kept liturgical items in the church as none are inventoried in the priory. Although small in number, the presence of monks implies a certain level of liturgical activity, and the rich musical tradition of the Benedictine order may have meant an enhanced devotional experience for parishioners.²⁰⁵ The monks either performed parish duties

¹⁹⁹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 101.

²⁰⁰ Blair and Steane (1982), 53, 107; TNA E106/2/6, m. 9 and TNA E106/8/5, no. 36.

²⁰¹ Blair and Steane (1982), 83–84.

²⁰² David Smith and Vera London, *The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales*, 2, 1216–1377. (Cambridge, 2004), 152.

²⁰³ It was not unusual for a secular priest to lodge in the priory in cases where the parish church was shared. In 1190, the vicar at Modbury (Devon) lived in the priory, as did the vicar at Chepstow (Monmouthshire) in 1399, Matthew (1962), 58.

²⁰⁴ Matthew (1962), 58–59.

²⁰⁵ James Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2014), 104.

themselves or appointed a chaplain, the first of these being recorded in 1220.²⁰⁶ A perpetual vicarage established in 1225 was short-lived, the last recorded presentation being in 1260–61.²⁰⁷ In 1291 the full annual value of the church, set at £8, went directly to the monks, suggesting that from this point they were again serving the parish themselves.²⁰⁸

During the fourteenth century, the recurrent war with France created financial insecurity for the alien monasteries.²⁰⁹ In 1338, the prior of Cogges was excused rent and arrears on account of hardship.²¹⁰ In 1378, Parliament temporarily expelled the alien monks from England while the King used their revenues to pay off his creditors.²¹¹ In 1387 the priory at Cogges and its dovecot were derelict; in 1409 it was farmed out on behalf of Queen Joan, and in 1441 Henry VI gave it to Eton college.²¹² Under these circumstances, major interventions to the church fabric made in the fourteenth-century are likely to have been funded by someone outside the monastery. I will argue that in the first half of the fourteenth century this was Margaret Oddingseles whose monument is housed in the north-east chapel and whose family arms appeared both in the chapel and elsewhere in the church.²¹³

5.2 Church overview

The church comprises chancel with crypt below (filled in); north-east chapel; nave (clerestoried on the south); north and south nave aisles and a south porch. An unusual tower, square at the base, its upper stages octagonal, is placed across the north-west angle of the north aisle. The church fabric is of coursed, limestone rubble, neatly dressed in places, with some remains of exterior render (5.2: 1–2). Aside from

²⁰⁶ Matthew (1962), 58–59; *The Oseney Cartulary*, 4, ed. by Herbert Salter (Oxford, 1933), 194.

²⁰⁷ *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles*, 1, 183; *Rotuli Ricardi Gravesend Episcopi Lincolniensis*, ed. by Francis Davis (Lincoln, 1925), 214.

²⁰⁸ *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicolai IV circa A.D. 1291*, 1, eds, George Eyre and Andrew Strahan (London, 1802), 43.

²⁰⁹ Matthew (1962), 72–97.

²¹⁰ *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 55

²¹¹ Matthew (1962), 108–11.

²¹² Blair and Steane (1982), 53.

²¹³ Bodl, Wood E 1, f. 46r.

the sculpture decorating the north-east chapel, very little medieval decoration has survived although flecks of painted plaster throughout the interior suggest it was once brightly painted. Modern seating in the chancel and nave currently faces west, not east, to accommodate the present evangelical style of worship (5.2:3).

The west wall of the nave survives from an eleventh-century church comprising a nave and small narrow chancel.²¹⁴ Narrow nave aisles were built on in the late twelfth century. The two-bay south aisle, added first, retains a round pier with scalloped capital on a spurred plinth (5.2: 4). The north aisle was added next. Its roofline was still visible in 1870 as a scar in its east wall against the adjoining north-east chapel.²¹⁵ It was widened in the fourteenth century.²¹⁶ The square plinths of its early three-bay arcade were retained (5.2: 5) They have double-chamfered corners and closely resemble the plinth supporting a blocked Romanesque arcade in the chancel at Tadmarton and the Transitional south doorway at Langford (both Oxon) (5.2: 6–8).

The north nave aisle adjoins the north-east chapel (5.2: 9–10). Both structures have two-light curvilinear windows in deep, straight-headed embrasures in the north wall. However, the windows differ in design: the interior lintels over the aisle windows are plain slabs while those over the chapel windows have rounded corners and are carved with ballflower and rosettes; and the reticulations in the aisle windows are stretched sideways in comparison to the more rounded ones in the chapel (5.2: 11–12). At Shottesbrooke, built *c.* 1340s, different styles of reticulated tracery occur in adjacent windows but other details are the same. The more pronounced differences between the two units at Cogges suggest that they are not of the same build.

Observation of the external fabric shows that the chapel is the older structure. There is an awkward join between them, behind the diagonal buttress at the chapel's north-west corner. At eaves height in the same corner, the cornice and parapet of the nave aisle roof butt up against the west wall of the chapel. Lower down, the string courses have different profiles; the sharply chamfered string course on the aisle wall

²¹⁴ Blair and Steane (1982), 86–87, 89.

²¹⁵ *Proceedings and Excursions of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society* (Oxford, 1869–70), 143.

²¹⁶ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 550–51.

overlapping the more rounded scroll-shaped string on the chapel buttress (5.2: 13–14).

Inside, a small trefoil window, which originally lit the chapel from the west, has been enclosed by the widening of the aisle and is now internal. It has a sloping sill and is placed high in the north half of the wall. The off-centre position shows it was designed to clear the earlier, narrow aisle. Below it, a narrow ledge of around 5 cm depth shows that the wall is thinner at the top than the bottom (5.2:15–17). There was perhaps a low door here, or the wall may have been heightened.²¹⁷ The upper window resembles a thirteenth-century window in the south aisle (5.2: 18–19).²¹⁸ It may therefore also date to the thirteenth century but the design is not distinctive enough to be sure. These observations show that the chapel pre-dates the present aisle and co-existed with the earlier narrower one.

5.3 The chancel and crypt

The chancel is a little larger than the nave, measuring approximately 10 x 5. 2 metres, widening very slightly towards the north east. It has a mid thirteenth-century arch formed of two continuous chamfered orders.²¹⁹ The scissor-braced roof has been repaired but may date from the fourteenth century (5.3:1–3).²²⁰ The reticulated tracery of the three-light east window has been inserted into an Early English surround with jamb shafts and simple stiff-leaf capitals, one inhabited by a small male figure (5.3: 4–5). One head corbel survives on the exterior north-east angle of the chancel at the end of a section of string course. It marks the lower springing of an earlier roof. Another string runs round the east and north walls of the chancel at sill level, enclosing low diagonal buttresses (5.3: 6–7). Blair and Steane noted three

²¹⁷ Warwick Rodwell, *Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire: The Archaeology and Architecture of a Cathedral, Monastery and Parish Church* (Oxford, 2009), 122.

²¹⁸ <<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101053065-church-of-st-mary-witney>> [accessed 15 Sept, 2020]; Blair and Steane (1982), 95.

²¹⁹ Blair and Steane (1982), 91. Sherwood and Pevsner give it as fourteenth-century, Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 550.

²²⁰ The roof is given as fourteenth-century in English Heritage Legacy ID: 252646 and Blair and Steane (1982), 100; and as fifteenth century in Frank Howard, ‘On the Construction of Medieval Roofs’, *Archaeological Journal*, 71, 1 (1914), fig. 14.

small windows at ground level at the east end of the chancel, one in each wall, revealing the presence of a crypt. The two lateral windows have since been covered over but a semi-circular window arch is still visible at the bottom of the east wall inside, and there is a chamfered, square aperture in the corresponding position outside (5.3: 8–10). The reticulated window above is set high in the wall indicating that the chancel floor was raised at the east end to allow light into the lower chamber—which was therefore partly, rather than wholly, underground. There is no evidence inside or outside the church to show how the crypt was accessed. Its use cannot be determined without archaeological exploration. It may have provided safe storage for eucharistic items, or housed relics or significant burials, perhaps those of the founders and priors. Its physical features, as far as they can be determined, are consistent with Jennifer Crangle’s diagnostic template for a chancel chamber, raising the possibility that it performed this function as well.²²¹

The reticulated tracery in the east window suggests a date around the middle of the fourteenth century for its renewal. The roof was probably rebuilt at the same time. An encircled cross on the gable is medieval and may belong to the same programme of repair. Two inscriptions in stained glass, one reading *le dame de Grey*, the other *Willm Hamon monachus de Feschaps et prior de Cogges*, suggest that the work was a joint project, paid for by Prior William Hamon and the lady of the manor.²²² In the mid fourteenth century, this was Margaret Oddingseles who held the manor in dower and whose family arms were also displayed.²²³ Hamon was a man of some standing. In office from 1341 until at least 1364, he was a king’s surgeon, naturalised citizen of England, and royal administrator.²²⁴ His career suggests he was not often resident at Cogges Priory (which was no longer a prestigious institution by this time), but he

²²¹ See chap. 6.3: The lost lower chamber.

²²² Bodl, Wood D 14, f. 57r; Blair and Steane (1982), 108, 110. Blair and Steane point out that ‘le dame de Grey’ could relate to either Margaret Oddingseles or her successor Avice Marmion (*fl.* 1379). However, the arms of the prestigious Marmion family were not recorded and Avice cannot have received Cogges in dower until the death of her husband John de Grey, in 1359, a little late for the reticulated tracery. *IPM*, 10, 1352–61, 406.

²²³ *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 193–94; Bodl, Wood D 14, ff. 56v–57r.

²²⁴ Matthew (1962), 95, 106; *Pat. Rolls*, 1364–67, 39.

may nonetheless have wished to mark his appointment by contributing to the maintenance of the church.

Blair and Steane note changes in the exterior masonry showing that the south chancel wall has been largely rebuilt. It has no string courses to match those on the east and north walls, nor is there a head-stop to match that on the north corner.²²⁵ Rectilinear windows in this wall suggest a mid fifteenth-century date for the rebuilding: one of the head-stops shows a woman in a divided headdress, a style that was fashionable from the mid 1400s but outmoded by 1500 (5.3:11–13).²²⁶

Blair and Steane consider the present chancel and crypt to be coeval. On the basis of the thirteenth-century chancel arch, buttresses and east window, they date them to the rebuilding in *c.* 1230–50 of an inferred, smaller chancel in place before 1104.²²⁷ However, there is one feature in the chancel which complicates this chronology. It has implications for the date of the north-east chapel and is therefore discussed here. The north chancel wall is pierced by a two-bay arcade with Decorated mouldings opening to the north-east chapel (5.3: 14). The chapel contains a fourteenth-century monument, has Decorated window tracery and sculpture and has been described as a mid fourteenth-century addition.²²⁸ However, the central pier of the arcade rests on an earlier feature, a square plinth with corner spurs (5.3: 15–16). This Romanesque or Transitional design is widely found locally. There is a damaged one at Cogges in the south aisle (5.2: 4). Later examples are in the Transitional north arcade at Little Faringdon.²²⁹ The design seems to have been in use from around 1170 to 1200, perhaps running into the 1200s. The base of the Cogges plinth is approximately the same width as the walls at either end of the arcade (5.3: 17).²³⁰ This probably means

²²⁵ Blair and Steane (1982), 100.

²²⁶ See two memorial brasses at Adderbury, dated *c.* 1465 and 1508/9, respectively. In the first, Alice Danvers is shown in a divided head dress, while in the second, Jane Smyth wears the later, pedimental style. Jerome Bertram, *Oxfordshire Brasses and Slabs* (2019), 12.

²²⁷ Blair and Steane (1982), 91.

²²⁸ Blair and Steane (1982), 91; Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 550.

²²⁹ Blair and Steane (1982), 87; Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 685.

²³⁰ On Blair and Steane's plan the plinth is marginally narrower (5.2: 1). They also show the east and west responds as slightly different widths but give all three elements the same mid fourteenth-century date.

that plinth and walls belong to the same campaign but does not provide us with a date, nor does it guarantee that the plinth is in its original position. If it has been reused, it is hard to see where it came from. As noted, the plinths of both nave aisles remain in place; and Blair and Steane's building chronology suggests that the early chancel was demolished and rebuilt in the mid thirteenth century, too soon for an element salvaged from it to be included in a mid fourteenth-century chapel. There are a number of potential solutions, all of which imply a chamber occupying the space north of the chancel before the present Decorated chapel, and thus of interest to the present inquiry. Before considering their merits, the plinth itself should be described and its relation to similar forms discussed.

The plinth has descending, tongue-shaped corner spurs with rounded contours to either side of a central depression. It originally supported a large octagonal pier, the base of which remains on the north and south faces which are continuous with the plinth. The east and west faces have been cut back and the intermediate faces have been given Decorated mouldings: double hollows divided by a roll and fillet (5.3: 18–19). In Oxfordshire, early plinths are frequently retained as part of later modifications. See for example Nether Worton and Charlton-on-Otmoor where Romanesque plinths support octagonal piers that have been simply cut back and given roll mouldings at the base, probably in the early thirteenth century.²³¹ The Cogges plinth has no base rolls and its Decorated mouldings show it was modified later, in the mid fourteenth century.

The position of the plinth is problematic as it is older than both the supposed mid thirteenth-century chancel and the fourteenth-century chapel. If it is *in situ*, the chancel must have been enlarged some decades earlier than has been suggested, perhaps around 1200–20, and given a north aisle, and perhaps a crypt, at the same time. The semi-circular rear-arch of the crypt east window is consistent with this date. A large chancel with a north aisle and crypt would be ambitious for a village parish church but appropriate to the monastic character of Cogges, which was an influential establishment until the later thirteenth century. If the plinth is older, it may have been salvaged from an earlier chancel and reused in the rebuilding of *c.*

²³¹ My thanks to John McNeill for discussing this with me, 19 April, 2019.

1200–20. Either way, the present chancel arch, diagonal buttresses and Early English window must be modifications introduced mid century into an existing building, rather than evidence of its wholesale reconstruction.

Whether the chancel achieved its present extent before or shortly after 1200, the existence of the plinth presupposes that it was aisled, if only on one side. It should be noted however that the piece-meal addition of single, lateral extensions to parish chancels is rare before the second quarter of the fourteenth century.²³² In the late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century, such additions are usually built as pairs of aisles, one on either side of the chancel, as at St Peter, Northampton, Walsoken (Cambridgeshire) and Laxton (Nottinghamshire). Yet single extensions are not entirely unknown and there are local precedents. Tadmarton is the earliest comparator (5.3: 22–25). Its two-bay Romanesque aisle, opening north from the chancel, is now blocked but the contours of two round arches are clearly visible, springing from a central pier with a rectangular, scalloped capital. An early lancet window within a deep, round-headed embrasure in the opposite wall shows there was no corresponding south chancel aisle. At Cookham (Berks) the north-east chapel is Transitional with lancet windows and an arch, decorated with nailhead, springing from shallow, square capitals. There is a south-east aisle but its double-chamfered arches, octagonal piers and moulded capitals are those of the late-thirteenth or fourteenth century.

To summarise, these comparators show that chancels with a single, late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century aisle or chapel are not unknown in the region. At Cogges there may in fact have been a matching south aisle but since the wall on the south side has been rebuilt the evidence no longer exists. The style of the plinth suggests a date somewhere around 1200 but it has not been possible to determine its original position. It cannot therefore be used to date the present chapel. However, its survival is strong indication that there was a north extension to the chancel from the early thirteenth century, and possibly before. While a single architectural element cannot

²³² Thanks to John McNeill for pointing this out. He considers the Stapleton chapel of *c.* 1300–1325 at North Moreton to be an exceptionally early example. McNeill (2011a) 19–20.

support such a claim on its own, corroboration is provided by examination of the surrounding fabric, as I now show.²³³

5.4 The north-east chapel (exterior)

Description of the exterior

The chapel measures approximately 7 x 4 m. It has a tiled, gabled roof of similar pitch to the chancel. It is of three equal bays with a straight-headed curvilinear window in each (5.4: 1). The east window has flowing tracery under a very low gabled arch on which sit three carved heads including the Head of Christ mentioned earlier (5.4: 2). There are diagonal buttresses at the north-east and north-west corners, matching the buttresses on the chancel (5.4: 3–4). There are two more buttresses on the north wall between the windows. The tops are shallow with sloping caps. The lower parts have been modified with the addition of plinths matching those at the corners. A scroll-moulded string course runs under the windows, enclosing the east and north walls. Sections are missing south of the east window and around the two central buttresses (5.4: 5–6). The chapel is further enclosed by a similar string at eaves height which continues onto the west gable. On the north wall the string is concealed by a modern gutter. On the west gable it slants up in the middle to create a shallow, up-turned V (5.4: 7–8). On the east gable it slants up in the same way to follow the line of the window arch. Some fifty centimetres above is a second moulding in the form of a narrow cornice containing the remains of ballflower decoration (5.4: 9–10). This runs parallel with the string below, creating a frieze-like panel between them. The panel contains courses of masonry laid slantwise, rising towards the middle. It is bisected by a tapering polygonal shaft with longitudinal striations, rising up from behind the sculptured head at the apex of the window. A cleft and drilled hole at the top of the shaft must relate to a lost pinnacle (5.4: 11–12). This was described as ‘splendid’ in the early nineteenth century, but no further details are given.²³⁴

²³³ See chap. 5.5: Dating the chapel fabric.

²³⁴ Gladstone’s Library, Hawarden (Flintshire), *Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne* 45, ff. 68–70.

The chapel roof

The stonework in both gables is patchy and irregular and contrasts with the neater masonry in the walls lower down (5.4: 2 and 8). This suggests that the pitched roof they support is later than the rest of the structure. Inspection inside the roof void confirms this to be so.²³⁵ The timbers of the present roof rest on top of those of an earlier roof with a much flatter pitch (5.4: 13–14). The low roof remains in place, acting as the ceiling. Its heavy-duty rafters and ridge piece confirm that it was initially built as a double-framed roof, i.e., with purlins, and principal and common rafters; the principals being placed to coincide with the buttresses on the north side and the apex of the arches on the south (5.4: 15–16). The shallow pitch indicates it had a lead covering, nailed in place.²³⁶ Several nails remain. The rising string moulding on the west gable matches the pitch of this roof and must therefore relate to its coping. The frieze-like panel on the east gable can be interpreted as the remains of a parapet. The use of ballflower in the coping suggests a mid fourteenth-century date for this lower roof. This is confirmed by its evident integration with the fourteenth-century sculptured frieze inside, described below.²³⁷ Julian Munby considers the date to be precocious but not impossible, noting the precedents of Windsor Castle and Bristol Cathedral which both had low-pitched roofs at this date.²³⁸ There are parish church examples as well. See the ballflower-enriched, low-gabled roofline of the early fourteenth-century north nave chapel at Witney; Kiddington (Oxon) has a low-pitched, fourteenth-century roof combined with straight-headed windows with flowing tracery, much as at Cogges; at Gaddesby (Leics), the exterior sculpture of *c.* 1340 decorating the west end of the south aisle is clustered around a low-gabled roof (5.4: 17–19).²³⁹ Since replaced by a shallow pent, the profile of the earlier roof at Gaddesby is revealed by a scar in the interior masonry. Warmington (Northants) has an even earlier low-pitched roof over a

²³⁵ Thanks to Gerry Waite, churchwarden, for providing access to the roof during repairs in March 2020, and to Sam from Heritage Roofing, Oxford, and Julian Munby, Oxfordshire diocesan archaeologist, for discussing its construction with me.

²³⁶ This type of roof is described in Howard (1914), 299 and 295–96.

²³⁷ See chap. 5.8: The frieze and corbels.

²³⁸ Julian Munby, personal comment, 5 April, 2020.

²³⁹ Ernest Smith, *The Story of Gaddesby Parish Church* (Leicester, 1968), 8.

timber-vaulted ceiling in the nave, dating to the late thirteenth century (5.4: 20–21).²⁴⁰

At Cogges, the upper, high-pitched roof has light arch braces rather than big ‘planky’ ones and is post-medieval, probably sixteenth or seventeenth century.²⁴¹ It was perhaps installed by William Blake (d. 1695) who ‘repaired and paved’ the chapel in 1677 (5.4: 22–23).²⁴² The whole arrangement is reminiscent of the chancel at Cotterstock (Northants) which also has a low-pitched roof formed of heavy-duty moulded timbers, boarded on the upper side, acting as a ceiling. A steeply pitched roof was constructed over the top in 1784 (5.4: 24–25).²⁴³ John Giffard, canon of York, rector of Cotterstock church until 1319 and servant of Edward III from 1330, raised Cotterstock to collegiate status, founding a chantry there in 1338. Its statutes were finalised in 1344.²⁴⁴ The lower roof has a series of wooden bosses carved with grotesques, crowned heads and the arms of Giffard, identifying it with the foundation and providing a probable date range of 1338–1344 for its construction. At Penshurst Place (Kent), the great hall of c. 1341 has a different style of roof (supported by arch-braced collar beams and crown posts) but the timber wall plate is carved with a series of fine roll mouldings, similar to the mouldings of the roof timbers at both Cotterstock and Cogges (5.4: 26–27).²⁴⁵ These reliably dated examples provide helpful comparators for the lower roof at Cogges, supporting a date in the 1340s for its installation. This coincides with the curvilinear style of the window tracery and Decorated-era figure sculpture, suggesting that they were installed as part of the same campaign.

²⁴⁰ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Northamptonshire* (Harmondsworth, 1961), 446.

²⁴¹ Julian Munby, personal comment, 5 April, 2020.

²⁴² OHC, PAR70/13/1/W/1.

²⁴³ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 82, 2 (1812), 219–21.

²⁴⁴ Andrew Budge, ‘Change in Architectural Style: The Adoption of Macro- and Micro-Architectural Motifs in 14th- Century Collegiate Churches in England and Wales’ (PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2017), 242. Many thanks to Andrew for discussing this with me and for the use of his photographs.

²⁴⁵ Anthony Emery, *Discovering Medieval Houses* (Princes Risborough, 2007), 80.

The east window and sculpture

The embellished four-light east window extends right up to the moulding that marks the line of the earlier roof, resulting in a low, angular arch. The window is wide and the main lights are proportionately a little short. This creates a rather squashed look in contrast to the flowing lines of the curvilinear tracery but is clearly intended. The tracery has been repaired in places but is continuous with the angular arch and jambs. The stone from which the central head is carved is concave beneath, following the apex of the window, and is moulded to match the string which extends to either side (5.4: 28–29). The side heads are carved from the same block of masonry as the corners of the window (5.4: 30–31).

The window is divided into two by a central mullion which develops into two large, cusped mouchettes with a curved triangle at the apex. To either side, pairs of lower lights with rounded, cinque-foil heads support a cusped tri-lobe over a curved diamond, contained under an ogee arch with an extended tip. Two more cusped mouchettes reach into the upper corners. The jambs are hollow-chamfered and defined by a pronounced quirk on the outer edge. The left jamb has a further, narrow chamfer (5.4: 32). The symmetrical design gives the impression of two side-by-side windows while the low arch and short lights create a somewhat truncated effect.

The top of the window is embellished with three male heads, elegantly carved with narrow noses and lips, prominent eyebrows and high cheekbones (5.4: 33–35). They have full beards, short fringes and wavy hair reaching to below the ears. The facial features and hairstyle resemble the bronze effigy of Henry III (1293) at Westminster Abbey and the alabaster effigy of Edward II (early 1340s) at Gloucester Cathedral. A similar head appears as a drip-stone at Broughton (Oxon), belonging to the early fourteenth-century east window (5.4: 36–38).²⁴⁶ The Cogges heads can thus be dated to *c.* 1290s–1340s. The central head is differentiated from the other two. Positioned at the apex of the arch, it is larger, has a halo and the carving is more elaborate, with more detailed eyes and drilling in the beard and hair curls. It can be identified as the Head of Christ by comparison with other early fourteenth-century examples in a variety of media (5.4: 39–41); for example, a carved roof boss at Leckhampton

²⁴⁶ The tracery in this window has been restored but the head-stop belongs to the original window.

(Gloucs), tracery lights in the Latin chapel at Christ Church Cathedral and at Ducklington and Cassington (Oxon), and illustrations in the De Lisle Psalter (S. E. England, c. 1308–39, BL Arundel MS 83 II), ff 126r, 129r, 130r. The identification of the Cogges sculpture as the Head of Christ was first proposed by John Goodall in 1995 in relation to a group of late-Geometric windows at Adderbury, Bloxham, Kidlington and St Giles, Oxford which have the Head of Christ carved into the centre of wheel tracery and are accompanied by further sculptural detail (5.4: 42–43).²⁴⁷ Goodall makes the convincing suggestion that the Cogges head is another, slightly later example of this convention, adapted to fit a curvilinear window. The suggestion is supported by the sculpture surrounding the window at Bloxham which includes a pinnacle and parapet, details which were once present at Cogges as well (5.4: 44).

The two lateral heads at Cogges are positioned at the springing on either side of the arch. As the arch is so shallow, the three heads appear in close proximity. They have a strong ‘family’ resemblance although neither of the side heads is haloed. The south head has slightly younger features and less flourishing hair and beard. At the extremities of the moulding on which they sit are the vestiges of further sculpture. On the north, a block of stone with a pronounced scoop carved into it show that these were drain exits, allowing water running off the earlier roof to emerge from behind the lost parapet (5.4: 45–47). Traces of carving beneath them suggest that they were embellished in some way, perhaps with a gargoyle such as those at Adderbury and Witney (5.4: 48–50). The missing pinnacle has already been mentioned. When intact, the window and surrounding sculpture on this wall with the Head of Christ at its centre would have created an eye-catching display, rivalling the chancel itself for interest.

The north windows

The north wall has three, two-light windows, all of the same dimensions under flat tops but with variations of curvilinear tracery and interior ornament (5.4: 51–56). The easternmost window, now blocked and partially concealed inside by a later wall monument, is of two ogee lights supporting a central reticulate unit. The front edge of the internal soffit is chamfered and carries two rows of ballflower separated by a

²⁴⁷ Goodall (1995), 317–89.

roll-and-fillet moulding, eleven on the front edge and thirteen behind. The middle window is of two trefoiled lights with a curved diamond between and two trefoils above. The soffit is chamfered and carries a row of eight rosettes with central buds, flanked by a roll moulding above and two narrower rolls behind. The north-west window has one whole and two partial reticulate units in the tracery. The front edge of the soffit has a hollow chamfer with a row of ten ballflowers inside, defined by a roll on the front edge and two narrower rolls behind. All the windows have the same, slightly rounded, interior top corners formed out of a single block. The jambs below are unchamfered.

The west wall has the single-light window described earlier, eccentrically placed above and north of the arch to the adjacent aisle. It has a trefoil arch under a flat top with no soffit decoration, plain jambs and a deeply sloping sill (5.2: 15–17).

5.5 Dating the chapel fabric

The somewhat unexpected chronology of the chapel roof has already been discussed, as has the retention of a Romanesque plinth. Dating the fabric of the rest of the chapel is also complex. Its window tracery and sculpture belong to the mid fourteenth century but, as Warwick Rodwell warns, such features may have been inserted into an existing structure, obscuring its origins.²⁴⁸ This is evidently the case here. The curvilinear tracery, ballflower ornament and style of the figure sculpture are characteristic of the Decorated style. However, the walls are those of an older building. As noted, the central buttresses in the north wall were originally shallow, an early type which, according to Rodwell, gave way during the course of the thirteenth century to buttresses that were square in plan.²⁴⁹ There are local examples of the early, shallow type at Hook Norton, Tackley, Tadmarton and Ducklington (5.5: 1–4). At Blewbury (Berks), there are shallow buttresses on the north side of the Romanesque chancel and deeper ones on the rebuilt south side (5.5: 5–6). Those on the chapel at Cogges lack the string that encloses the later diagonal buttresses but otherwise appear to have been modified to match them with the addition of plinths (5.5: 7–8). Diagonal buttresses occur from the mid thirteenth century onwards. There

²⁴⁸ Rodwell (2012), 52.

²⁴⁹ Rodwell (2012), 121–23.

are a number of early examples in Oxfordshire, for example at Swalcliffe and Dorchester Abbey (5.5: 9–10).²⁵⁰ The diagonal buttresses on the chapel at Cogges are the same height and profile as on the adjacent chancel and are treated in the same way; i.e., they are enclosed by a string and bonded into the adjoining walls with some internal quoins and matching courses of masonry (5.5: 11–12). The chapel thus seems to have received its diagonal buttresses at around the same time as the chancel, that is *c.* 1230–1250. The enclosing strings have different profiles, so the two cells were perhaps dealt with consecutively, rather than concurrently. The shallow, older buttresses on the chapel indicate the upgrading of an extant building constructed some decades earlier, perhaps around 1200–20. A similar chronology occurred at Great Doddington (Northants) where the late twelfth-century west tower was modified in the early thirteenth century with the addition of a new doorway and diagonal buttresses.²⁵¹

Around and above the arches of the curvilinear windows in the north wall, the stone courses are shallower and the blocks less finely dressed than those lower down (5.5: 13). These changes indicate that the windows are later insertions. The low-pitched roof was probably installed at the same time. The raising of the chapel's west wall noted earlier was perhaps part of the same project. Re-fenestration was widespread and took various forms. As noted, the reticulated tracery in the chancel east window was inserted into an Early English surround. In the north aisle at Ducklington, the arches of thirteenth-century windows have been adapted to take curvilinear tracery.²⁵² In the chantry chapel at Asthall, a fourteenth-century square-headed window replaces two lancets in the east wall. At Dorchester Abbey, there is a pair of straight-headed windows with reticulated tracery in the north nave wall, very similar to a north window in the chapel at Cogges. Rodwell considers them to be adaptations of Norman lancets, their rear-arches rebuilt to suit widened apertures (5.5: 14–15).²⁵³ Something similar may have happened at Cogges resulting in the three straight-headed windows in the north wall. In the east wall, the truncated design of the present four-light window also suggests modification. Its low triangular arch may

²⁵⁰ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 795–96; Rodwell (2009), 78.

²⁵¹ Ron Baxter < <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=6264> > [accessed 20 July, 2020].

²⁵² See chap. 7.4: Dating the north aisle.

²⁵³ Rodwell (2009), 165–66.

have been achieved by knocking out the embrasure of an existing window to its fullest extent in order to maximise the amount of height available under the new, lowered roof. The trio of lancets in the east chancel wall at Black Bourton and the grouped lancets at Swalcliffe and Ducklington, which have wide, shallow, segmental arches, would lend themselves to adaptation of this type (5.5: 16–19). The low-arched design does not occur elsewhere in the area at this time but is occasionally found further afield. See for example Worksop Priory Gatehouse and Duxford Chapel (Suffolk), both 1330s (5.5: 20–21).²⁵⁴ At Cogges, it was perhaps chosen to create the necessary hierarchy for the sculptured heads, the apex providing a raised position for the Head of Christ. Different solutions for updating windows found elsewhere are similarly dependent upon local circumstances. At Twyford (Bucks), the sill of an inserted Decorated window has been lowered, allowing for a conventionally proportioned window with a two-centred arch. The same solution was not adopted at Cogges, presumably to maintain space for an altar. The modernisation of a window at Raunds (Northants) required a flattened ogee arch in order to squeeze in under the pent of the roof (5.5: 22–23).

Observation of the exterior fabric confirms that there was an aisle north of the chancel in place by at least the mid thirteenth century (5.5: 24). This accounts for alterations to the fabric outside and the presence of the spurred plinth inside but does not provide us with a firm construction date. While frustrating, this does not affect the present inquiry as the focus is on the later appropriation of the space for use as a chantry chapel, and what this might have meant for the patron.²⁵⁵

5.6 Dating the windows

Having demonstrated that the shell of the chapel is earlier than previously thought, the windows should be carefully considered to confirm the date of *c.* 1340s generally ascribed to them.²⁵⁶ Flowing tracery appears in parish churches in the region from

²⁵⁴ Richard Lea and David Robinson, *Worksop Priory Gatehouse, Nottinghamshire, An Architectural History with an Account of the Significance of its Fabric*. Historical Analysis and Research Team, Reports and Papers 37 (English Heritage, 2000), 22, 31.

²⁵⁵ The question has implications for the date and early use of the crypt and chancel as well as the chapel, and would repay further investigation.

²⁵⁶ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 550; Blair and Steane (1982), 91.

the 1320s. See for example the chancel and north aisle windows at Crick (Northants), installed between 1320–40 (5.6: 1).²⁵⁷ Nearer at hand—and closer stylistically—are the tracery designs at the other two study sites: the north aisle windows at Ducklington, and the north transept windows at Witney. At Witney the design is repeated in the north nave aisle, in combination with a low-pitched roof (5.6: 2–6).²⁵⁸ The comparisons show that Decorated-era flowing tracery in the region is generally combined with higher, more acutely pointed arches than at Cogges.

Straight-headed windows like those in the north wall at Cogges are more commonly associated with Perpendicular styles. See for example those in the south chancel wall (5.3: 13). However, flat arches do occur in combination with earlier designs. Stephen Hart notes groups of thirteenth-century lancets at Sudborough and Stanion (both Northants) under straight heads.²⁵⁹ They have emphatic hood moulds and stops, similar to those at Cogges (5.6: 7–8). At Asthall, the north transept east window combines a flat arch with Decorated trefoil tracery, resembling the central north window at Cogges (5.6: 9–10). Katherine Mair dates stained glass roundels in the Asthall window to around 1320.²⁶⁰ Peter Newton dates similar roundels in the east window at Cogges to c. 1325–1350.²⁶¹ Rodwell gives the straight-headed reticulated windows at Dorchester Abbey a loose, fourteenth-century date.²⁶² Those at Kiddington belong to the mid fourteenth-century rebuild.²⁶³ Kiddington shares a number of other features with Cogges as well, suggesting that the two buildings are close in date. Apart from flat-topped windows over reticulated tracery, it has grotesque sculpture and a shallow roof with a pinnacle in the form of a cross rising from its apex (5.6: 11–12). The mouldings and aspects of the tracery design are also repeated at both sites: the leading edge of the mouldings is flat; the cusps have sunk

²⁵⁷ Alan Bale <<http://www.westnorthantshistory.co.uk/dbase/data/docs/Cri/Hist-Notes/History-Notes-28.pdf>> [accessed 14 March, 2019].

²⁵⁸ Jon Cannon, *Medieval Church Architecture* (Oxford, 2014), 56; Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 844.

²⁵⁹ Stephen Hart, *Medieval Church Window Tracery in England* (Woodbridge, 2012), 8, 34.

²⁶⁰ Mair (1997), 252, 256.

²⁶¹ Newton (1979) 69.

²⁶² Rodwell (2009) 165–66.

²⁶³ <<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101198490-church-of-st-nicholas-kiddington-with-asterleigh#.X2DFgmhKj-s>> [accessed 15 Sept, 2020]: Sherwood and Pevsner(1974), 66–69.

tracery; and the round-arched main lights have the same ripple-like cusps on their under sides (5.6: 13–14). These examples of flat-topped windows of 1320s–1340s support a similar date for the Cogges chapel north windows.

As with flat arches, windows with low-rise arches, like that in the east wall, are commonly associated with Perpendicular architecture. Yet earlier examples of this type can be found as well. Those at Worksop and Duxford have already been mentioned. At Peterborough Cathedral there are low-rise windows combined with flowing tracery in the upper storey of the apse, dating to the early 1330s.²⁶⁴ The nave west window of *c.* 1330 at the collegiate church of Michaelhouse, Cambridge has a low arch over tracery that recalls that at Cogges.²⁶⁵ At parish level, the south transept at Northborough, built to house the Delamare chantry of *c.* 1327–1340, has windows with low arches over dropped, flowing tracery, also somewhat reminiscent of the Cogges design (5.6: 15–17).²⁶⁶ These comparators all have segmental arches. Windows with ‘triangular’ gabled arches like that at Cogges are less common. Noting those at Boothby Pagnell (Lincs), Stephen Hart describes the design as an unappealing variation of the segmental-pointed type and ‘fortunately rare’. He dates its first appearance to the early fourteenth century.²⁶⁷

To summarise, the combination of Decorated tracery with a horizontal arch appears locally as early as 1320 (Asthall), and with a low-rise arch a little further afield from the 1330s (Peterborough Cathedral and Michaelhouse). The re-fenestration at Cogges could therefore have taken place in the 1330s. However, the height of the east window depends upon the low-pitched roof which is unlikely to have been installed before the 1340s. Thus, while the date of *c.* 1340s ascribed by previous commentators to the whole building does not apply to the walls, it does apply to the traceried windows. Together with the sculpture and a new roof, this points towards a substantial remodelling at that date.

²⁶⁴ Jonathan Foyle, personal comment, 28 September, 2018.

²⁶⁵ Budge (2017), 254.

²⁶⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough* (Harmondsworth, 1968), 296.

²⁶⁷ Hart (2012), 8, 6–7.

Observation of the fabric shows that the Cogges chapel belongs to an active and evolving architectural and sculptural tradition in the region. It retains a distinctive Romanesque plinth inside and includes a Decorated sculpture of the Head of Christ outside, in the east window—a motif which first appears in late-Geometric windows in association with grotesque sculptural ornament. The windows have been adapted to take Decorated tracery and a new, low-arched roof installed. By re-using fabric with liturgical associations (the chapel itself and the plinth it shares with the chancel), updating an apotropaic design (the Head of Christ built into the window) and employing new architectural forms (low-arched windows and roof), the patron draws on the metaphysical power vested in objects and images while demonstrating her/his embrace of new fashions in building and sculpture.

5.7 Early function

As there was already a spacious chancel for the celebration of Mass, the north addition was perhaps initially intended as a Lady chapel for the monks' daily recitation of the Office of the Virgin.²⁶⁸ It may also have functioned as a vestry or sacristy: a place to store church plate, vestments, documents, even relics, as none of these items are recorded in the priory inventories.²⁶⁹ For security purposes vestries were commonly provided with a lockable internal door rather than an open arcade. However, at Dorchester Abbey, the arcaded north chancel aisle, built between 1250–60, seems to have performed this function. It still contains, besides a piscina, three sizeable aumbries in the north wall, too large for the requirements of a side altar. Rodwell proposes that they housed reliquaries or other treasures instead.²⁷⁰ A vestry/sacristy of some sort would have been required at Cogges when the vicarage was instituted in 1225. A possible upper space, hinted at by the high window in the west wall, may have offered secure storage. It may also have provided

²⁶⁸ Sally Roper, 'Medieval English Benedictine Liturgy: Studies in the Formation, Structure, and Content of the Monastic Votive Office, c. 950–1540' (PhD thesis, Oxford, Brasenose College, 1998), 99.

²⁶⁹ The crypt and perhaps the tower are other possible locations for a strong room. Vestries, sacristies and treasuries are discussed by Toby Huitson, *Stairway to Heaven: The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces* (Oxford, 2014), 104; and Lesley Milner, 'Secret Spaces: English Sacristies, Vestries and Treasure Rooms, 1066–1300' (PhD thesis, London, Courtauld Institute, 2015).

²⁷⁰ Rodwell (2009), 75–77.

accommodation for the vicar. None is mentioned in relation to the first appointee, Benedict of St Edmund.²⁷¹ However, the prior was instructed to build a suitable house with messuage for his successor, Herbert de Findon, elected in 1232, implying that existing arrangements were inadequate.²⁷² Whatever the initial function of the north chancel addition, its prestigious position and liturgical associations would add spiritual advantage to the practical and financial benefits of appropriating an existing building for use as a chantry chapel.

5.8 The north-east chapel (interior)

Description of the interior

The north-east chapel opens from the chancel through a much-moulded, Decorated arcade of two bays (5.8: 1). The arches are tall, pointed and formed of two orders of continuous hollow chamfers, the east having more complex mouldings than the west including paired head-stops at either end (5.8: 2–3). The central pier rests on the spurred plinth described earlier. The four cardinal faces of the pier are flat. There are double hollows in the angles between, divided by a roll and fillet. In the absence of capitals, these rolls end in a pointed tip, dying into the arch at the springing. The inner surface of the arch over the east bay has a deep hollow moulding which stops at around 1.25 m above ground on both sides. The east respond has no mouldings at all below this point. Carved into the angle of this respond, facing into the chapel, is an elaborate corner piscina with a pinnacled canopy (5.8: 4–6). The west bay has no soffit moulding at all and the respond lacks both the pointed tip detail and head-stops. There are head-stops at either end of the east bay on both north and south faces of the arch. The pair on the east respond are beardless male heads with wavy, chin-length hair and generic features (5.8: 7–8). The pair on the central pier are female busts, noticeably differentiated from each other (5.8: 9–10). The face of the bust on the chancel side has a cheerful expression. She wears a veil and fillet high on her forehead. Prominent coils of hair are visible in front of her ears. Her wimple is attached above and below them with jewelled pins. It comes up over her chin and is tied beneath by a cord. It is stretched smoothly across her throat and tucked into the

²⁷¹ *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles*, 1, 183.

²⁷² *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles, Episcopi Lincolnensis, A.D. MCCIX–MCCXXXV*, 2, ed. by Francis Davis (London, 1907), 40.

wide neckline of her gown, secured with another pin on the right-hand side. The neckline has a decorative finish. The sculpture stands proud of the pier and finishes beneath the bust with a scalloped lower edge, representing the folds of a gown. By contrast, the bust on the chapel side is smaller and unsmiling. Her veil has fine folds but is less full. It is fixed with a fillet worn lower on her forehead. Inconspicuous netted coils of hair can be glimpsed at her temples. Her wimple also comes up over her chin and is tied by a cord underneath but tucks into a higher, round, plain neckline. The remains of wooden pegs to right and left below the neckline may represent jewelled wimple pins (an unusual form but it is hard to see what else they could be). The base of the sculpture has a slightly wavy front edge but a flat, unmoulded surface underneath. The relationship of these heads to the monument and its setting is discussed below.²⁷³

The frieze and corbels

A stone frieze carved with human, animal and monstrous figures runs the length of the north and south walls of the chapel at eaves height (5.8: 11–12). Post-medieval interventions aimed at supporting the roof above have caused damage and loss, mostly along the south side (5.8: 13–14). This was worsened by leaks in the 1970s–80s.²⁷⁴ On the north side, roof corbels depict musicians: one human and three animal (5.8: 15–18). The carvings can be dated to the first half of the fourteenth century by comparison with other sculpture in the area. The amphisbaena in the frieze and citole-strumming lion corbel, for example, have their counterparts in the early fourteenth-century chancel at St Swithun's church, Merton (5.8: 19–22).²⁷⁵ The human male-headed hybrid on the north wall at Cogges has a similar hairstyle to the exterior heads, already dated to 1290s–1340s, but with looser curls and more defined strands of hair in the beard, similar to a crowned male head on the early fourteenth-century shrine of St Beornwald at Bampton (Oxon) (5.8: 23–24).²⁷⁶ The cowled hybrids pulling faces on the south side resemble more closely-dateable marginalia in illustrated manuscripts (5.8: 25–28). See examples in the Luttrell Psalter (England, c. 1325–50, BL, Add. MS 42130, f. 34) and the Gorleston Psalter (East Anglia, c.

²⁷³ See chap. 5.12: Surrounding imagery.

²⁷⁴ Personal comment, Gerry Waite, 12 March, 2020

²⁷⁵ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 700.

²⁷⁶ John Blair, 'St Beornwald of Bampton', *Oxoniensia*, 49, 1984, 47–56 at 52.

1310–1324, BL, Add. MS 49622, f. 10). These comparisons suggest a date of *c.* 1310–1340s for the sculpture.

The frieze is approximately 25 cm deep with a roll moulding along the bottom edge. It seems to have functioned not just as decoration but as a second wall plate, immediately below the timber one, supporting the now much-bolstered, low-pitched roof. A similar but considerably reduced version of this design can be seen in the south aisle at Gaddesby where it also functioned in combination with a low-pitched roof, since renewed. The scar of the earlier roof remains in the west wall (5.8: 29–30). The Cogges roof corbels are approximately 0.35 m tall and sit just below the level of the frieze. They coincide with the principal rafters which in turn coincide with the buttresses outside, taking some of the weight and thrust of the roof (5.8: 31–32).²⁷⁷ Frank Howard explains how, in this type of roof, the ridge piece and wall plate are made especially strong, with principal and intermediate rafters framed into the plate. To avoid the rafters thrusting out the roof, wall posts should be used, but because the roof is low and space is limited, they are usually much curtailed—if they exist at all.²⁷⁸ Despite modification, these features are still in evidence at Cogges. The roll-moulded ridge piece is substantial. The rafters are framed into it and into an eaves beam, and are further supported by the frieze (5.8: 33–34). The eaves beam may replace the wall plate, or there may have been a further wall plate behind. The intermediate rafters along the north wall rest on the heads of figures in the frieze which are lowered to accommodate them (5.8: 33–34). There may have been vestigial wall posts resting on the corbels, indicated by gaps between them and the principal rafters above. These are now filled with mismatched timber inserts, presumably to prop up a failing roof. Above the two western corbels in the north wall there are small, odd-shaped timber pieces. A scroll-shaped bracket has been inserted above the centre-east corbel, fitted round the mouldings of the rafter and pinned with timber pegs. There is nothing in the gap over the corbel in the north-east corner (5.8: 35–38). In the opposite wall, four large, post-medieval, tulip-shaped corbels beneath the principal rafters have been bolstered with curved brackets.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Howard (1914), 299.

²⁷⁸ Howard (1914), 343.

²⁷⁹ The corbels replaced by these later insertions may be the animal musicians now in the adjoining north aisle, where they evidently do not belong. See Conclusion, note 951.

The intermediate rafters have been strengthened with long, wooden struts. These inserts break into the frieze and have damaged some of the figures (5.8: 39–40). The scrolly shape of the brackets is post-medieval. They may belong to the repairs conducted in 1677. These observations show that what appears to be the chapel ceiling is in fact an earlier roof and that it is contemporary with the frieze of c. 1340s.

Grotesque friezes occur fairly widely in the fourteenth century as corbel tables on the outside of buildings. There are somewhat sparsely populated examples at Witney and North Moreton as well as the much more prolific versions discussed by John Goodall (5.8: 41–45).²⁸⁰ However, they rarely occur inside.²⁸¹ The closest parallel I am aware of is the above-mentioned example at Gaddesby where a narrow, concave string at eaves height (once supporting the roof) contains small, widely-spaced foliage and ballflower motifs interspersed with occasional monsters. Compared with Cogges the carvings are insignificant, much higher up and almost impossible to make out. At St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, the elaborately-carved, early fourteenth-century north porch has an internal cornice containing much larger heads and foliage inhabited by figures (5.8: 46–47). These carvings are also high up, widely-spaced, and have none of the burlesque character of the figures at Cogges which engage animatedly with one another and with the viewer, jeering, scowling and waving sticks, packed shoulder to shoulder, unrelieved by decorative motifs. The effect is at once threatening and humorous, intensified by the close confines of the chapel (5.8: 48–52). The significance of this unusual feature is discussed in section 5.11 below.

The monument

A free-standing chest monument, apparently carved from local Windrush Valley oolitic limestone, stands under the arcade.²⁸² It measures approximately 238 x 78 x

²⁸⁰ Goodall (1995), 271–332.

²⁸¹ In the Romanesque chancel at Barfreston (Kent), a band of animals and heraldic figures in low relief at sill height has no structural function.

²⁸² This is a sedimentary rock formed from spherical grains built up of concentric layers interspersed with shell fragments. It was extracted locally from the thirteenth century from a number of quarries in the Cotswolds, including five around Burford. Bill Horsfield, *A Building Stone Atlas of Oxfordshire* (English Heritage, 2017), 5–6.

80 cm and comprises a panelled chest on which lies the effigy of a woman in a long loose gown, veil and wimple (5.8: 53–54). The veil is pleated around the top and sides, indicating fullness. It sits high on the forehead revealing a fringe of curls and falls naturalistically in graduated folds to cover the shoulders. The neck is covered by a wimple that comes up over the chin leaving the mouth free. It attaches at the sides above the ears and falls in two V-shaped pleats to tuck into a round-necked supertunic, emphasising a noticeably long neck. A raised seam runs from the neckline down the front of the bodice, possibly indicating embroidery. The chemise beneath has closely-fitting sleeves but no buttons. A cloak hanging from the shoulders is drawn up and bunched under each forearm. The supertunic is loose and falls in a series of pronounced V-shaped folds across the top half of the body. Both cloak and tunic are full and overly long, falling in folds that pile up at the feet. There is no sign of hanging sleeve extensions, popular from the mid 1330s. The clothing points to a date in the early 1330s.²⁸³ The effigy is probably therefore the earliest element of the chantry chapel. It was perhaps commissioned first, suggesting an evolving project that took some years to complete.

The nose of the effigy is broken but her face is otherwise intact. She has a high forehead, fine features and serene expression. The hands are missing but the arms are bent at the elbow and meet at the wrists, indicating that they were pressed together in prayer. They were probably raised slightly as there is no damage to the bodice where attached hands would have rested. A shallow channel, some 8–10 cm wide, runs down the body from under the right wrist to the waist, cutting through the folds of clothing. Flecks of paint inside suggest it is medieval and not the result of later damage. Whatever it contained was apparently loose as there is no evidence of fixings or damage to the surrounding stonework.

One pointed shoe emerges from beneath the hem of the gown, resting on the back of a recumbent lion, its head turned to face the effigy, its tail ending in a tassel (5.8: 55–56). A lion footrest also occurs at Asthall on the effigy of Joan Fitzalan but is otherwise rare on monuments to women. Female effigies usually have dogs at their feet, suggesting fidelity, although other beasts with heraldic connotations

²⁸³ Margaret Scott and Aileen Ribeiro, *A Visual History of Costume. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (London, 1986), 22–24.

occasionally appear. In their discussion of beast symbolism on monuments, Brian and Moira Gittos suggest that lion supporters which are restful rather than fighting may mean courage, determination and vigilance, and have a protective function.²⁸⁴

The crossed pillows under the head of the Cogges effigy supported by kneeling, winged angels looking heavenwards are a more conventional detail found on both male and female effigies from the 1290s onwards.²⁸⁵ The angels wear cloaks fastened at the neck with brooches over loose gowns. The angel to the north is headless. He has long, fine fingers on his left hand and bare feet that show beneath his cloak, one facing up, the other down, the underneath of the toe-pads carefully described. The south-side angel wears a circlet round neatly-parted rows of wavy hair. A fragment of black and red pigment survives on the close-fitting sleeve of his left forearm and there is another patch of red on his front (5.8: 57–58). Tiny flecks of black, yellow and reddish pigment appear elsewhere on the monument, on the lion, the slab and inside the channel, suggesting that the whole object was once richly coloured. The distribution of the paint suggests that the effigy wore a black cloak over a dark red gown with yellow details, perhaps reflecting the palette in the east window where fragments of medieval glass in the same colours remain.

The chest on which the effigy lies carries six panels carved with reliefs, each approximately 0.60 x 0.60 m (5.8: 59–61). Four have encircled sexfoils containing the symbols of the Evangelists holding scrolls, now blank but probably once painted with their names. Each panel is slightly different: the lion, ox and eagle panels have trilobe tracery in the spandrels while the angel has a triangle; the circle surrounding the ox has a slight ogee point at top and bottom; the ox carries his scroll in his mouth, the others in a hand or claw. The angel is more detailed than the three beast figures. He sits on a throne wearing a full cloak fastened with a buckle, his hair hanging in elaborate ringlets. The remaining two panels are carved with octofoils with alternate pointed and rounded lobes. They contain beasts with shields hanging from their necks. The shields are now blank but were probably originally painted

²⁸⁴ Gittos and Gittos (2019a), 180.

²⁸⁵ See for example the effigies of Aveline de Forz and Edmund Crouchback at Westminster, dated c.1293 and c. 1296–1301, respectively.

with coats of arms, as on the monument of Blanche Grandisson (d. 1347) at Much Marcle (Heref) (5.8: 62).

The panels are slightly recessed within shallow boxes framed by vertical roll mouldings to right and left and by a ballflower moulding at the top. The north side of the chest has a continuous string moulding running along the base, enclosing three side-by-side panels and their frames. On the south side, the base moulding is missing and there is only one panel, placed centrally (5.8: 63–64). There is one panel at either end of the chest, both placed off-centre, with no room for the surrounding mouldings (5.9: 65–66). These observations show that the tomb has been dismantled and wrongly reassembled. Its original form is given in an account of 1870.²⁸⁶ There were no panels on the short ends and three along each of the long sides, arranged symmetrically with an Evangelist panel to either side of a central coat of arms. This order survives today on the north side where the angel of St Matthew and the ox of St Luke flank a heraldic panel, confirmed as original by the unbroken moulding along the bottom edge. The south side should display the eagle of St John and the lion of St Mark to either side of another heraldic panel. However, the St John panel has been wrongly placed in the centre with blank spaces to left and right. The heraldic panel originally in this position is on the west end of the tomb under the effigy's head, while the St Mark panel is on the east end under the feet. With the panels in their intended positions, the four large-sized Evangelists were the most prominent feature of the tomb design. Sally Badham observes that the Evangelists are widely found on medieval funerary monuments but always as supporting elements, not as the focus of the composition, making this an unusual if not unique example.²⁸⁷ Together with other uncommon elements, e.g., the lion, and the channel carved into the dress, the design of the tomb suggests personal choice. Its iconography is discussed in section 5.11 below.

The mis-assembly of the tomb probably resulted from being moved. It was first recorded in the west bay of the two-bay arcade where it now stands in 1882.²⁸⁸ In 1835 it was in the east bay which has richer mouldings and pairs of head-stops, and

²⁸⁶ OAHS (1869–70), 142.

²⁸⁷ Badham (2012).

²⁸⁸ G. N. Haden, plan, 1882 (church office folder).

was evidently the intended position.²⁸⁹ This is confirmed by the report of 1870 which describes the tomb attached to the east face of the central pier,²⁹⁰

At the west end it has a curved space joining it to the east face of the pier before described, and in this curved space are two brackets that probably supported figures.

It was presumably attached by means of a stone shelf, part of which survives, projecting from the head end of the chest. The phrase ‘curved space’ is ambiguous and the brackets are not described. Nonetheless, the monument was evidently intended to display two more sculptured figures, at the head end. A curved area of discolouration on the surface of the shelf may confirm this. While this need not be medieval, it is suggestive of something standing on it. Furthermore, it corresponds with a shallow cleft in the back of the head of the effigy and the pillow, indicating where something was attached ((5.8: 67–68). Indentations in the slab around the effigy suggest that something was attached here too. They are irregularly placed and two contain wooden peg ends. They do not therefore indicate metal railings (5.8: 56). The plan of 1835 shows a single rail running across the bay above the monument (5.3: 17). If medieval, it perhaps supported a canopy of some kind, as on other contemporary monuments. A canopy originally sheltered the chest tomb of Elizabeth de Montfort at Christ Church which shares a number of design features with the Cogges monument.²⁹¹ Brian and Moira Gittos infer canopies over two early fourteenth-century female effigies in Yorkshire, one in Rievaulx Abbey museum, the other (probably of Muriel Fitzalan) at Bedale.²⁹² Margaret is likely to have known of this tomb through her daughter-in-law Katherine Fitzalan, co-heir to the Bedale estate.²⁹³ The painted wooden canopy which remains in place over the monument to the Black Prince (d. 1376) at Canterbury Cathedral, although no doubt grander, may give an idea of what a canopy at Cogges might have looked like (5.8: 69). The underside of the prince’s canopy was painted with Christ in Majesty surrounded by

²⁸⁹ James Long, plan, 1835 (church folder).

²⁹⁰ OAHS (1869–70), 142.

²⁹¹ Jerome Bertram (ed.), *Medieval Inscriptions. The Epigraphy of the City of Oxford* (Woodbridge, 2020), 61. See chap. 5.10: Local precedents.

²⁹² Gittos and Gittos (2019b), 20, 134.

²⁹³ *CP*, 6, 146.

the four Evangelists, providing a further point of comparison with Margaret's tomb. Whatever its original appearance, with all its lost features intact, and painted in its original colours, the Cogges monument was considerably more splendid than its present monochrome, depleted form suggests, placing it within Paul Binski's 'eye-catchingly vulgar, colourful, pleasing object domain', aimed at attracting intercessory prayers.

Screens

In its earlier position under the east bay, the monument was perhaps contained within a parclose. The straight edge at the base of the north-facing female head-stop on the central pier suggests it sat on something. Vertical patches of discolouration together with the stump of a wooden peg and the end of a spar directly beneath the head suggest the wall post of a wooden screen running north-south across the chapel, dividing the chapel in two, enclosing the monument within the eastern half along with the altar and piscina (5.8: 70). Metal rings and other marks on the threshold between the aisle and chapel, and wooden stubs in the masonry to either side of the arch probably relate to a screen or door here too (5.8: 71–72). It is not possible to judge the age of timber pegs by appearance alone but if they attest to a parclose screen round the monument at the east end and a door or gate at the west end, they may indicate public access to the western half of the chapel, at least on occasion. Such a situation was desirable as it would encourage more intercessory prayers. It is attested in chantries elsewhere. John Pympe of Nettlestead (Kent) requested in his will of 1496 that his parclose should be of no more 'widnesse than is needful that oon halfe for the prest and his clerke that other halfe for theme that shall knel wtin'.²⁹⁴ Simon Roffey has found signs of seating in a number of west country chantry chapels which he interprets as evidence of parishioner attendance.²⁹⁵ At Gaddesby, similar evidence survives in the form of stone seating round pier bases in the south aisle which is furnished as a chantry chapel.

²⁹⁴ TNA PROB 11/11/124.

²⁹⁵ Roffey (2007), 84.

5.9 Stained glass

The east window

‘Richly coloured’ murals were uncovered in 1883 but their subjects were not recorded.²⁹⁶ The walls have since been stripped of all plaster. There was also an extensive programme of stained glass made up of abstract, figurative and heraldic elements. Remnants survive in the tracery of the east window where parts of a bold and unusual design of *c.* 1325–50 in a striking palette of red, yellow, black and white remain, partially made up in a sympathetic restoration of 1965 (5: 1–4).²⁹⁷ The design comprises concentric roundels enclosing suns or stars, oak leaf whorls and a number of rayed or petalled ‘daisy wheels’. Smaller lateral roundels are bordered in yellow, black and white while those in the centre have red pot-metal borders, the largest two being further encircled with yellow dogtooth on a black ground. The roundels are enclosed in foliage which twines round the spars of a white trellis set against a black background, suggestive of a garden. The leaves resemble ground ivy, a plant with many culinary and therapeutic uses.²⁹⁸ They are round, veined and slightly throated with scalloped edging, carried on stems of square section (5.9: 5–6). Although drawn naturalistically, the leaves are coloured in yellow stain in tones ranging from cream through lemon and gold to deep orange while the stems are white with blobby, trefoil offshoots. A green quatrefoil in the apex is surrounded by golden oak leaves, also naturalistically drawn.

Individual elements of this design recur in fourteenth-century glass at Christ Church Cathedral and local parish churches, indicating the spread of high-quality work throughout the area, if not a shared workshop. Borders of yellow dog-tooth on black occur in the chantry chapel at Ducklington and the chancel at Beckley (Oxon), and as part of more complex borders in the glazing of the Latin Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral (5.9: 7–9). The throated, scallop-edged leaves closely resemble black and white foliage surrounding the figures of St Frideswide and St Margaret, both in the Latin chapel, while coloured versions of the white stems with trilobe offshoots appear in tracery lights in the St Lucy chapel (5.9: 10–11). Also in the Lucy chapel,

²⁹⁶ *Witney Deanery Magazine*, Jan. 1883.

²⁹⁷ Newton (1979), 69–70.

²⁹⁸ Michael Davison, *Field Guide to the Wild Flowers of Britain* (London, 1981) 300.

daisy wheels form the backdrop to Christ in Majesty, and celestial lights in the form of starbursts and suns appear behind St Martin of Tours and St Thomas Becket (5.9: 12–13). Along with flowers and foliage, stars and suns and other radiating shapes were part of the traditional, visual shorthand for heaven.²⁹⁹ They can be seen in stained glass in the Stapleton chantry at North Moreton, mentioned earlier, and at St Alphege, Solihull (Warks) where Margaret Oddingseles’s natal family had their chantry.³⁰⁰ On the tester of the monument to the Black Prince, raised tin reliefs of stars or suns are part of the heavenly background (5.9: 14–16).³⁰¹ In the Rothschild Canticles (Flanders, c. 1300. Beinecke Library, New Haven, Beinecke MS 404, f. 98), God himself appears as a whirling, rayed orb (5.9: 17). The foliage and radiating shapes in the stained glass at Cogges suggest that it too evoked heaven.³⁰² Reset fragments including a crown and part of an inscription in black letter reading ‘DREAS, probably for St Andrew, hint at an array of saintly figures (5.9: 18–19). A red roundel in the central north wall window shows that the scheme extended here as well. In 1658 Anthony Wood noted ‘curious painting’ as well as ‘severall coates of armes set up in the windows of this Isle, but toren downe as I have been informed in the late rebellion’.³⁰³ The lost glass at Cogges thus appears to have combined the same sorts of sacred and secular elements found elsewhere in the vicinity but with a particularly striking representation of heaven in the tracery that perhaps drew on known examples such as those at North Moreton and Solihull.

The lost heraldic glass

Nothing further can be surmised about the subject of the lost figurative glass but a handful of antiquarian reports provide important information about heraldic glass in the chapel which can be reconstructed with a fair degree of accuracy. It was recorded

²⁹⁹ Rita Wood, ‘Geometric Patterns in English Romanesque Sculpture’, *JBAA*, 154, 1 (2001), 1–39 at 9–11.

³⁰⁰ Robert Pemberton, *Solihull and Its Church* (Exeter, 1905), 82.

³⁰¹ Sauerberg, Marchant and Wrapson (2010), 161–186, fig. 19.

³⁰² The sunburst was a heraldic device used by the de la Hayes (*Argent a sun in splendour gules*) but that does not seem to be its meaning here. The tinctures do not tally and the design in the window appears in a group of other rayed figures. Furthermore, by the 1340s (the proposed date for the window and its stained glass), the descendants of the de la Hayes had relinquished almost all their Cogges property.

³⁰³ Bodl, Wood E 1, f. 46r.

by the heralds Richard Lee (in 1574) and Nicholas Charles (between 1609–13); and again by Anthony Wood (between 1658–60).³⁰⁴ There are some difficulties interpreting these documents as the shields are not dated, there are occasional discrepancies between them, and not all the heraldry is attributable. Lee's is the earliest and most extensive record and may therefore be regarded as the most reliable. Charles' account records fewer shields and does not give locations. Wood's field notes were made after the Civil War when only a handful of shields remained *in situ*. His fair copy is a compilation, incorporating the earlier records. It indicates that there was heraldic glass in the chancel east window and elsewhere in the church, as well as in the north chapel. Even the earliest of these accounts was written some two hundred and forty years after the glass was installed, by which time dirt, decay and damage would have affected its appearance. Some inaccuracies may therefore be expected.

Lee's account is in the form of rough, annotated tricks (drawings with the tinctures indicated by textual abbreviations) with occasional marginal notes (5.9: 20). His first six shields come under the heading, 'In Cogges Church sometyme the Lady Gray's of Rotherfield'. He evidently understood 'Lady Gray' to be the patron. The shields included the arms of Fitzrobert, Oddingseles and de Grey, identifying this Lady Gray as Margaret Oddingseles through her mother, father and husband.³⁰⁵ Lee does not assign these shields to specific windows. He does, however, group the next ten by window—four in one and two in each of three others—but does not say where in the church they were. As Blair and Steane astutely observe, the groupings exactly match the layout of the north chancel chapel which has a four-light east window and three, two-light north windows, a configuration that does not occur elsewhere in the church. Thus (assuming all the glass was of the same date), this part of Lee's record can be taken to represent a complete set of heraldic glass for the chapel with one shield in each light of each window.³⁰⁶ It was clearly a major part of the memorial

³⁰⁴ Richard Lee, Bodl, MS Wood D 14, 1574, ff. 56v–7; Nicholas Charles, BL, MS Cotton Lansdowne 874, 1610, f. 182v; Anthony Wood, Bodl, Wood B 15, 1652, f. 56; Bodl, Wood E 1, May 1658, f. 46; BL, Harl. MS 4170, 1660, f. 48.

³⁰⁵ Margaret's biography is given in chap. 5.10: Biography.

³⁰⁶ Blair and Steane (1982), 108–10.

setting. Identification of the shields will offer essential information about patronage and function of the glass.

The following attributions depend largely on the work done by Blair and Steane. However, I differ in some places and draw an alternative conclusion about their significance.

East window

Barry of six argent and azure, a bend gules. Grey of Rotherfield.³⁰⁷

Barry of six argent and azure, on a bend gules three martlets or. Ralph de Grey.³⁰⁸

Or a fess between two chevrons gules. Fitzrobert.³⁰⁹

Argent a fess gules. Oddingseles.³¹⁰

North wall window 1

Argent three cross-crosslets fitchy sable, on a chief azure three mullets or.

Clinton.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Robert Mitchell (ed.), *The Carlisle Rolls c. 1334*, Mitchell Series, 32 (Edinburgh, 1983), 441–456, 453, no. 217.

³⁰⁸ Mitchell (1983) no. 218. The brothers John and Ralph de Grey are listed side by side on this roll: ‘Mons Johan Grey, Barry Azure and Argent, a riband Gules’; ‘Mons Rauf son frere, Barry Azure and Argent, on a bend Gules three martlets Or’.

³⁰⁹ *The Parliamentary Roll (or The Great Roll or The Bannerets’ Roll)*, England, c. 1312. BL, MS Cotton, Caligula A XVIII, ff. 3–21), numbers 769, 33 <http://www.aspiologia.com/N-Parliamentary_Roll/> [accessed 5 May, 2020]. The shield is given to both Fitzrobert and Fitzwalter, the first-born sons of this family being alternately Robert and Walter over successive generations, *CP*, 5, 709.

³¹⁰ This must be an incomplete version of the Oddingseles shield: *Argent a fess and two mullets in chief gules*. See *Segar’s Roll*, c. 1283. College of Arms, London, Ga. MS L14, pt 1, ff. 26–31, no. 115 <http://www.aspiologia.com/G-Segars_Roll/G-109-160.html> [accessed 5 May, 2020]. The shield without mullets belongs to Thomas Kent with whom I can find no connection, *The Dering Roll*. BL, Add. Roll 77720, no. 191 <<http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/Dering/dering-roll.html>> [accessed 5 May, 2020].

³¹¹ John Papworth and Alfred Morant, *An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats of Arms Belonging to Families in Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 (London, 1874), 675.

*Barry nebuly of six or and gules. Basset.*³¹²

North wall window 2

*Argent, on a bend azure three mullets or, a label of five gules. Moreby.*³¹³

*Gules, a buck's face cabossed argent. Duston.*³¹⁴

North wall window 3

*Barry of eight or and gules. Fitzalan.*³¹⁵

Per fess dancetty or and gules, in chief a barrelet or. Unknown.

5.10 Margaret Oddingseles: patron

Blair and Steane have conclusively demonstrated that this heraldry identifies Margaret Oddingseles, widow of John de Grey of Rotherfield, who held the manor of Cogges in dower after his death in 1311.³¹⁶ Based on an estimated date of death for Margaret of 1330, they propose that the chapel in which the glass and monument appeared was a de Grey family memorial, and assign patronage to Margaret's son, John de Grey, first Lord Grey of Rotherfield (1300–1359).³¹⁷

The shields include Margaret's father, mother, brother-in-law and second husband, John's first wife and his great-grandmother. Clearly this was a Grey family chapel, and it seems inherently likely that it was built to house the fine tomb and its female

³¹² The same shield was held by both Basset and Lovel, *The Herald's Roll*, c. 1270–80, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 297, no. 108 <http://www.aspiologia.com/HE-Heralds_Roll/N-073-144.html> [accessed 5 May, 2020]; *The Parliamentary Roll*, no. 59. Margaret Oddingseles was related to Ela Basset, Countess of Warwick (see note 323). I can find no connection with Lovel before 1422 when Margaret's descendant, Alice Deincourt, married William Lovel (see note 863). If the shield was contemporary with the chantry, it is most likely therefore to be Basset.

³¹³ *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 29, 1 (1927), 53.

³¹⁴ Papworth (1874), 910.

³¹⁵ *The Herald's Roll*, no. 619.

³¹⁶ Blair and Steane (1982), 108–10; *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 193–94; *Cl. Rolls*, 1307–13. 393.

³¹⁷ *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 204–05; *IPM*, 10, 1352–61, 405.

effigy. The obvious conclusion then, is that the tomb and chapel commemorate Margaret and were erected by her son John.³¹⁸

Noting John's distinguished career during the 1340s–50s, in particular his duties as Steward of the Household from 1346, they put forward this aristocratic and courtly background as an explanation for the lavish treatment of the chapel. Based on a reconsideration of the relationships indicated by the heraldic glass, a reassessment of Margaret's date of death, and analysis of the distinctive sculpture, I propose that a more likely patron for this highly individualised space is Margaret herself.

Biography

Margaret Oddingseles, born in 1277, was the youngest child of William Oddingseles of Solihull (d. 1295), Justiciar of Ireland.³¹⁹ The Oddingseles family was established in Warwickshire from the early thirteenth century, their principal manors being Solihull and Maxstoke.³²⁰ They held the advowson of the church of St Alphege, Solihull where William and his mother founded a family chantry in 1277, the year Margaret was born.³²¹ Margaret was very well connected on her mother's side. Her mother Ela (*fl.* 1314) was the daughter of Ida (born Longespée) and Walter Fitzrobert (d. 1258).³²² Margaret was thus descended through her maternal grandparents from Ela Longespée (1187–1261), Countess of Salisbury, founder of Lacock Abbey, and from Robert Fitzwalter (d. 1235), a prominent Magna Carta baron. Margaret's great-aunt was another Longespée, the wealthy widow Ela Basset, Countess of Warwick (*c.* 1210–1298).³²³ The arms of Oddingseles, Fitzrobert and Basset in the chapel glass thus acknowledge members of Margaret's natal family. Relationships are hard to prove but the Oddingseles and Basset families were

³¹⁸ Blair and Steane (1982) 109.

³¹⁹ *IPM*, 3, 1291–1300, 186–87; Barron (1904), 33.

³²⁰ Pemberton (1905), 4; *IPM*, 3, 1291–1300, 186–87; *CP*, 3, 313.

³²¹ Pemberton (1905), 82.

³²² *CP*, 3, 313; Barron (1904), 42–43; *CP*, 6, 144–45; William Bowles, *Annals and Antiquities of Lacock Abbey in the county of Wilts* (London, 1835), 160–63; William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6, pt 1, ed. by John Caley, Henry Ellis and Bulkeley Bandinel, 6 vols (London, 1846), 500–01.

³²³ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6, pt 1, 500–01; R. Malcolm Hogg, 'Basset, Philip (d. 1271), justiciar and royalist nobleman', *ODNB*, 2004; <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/1643>> [accessed 1 August, 2020].

evidently involved with one another. Margaret's father William Oddingesles witnessed a charter for Ela and her husband Philip Basset in 1267.³²⁴ Ela was a prominent figure locally. She owned several Oxfordshire manors including Cassington, adjoining Cogges, and she was a generous benefactor of many of its religious institutions.³²⁵ As a widow, Ela made a prodigious amount of chantry arrangements, most of them in Oxfordshire.³²⁶ She entered the convent at Godstow at the end of her life and was buried at Oseney Priory, both institutions being no more than ten miles from Cogges.³²⁷ She was very long-lived, surviving until Margaret was twenty years old. Despite being married three times, Ela had no children of her own. She may have taken an interest in her younger relatives, perhaps looking out for Margaret when she first came south from Warwickshire to Oxfordshire. In any case, their kinship represented a prestigious connection for Margaret, and her great-aunt's enthusiastic collecting of post-mortem benefits would have provided her with an influential precedent.

Margaret was eighteen in 1295 when her father and her brother Edmund died, leaving her and her three sisters Ida, Ela and Alice, as co-heirs.³²⁸ Ida (d. 1325), the eldest, inherited the family seat at Maxstoke.³²⁹ She married John de Clinton (d. 1310), scion of an established Oxfordshire family, serving after his death as lady-in-waiting to Queen Isabella and the future Edward III.³³⁰ Ida was still on friendly terms with the queen in 1322.³³¹ Alice married Maurice de Caunton of Cork, and Ela married Piers de Bermingham, Earl of Athenry, both important Anglo-Irish families.³³² Margaret appears to have been closest to Ida who sided with her in a dispute over family property in Solihull brought against them both in 1302 by the other two sisters.³³³ In 1308, Ida's husband John Clinton was granted the honour of

³²⁴ *Ch. Rolls*, 2, 1257–1300, 133.

³²⁵ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 2, 854; Amt, 4–11, 16.

³²⁶ For a discussion of Ela Basset's chantry provisions, see Amt (2009).

³²⁷ Amt (2009) 23–26.

³²⁸ *IPM*, 3, 1291–1300, 186–87.

³²⁹ *CP*, 3, 313; Barron (1904), 36.

³³⁰ *CP*, 3, 313.

³³¹ TNA SC 1/36/11A (February 1320); TNA SC 1/36/11A.

³³² Barron (1904), 36.

³³³ Barron (1904), 35–37.

Wallingford (Oxon), an important barony which bordered the de Grey estate at Rotherfield. Ida and Margaret may have spent time together as married women with young children. Their eldest sons, both called John, were born in 1300. Their husbands died within a year of each other. Ida's son John Clinton died in 1335.³³⁴ Both women also had younger sons called William, after their father. William Clinton (d. 1354) was created the earl of Huntingdon in 1337.³³⁵ He established a chantry at Maxstoke in 1331 and founded Maxstoke Priory in 1335 after his brother's death.³³⁶ The Clinton shield in the chapel thus relates to Margaret's sister Ida and her illustrious family.

In 1319, in a further dispute over the property in Solihull, Margaret's nephew, Lord Louth, Ela de Bermingham's son, sold his mother's two-thirds share of the estate including the right of appointment to the church and the Oddingseles family chantry.³³⁷ Until then the sisters had presented to the church in rotation, with John de Grey presenting on Margaret's behalf in 1303.³³⁸ The chantry was housed in the upper chamber of a purpose-built, two-storey extension north of the chancel, and remains largely intact (5.10:1). The chapel and adjacent chancel are decorated in high style, reminiscent of the chancel at the church of St Etheldreda, Holborn, with a continuous arcade of windows alternating with blind arches over image corbels along the lateral walls (5.10: 2). The two superimposed chambers at Solihull are both equipped for the celebration of Mass. They each have a piscina while the lower chamber retains its medieval altar. It is unlikely that the complex represents another, unrecorded charnel house. It lacks certain diagnostic details: there is no exterior door to the lower chamber, nor is there any record that it contained human remains.³³⁹ More tellingly, the door to the chancel is lockable from within and the altar is provided with a large, deep cupboard, hinged and rebated for a door (5.10: 3–5). The lower chamber may therefore have functioned as a vestry or treasure house, serving both church and chapel. A fireplace in the west wall may have been for cooking

³³⁴ *CP*, 3, 312–14.

³³⁵ *CP*, 3, 314.

³³⁶ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 181, 265; *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 309; *Ch. Rolls*, 4, 1327–41, 430–31.

³³⁷ Pemberton (1905), 7–9.

³³⁸ Pemberton (1905), 24.

³³⁹ See chap. 6.3: The lost lower chamber.

communion wafers.³⁴⁰ The upper chamber, housing the family chantry, was lavishly provided with murals and stained glass displaying heraldry and the above-mentioned roundels and celestial lights. Margaret must have known it. She, her mother and sisters are likely to have prayed there during the frequent spells when her father and perhaps her brother were called away to battle.³⁴¹ The dispute with her two younger sisters resulting in the loss of control over the Oddingseles chantry may explain why Ida is included in Margaret's heraldic display but Alice and Ela are not.

By early 1297 Margaret had married John Grey of Rotherfield (1272–1311).³⁴² In October 1300 she gave birth to John, their first son.³⁴³ The celebrations surrounding this event have already been described.³⁴⁴ Margaret and her husband brokered an advantageous marriage for John with Katherine Fitzalan of Bedale (d. by 1328), a wealthy Yorkshire heiress, when both were children.³⁴⁵ In 1325 Katherine gave birth to a son, also called John (d. 1359).³⁴⁶ She died soon afterwards and was buried at Blackfriars, York where, in 1340, her widowed mother established a perpetual chantry for Katherine and her de Grey family.³⁴⁷ The Fitzalan shield in the glazing thus relates to Margaret's daughter-in-law.

John de Grey died in 1311 and Margaret was granted the manor of Cogges in dower. Her predecessor as lady of the manor was Isabel Duston (d. 1304), widow of Walter de Grey and thus John's grandmother.³⁴⁸ Other than Margaret's sons, Isabel was the only member of the de Grey family included in the heraldic display. A probable relationship between the two women is discussed below.³⁴⁹ Margaret's son John

³⁴⁰ Rodwell (2009), 77.

³⁴¹ William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated....revised by William Thomas*, 2 vols (2nd edn, London, 1730), 2, 939–40; Barron (1904), 35.

³⁴² TNA CP 40/116, 1297. This lawsuit which John and Margaret brought together was heard in Hilary term (Jan–March) 1297, raising the possibility that they were married before then.

³⁴³ *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 204–05.

³⁴⁴ See chap. 3.2: Female agency.

³⁴⁵ *CP*, 6, 146; *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 194.

³⁴⁶ *CP*, 6, 146.

³⁴⁷ *CP*, 5, 393–98.

³⁴⁸ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 2, 867; *IPM*, 4, 1300–07, 193; *CP*, 6, 144.

³⁴⁹ See chap. 5.10: Margaret's connection with Cogges.

came of age in 1321. His Rotherfield arms were displayed in the east window. He had a successful military and administrative career in the king's service, being knighted in 1330 and becoming first Lord Grey of Rotherfield in 1338.³⁵⁰ In December 1346, after distinguishing himself in the French wars at Crécy and the Siege of Calais, he was granted licence to crenellate at Rotherfield and at Sculcoates, the main de Grey property in Yorkshire.³⁵¹ He was a founder Garter Knight in 1348 and died in 1359.³⁵² Sometime between 1333 and 1343 he married again.³⁵³ His second wife was Avice Marmion (*fl.* 1379), another well-connected, wealthy Yorkshire heiress. Her arms are not recorded in Margaret's chapel. Avice and John had two more sons, John and Robert, both of whom took their mother's surname.³⁵⁴ Avice, her mother and grandmother made extensive post-mortem provisions at West Tanfield (Yorkshire), where they held the advowson, founding three chantries between them.³⁵⁵ A mid fourteenth-century tomb there with a female effigy and the arms of Grey of Rotherfield is probably hers.³⁵⁶ As these women in Margaret's circle show, it was not uncommon, even perhaps expected, for widows to found chantries acknowledging their dead spouses and relatives, whether of their own volition or fulfilling the wishes of the deceased.

Margaret's second son, Ralph de Grey, was born before 1311. His arms, Grey of Rotherfield differenced for a younger son, were displayed in the chapel east window. By 1340 he had married Joan (*fl.* 1354), widow of Richard Achard of Coleshill,

³⁵⁰ Summerson <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11544>> [accessed 8 May, 2020].

³⁵¹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1345–48, 514.

³⁵² Summerson <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11544>> [accessed 8 May, 2020]; *Pat. Rolls*, 1377–81, 334.

³⁵³ *CP*, 6, 147, note a.

³⁵⁴ Summerson <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11544>> [accessed 8 May, 2020].

³⁵⁵ *The Certificates of the Commissioners Appointed to Survey the Chantries, Guilds, Hospitals, Etc in the County of York*, ed. by William Page (London, 1894), 106–08.

³⁵⁶ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/vol1/pp384-389#p28>> [accessed 10 August, 2019].

sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire.³⁵⁷ A son, Thomas, mentioned in 1347 and 1349, seems not to have lived, as Ralph's nephew, John II of Rotherfield, inherited in 1367.³⁵⁸

Margaret Oddingesles's second husband was Robert Moreby (d. 1336) of Moreby (Yorks) whom she had married by 1315.³⁵⁹ Moreby's arms were included in the heraldic glass along the north wall. He was a royal employee, member of Queen Isabella's household and an active soldier, knighted by 1322.³⁶⁰ He and Margaret had a son William, born around 1324.³⁶¹ William was underage at his father's death and became the ward of his step-brother, John de Grey.³⁶²

In the light of Margaret's biography, the choice of armorials on display in the chapel is as revealing for what it excluded as for what it included. For example, the glass did not display the shields of Margaret's mother-in-law, Joan de Valoines (d. 1312) nor that of Avice Marmion, her son John's second wife.³⁶³ This must rule John himself out as patron. Given the inclusion of the arms of Isabel Duston, his great-grandmother, he would surely have acknowledged his grandmother Joan de Valoines as well. Joan was also his godmother, lifting him proudly from the font at his baptism in 1300, and he inherited most of her considerable fortune when she died in 1312.³⁶⁴ John would surely also have acknowledged his second wife, a wealthy heiress from an ancient and prestigious family.³⁶⁵ The armorials that *are* displayed all point towards Margaret. The east window contained the shields of Margaret's

³⁵⁷ *The Edington Cartulary*, Wiltshire Record Society 42, ed. by Janet Stevenson (Devizes, 1987), 127–28, 125; Public Record Office, *List of Sheriffs for England and Wales from the earliest times to AD 1831* (New York, 1963), 108.

³⁵⁸ *Edington Cartulary*, 130; TNA E 211/427/A; Lincolnshire Record Office, 1ANC2/A/18/9.

³⁵⁹ *CP*, 6, 145; *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 270; *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, 2, ed. by Ethel Stokes and Lucy Drucker (London: 1939), 87.

³⁶⁰ *Parliamentary Representation for the County of York*, 1, 1258–1832, ed. Arthur Gooder (York, 1935), 73–75; Gittos and Gittos (2019), 69; Barron (1904), 43.

³⁶¹ *Cl. Rolls*, 1343–46, 520.

³⁶² *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 270.

³⁶³ *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 220–222.

³⁶⁴ *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 204; *IMP* 5, 1307–16, 220–222; 193.

³⁶⁵ *CP*, 8, 505–522.

mother, Ela Fitzrobert, and her father, William Oddingseles, as well as her two de Grey sons, John and Ralph.³⁶⁶ This group, located in the most prestigious position in the chapel, acted as a signifier for Margaret, identifying her as was conventional through her marital and natal families.³⁶⁷ The same convention was used to identify women on their seals. Margaret's sister, Ida de Clinton, had her name in a border encircling three shields displaying the arms of Clinton, Oddingseles and Fitzrobert, her husband, father and mother.³⁶⁸ Emme, wife of Margaret's kinsman John Oddingseles (d. 1336) of the nearby manor of Broadwell and Kelmscott (Oxon), used a seal with the Oddingseles arms impaled with those of her natal family.³⁶⁹ The glass in the north windows represented Margaret's sister, her great aunt, her daughter-in-law, her first husband's grandmother, and her second husband. The space was not therefore a de Grey family chapel but Margaret's own, displaying a selective group of shields slanted towards her natal family and her offspring. Furthermore, while it represented her kith and kin as was usual, proclaiming her prestigious connections and dynastic success, there were no royal arms demonstrating allegiance to the crown (as might be expected given the roles her male relatives played in the royal household) nor references to historic events in which members of the family had played a part (such as battlefield successes).³⁷⁰ Instead,

³⁶⁶ *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 204; *IPM*, 10, 1352–61, 405–6.

³⁶⁷ Margaret Schaus (ed.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, The Routledge Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages, 14 (New York, 2006), 732; Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women's Religious Patronage, 1450–1550. The Fabric of Piety* (Amsterdam, 2018), 46.

³⁶⁸ Nicolai Uptoni *De studio militari, libri quatuor. Iohan. de Bado Aureo, Tractatus de armis. Henrici Spelmanni Aspilogia. Edoardus Bissaeus. E codicibus mss. primus publici juris fecit, notisque illustravit*, ed. by Edward Bysshe (London, 1654). Each section in this book is independently paginated. The drawings are found at p. 82 of the last section.

³⁶⁹ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol17/pp20-59#21>> [accessed 21 March, 2019]; Gee (2002), 71; Walter de Gray Birch(ed.), *Catalogue of seals in the department of manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 (London, 1894) 326–7, plate 4, no 12282.

³⁷⁰ See for example the stained glass at Selling, Kent, which commemorates both the glorious reign of Edward I, and Gilbert III of Clare, killed in the battle of Bannockburn, 1314. Gilbert's cousin, Margaret, was married to Bartholomew Badlesmere of Selling, executor of Gilbert's estate. Anya Heilpern, 'The East Window of St Mary's Church, Selling, Kent: A Royal Window in the Shadow of Canterbury', *JBAA*, 165 (2012), 122–52.

the theme of the glass was familial, acknowledging individuals who were important to Margaret on a personal as much as a social level.

A roll call of the deceased

While the east window identified Margaret through the convention of displaying the arms of her immediate family, the north wall displayed the shields of deceased relatives. Her parents, acknowledged in the east window, were also dead. This is a significant detail in the context of a chantry but has not so far been noted. The shields in the north wall windows were grouped in pairs according to their relationship to Margaret. In the first were Clinton and Basset, i.e., Margaret's sister and her great aunt. In the second were Moreby and Duston, to whom she was related by marriage. The third window held the shield of Margaret's daughter-in-law Katherine Fitzalan. The other shield in this window is unknown. If the pattern of the preceding windows was maintained, it ought to belong to someone connected to Margaret in a similar way to Katherine: perhaps another deceased child or his/her spouse. Margaret was married to John de Grey from at least 1297 until 1311, time enough to have borne a daughter as well as her sons. Girls who did not stand to inherit or make prominent marriages are often invisible to history. In 1328 a certain Margaret de Grey, 'nun of Northampton', was elected abbess of the abbey of St Mary de la Pré, Northampton, dying in office in 1334.³⁷¹ The abbey was less than three miles from the manor of Duston, part of the de Grey inheritance, a quarter of which belonged to Margaret Oddingseles in dower.³⁷² Neither the abbess's parentage nor the abbey's coat of arms are recorded so a connection cannot be established but the coincidences of name, place and date raise the possibility that this second Margaret was related to Margaret Oddingseles in some way: perhaps an unrecorded daughter. An alternative is suggested by a resemblance between the unattributable shield (*Per fess dancetty or and gules, in chief a barrelet or*) and that of Deincourt (*Gules, billetty and a fess dancetty or*), another family of Oxfordshire landowners, for which it may have been recorded in error.³⁷³ Margaret's niece, Joan de Clinton,

³⁷¹ Smith and London (2001), 590–91.

³⁷² *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 194.

³⁷³ Papworth, 2 (1858–74), 706. In *Powell's Roll*, the shield is also attributed to John le Bryt (whose mother was Roberta Deincourt) and grouped with that of John D'Oddingseles (who held the

Ida's daughter, was married to Edmund Deincourt, who died in 1327.³⁷⁴ Without further evidence, neither of these suggestions can be substantiated but either a deceased daughter or a widowed niece would fit the commemorative programme of the stained glass: from the shields which can be reliably attributed, a pattern emerges identifying key members of Margaret's family of whom all but her two de Grey sons were dead by the time the glass was installed in the 1340s. Anne McGee Morganstern proposes that weepers on the sides of Elizabeth de Montfort's tomb at Christ Church Cathedral worked as a memory aid helping the priest remember the string of commendations in the chantry ordinance.³⁷⁵ Heraldic schemes like the stained glass at Cogges may have acted similarly, as a visual mnemonic prompting Margaret's chaplain to remember the individuals he was required to mention by name when saying Mass. Equally, the shields would give them a kind of proxy presence in the chapel, enabling them to participate, as it were, in chantry services as well.

Of those identified in the stained glass, the last to die was Robert Moreby in 1336. If the proposal holds good and the rationale behind the stained glass programme was indeed commemorative, this provides us with a *terminus post quem* for the remodelling of the north chancel aisle as a chantry chapel. It also means Margaret's patronage depends on her outliving Moreby and surviving into the 1340s, for which the evidence should be carefully examined.

Margaret's date of death

Margaret was an heiress, bringing to her two husbands the manor of Olton ('Old Town') in Solihull, further rents in Solihull, a share of the manor of Weford (Staffordshire), and the advowsons of the church at Arley (Solihull) and Oxborough

neighbouring manor of Broadwell and Kelmscot). *Powell's Roll*, Bodl, MS Ashmole 804, pt. 4, 1345–1351, 24.

³⁷⁴ *CP*, 4, 119, note f.

³⁷⁵ Morganstern (2000), 4.

(Norfolk).³⁷⁶ In 1322–23 she added to her holdings in Solihull by purchase.³⁷⁷ When Margaret was widowed in 1311, she received the de Grey manor of Cogges in Oxfordshire as her main dower property and a quarter of the manor of Duston, Northamptonshire. She also retained a life interest in Sculcoates, the main de Grey property in Yorkshire, and the neighbouring manors of Sutton, Dripol and Southburton which she held jointly with her husband, John de Grey.³⁷⁸ These lands were not granted out in wardship during her son's minority but remained hers until her death, at which point they reverted to him.³⁷⁹

Blair and Steane propose a possible date for Margaret's death in the autumn of 1330.³⁸⁰ She was alive in April that year when a licence for free warren was issued for her de Grey manors of Cogges and Sculcoates, and her own manor of Weford. The licence also covered another Yorkshire manor (Upton) described as hers in this document but not elsewhere. The hunting rights were granted to her husband Robert Moreby and her son John during her lifetime, and to John and his heirs thereafter.³⁸¹ Upton was perhaps another jointly-held property in which she had a life interest. In October the same year, a similar grant for free warren was made to John alone, with mention of neither Margaret nor Moreby, confirming John's licence for Cogges, Sculcoates and Upton but not Weford.³⁸² Blair and Steane suggest this means that Margaret had died in the meantime, her de Grey lands reverting to her eldest son.³⁸³

³⁷⁶ *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 194. For details of Margaret's property in Solihull and the advowson of Oxburgh see *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, 87. She passed the advowson of Oxburgh down to her de Grey descendants, *A Short Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Norfolk*, 2, ed. by William Rye (Norwich, 1886), 338, 353. Her share of the manor of Weford, is given in *Staffordshire Historical Collections*, 7, 1, ed. George Wrottesley (London, 1886), 94–108 <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/staffs-hist-collection/vol7/pt1/pp94-108#p93>> [accessed 22 October, 2020].

³⁷⁷ *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, 114.

³⁷⁸ *Cl. Rolls*, 1307–13, 393.

³⁷⁹ *CP*, 6, 145; Joint tenancies are discussed by Michael Phifer in 'Women's Property Rights on the Eve of the Black Death: A Preliminary Investigation', 4–5; <<http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT6/Pubs/WomPropRts.pdf>> [accessed 16 March, 2019].

³⁸⁰ Blair and Steane (1982), 109.

³⁸¹ *Ch. Rolls*, 1327–41, 168.

³⁸² *Ch. Rolls*, 1327–41, 189.

³⁸³ Blair and Steane (1982), 109.

Her own manor of Weford would go to her husband Robert Moreby. This reading is certainly plausible but it is not the only interpretation. The second licence included hunting rights over a string of other manors which John had already inherited from his father and from his grandmother, Joan de Valoines, to which Margaret had no claim.³⁸⁴ It included the manor of Moreby in Stillingfleet, part of which was held independently by Robert Moreby—who was still alive.³⁸⁵ It did not include the de Grey manors of Sutton, Dripol and Southburton in which Margaret had only a life interest. They would have gone to John after her death and might be expected to have been included in the hunting privileges as well. In other words, the extended rights in the second licence did not depend upon Margaret's death. The licence could have been issued to John separately for reasons unrelated to his mother, for example, as a reward for loyal service. He was knighted in 1330, the same year as the licences were granted, having fought in several military campaigns for both Edward II and Edward III.³⁸⁶ As is often the case, the written record provides a tantalising but incomplete picture. Ambiguity over the details of women's lives is common. The law of Coverture, by which a husband had rights to his wife's property during his lifetime, meant that women's names need not appear on documents relating to land ownership while later copies and printed sources based on them are often abridged, further removing women from the record.³⁸⁷ This makes it hard to identify when and how women were active. In September 1312, shortly after her first husband's death, Margaret appears under her own name as a widow doing homage for her de Grey lands in Yorkshire.³⁸⁸ In 1316, after her marriage to Robert Moreby, he and her underage son John de Grey are listed as joint holders of Sculcoates while her name

³⁸⁴ The following de Grey properties are listed: Shobynton, Estclaydon and Boticleydon in Bucks; Herdywyk, Stanlak, Feringford, Somerton and Cogges in Oxfordshire; Wynterburn in Berkshire; Duston in Northamptonshire, and Stillingflete, Moreby, Drynghous and Ketelwell as well as Sculcoates and Upton in Yorkshire, *Ch. Rolls*, 1327–41, 189.

³⁸⁵ *Feudal Aids*, 4, 34; *The Visitation of Yorkshire, 1585/6 made in the years 1584/5 by Robert Glover*... ed. by Richard Foster (London, 1875), 109.

³⁸⁶ Summerson < <https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11544> > [accessed 8 May, 2020].

³⁸⁷ Sara Butler, 'Discourse on the Nature of Coverture in the Later Medieval Courtroom', in *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World*, ed. by Krista Kesselring and Tim Stretton (Montreal, 2013), 24–45.

³⁸⁸ *Kirkby's Inquest* (Surtees Society, 1867), 410.

disappears.³⁸⁹ In the same year Moreby's name appears alone as lord of the de Grey manor of Stillingfleet, which he held in right of his wife.³⁹⁰ This does not mean, as might be assumed, that Margaret had died, only that the rights of her male relatives took precedence over hers. Thus, while the hunting licences confirm that Margaret was alive in April 1330, they do not tell us when she died. She must have been dead by 1348 as in that year her son John appointed the priest at Arley—one of her independently held assets where she had shared rights of presentation—in her turn.³⁹¹ Her date of death cannot be pinpointed any more closely but it is tempting to assign unrecorded deaths occurring around this time to the plague of 1348–50, described as having a 'catastrophic' effect in the area around Witney.³⁹² Assuming Margaret did live on into the 1340s, the death of Robert Moreby in 1336 would provide her with the motivation and, as a widow twice over, the means to establish and furnish a chantry. She also had good reason to choose Cogges for its location, as I now show.

Margaret's connection with Cogges

The burial of Margaret's first husband, John de Grey is not recorded but was probably at the family seat of Rotherfield where he died in 1311.³⁹³ Her second husband Robert Moreby is probably commemorated by the tomb and knight effigy bearing his arms in the Moreby chapel at Stillingfleet, where his family's chantries

³⁸⁹ *Kirkby's Inquest*, 308.

³⁹⁰ *Feudal Aids*, 6, 173; < <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol3/pp101-112#p13> and [29](#)> [accessed 28 November, 2020].

³⁹¹ Dugdale (1730) 1, 104. Even this is not conclusive. In 1303, John de Grey, Margaret's first husband, presented to Solihull on her behalf. Pemberton (1905), 34. In October 1311, following the death of her first husband, the crown presented Nicholas de Lyndwood to Arley, having taken custody of her underage son's inheritance. *Pat. Rolls* 1307–13, 396. This was presumably in error as on 13 December that year, the *inquisition post mortem* established that Arley was Margaret's inheritance through her natal family, *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 194. This presentation may have been revoked. Dugdale has Ela Oddingales, Margaret's mother, presenting William de Bockmor in January that year and notes no further presentations until 1348, Dugdale (1730) 1, 104.

³⁹² Patricia Hyde, 'Winchester Manors at Witney and Adderbury, Oxfordshire, in the Later Middle Ages' (B. Litt, Oxford, 1954), 167.

³⁹³ Summerson < <https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11544>> [accessed 8 May, 2020].

were located.³⁹⁴ Margaret's choice to be commemorated independently at Cogges suggests a particular connection with the place.

As we have seen, Margaret's eldest son John was born in 1300 at Greys Court, Rotherfield, the main family seat in Oxfordshire where his baptism and Margaret's churching took place.³⁹⁵ Ralph's birth is not recorded but it was perhaps soon after. By 1304 the family were resident at Cogges. In May that year Margaret's husband John obtained a licence for Mass to be said in the manor house at Cogges for himself, his wife and the rest of his household.³⁹⁶

At this point, Cogges belonged to John's elderly grandmother Isabel Duston—who was to die in December that year.³⁹⁷ Cogges had been Isabel's principal dower property since her husband's death in 1268 and she seems to have taken an active interest in its management, at least in 1279 when she personally agreed the terms of service owed by her twelve villeins, five cottagers and fifteen freemen.³⁹⁸ She may have been in residence in 1304: her grandson's application to have Mass said in a private oratory in her manor house in the year that she died implies it was for her benefit. Given her advanced age, she was perhaps in ill health and her death was no doubt anticipated. Sickness was one of the main reasons for granting such licences.³⁹⁹ It suggests that a daily Mass was being established in the manor house for Isabel's convenience, and that John and Margaret were living with her in her old age. While an infirm old lady could be moved to an oratory on-site, the family would presumably prefer not to have to carry her to the church. This would also be an advantage for Margaret who had at least one young child by this time (She may have had three: the putative daughter considered earlier, potentially seven years old, as

³⁹⁴ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–36, 372; *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 29, 1929, 52–53; Gittos and Gittos (2019a), 69. The township of Moreby was part of the estate of Stillingfleet where the de Grey family were overlords <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol3/pp101-112#p13and29>> [accessed 28 November, 2020].

³⁹⁵ See chap. 3.2: Female agency.

³⁹⁶ Lincs Archives, Dioc/Reg/3 f. 82v. Appendix 1

³⁹⁷ *IPM*, 4, 1300–07, 193.

³⁹⁸ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 2, 867–68 (*ad voluntam domine*).

³⁹⁹ Kent Rawlinson, 'The English Household Chapel, c. 1100–1500: An Institutional Study' (PhD thesis, Durham, 2008), 153–54.

well as the four-year-old John, and Ralph). As noted, Isabel was acknowledged in the heraldic glass in Margaret's chapel whereas Joan de Valoines, Margaret's mother-in-law, was not. Yet Joan was dead by 1312, qualifying her for inclusion, and she was by far the wealthier of the two women.⁴⁰⁰ The exclusion is likely to have been a deliberate choice. Jennifer Ward notes intentional and significant omissions from the list of family commemorations of Elizabeth de Burgh in 1351–52 and connects them with personal and political circumstances. Elizabeth does not include her sister Eleanor and brother-in-law Hugh Despenser the Younger, despite Despenser being the king's favourite, as it was through their machinations that she had lost her lordship of Usk (Monmouthshire).⁴⁰¹ While there is no suggestion of animosity between Margaret Oddingseles and Joan de Valoines, Margaret's relationship with her husband's family may have been through his grandmother rather than his mother, explaining the appearance of the Duston shield in the chapel glass. It suggests continuity, and perhaps fulfils a commitment made by Margaret to have prayers said for Isabel's soul after her death.

Grey's Court, Rotherfield was an almost continuous building site from the end of the thirteenth to the mid fourteenth century, overseen first by Margaret's husband, then by her son. During this time, it was transformed into a grand defensible structure, culminating with a licence to crenellate, granted in 1346.⁴⁰² Her husband John de Grey was a soldier and frequently away. He was active in the French and Scottish wars, present at the siege of Caerlaverock in the summer of 1300 shortly before their son John was born.⁴⁰³ He also had business in Ireland and property interests across the country requiring his attention.⁴⁰⁴ Under these circumstances, Margaret may have preferred to continue living at Cogges after Isabel's death in 1304; the manor house

⁴⁰⁰ *IPM*, 1, 1235–72, 246–47; *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 220–222.

⁴⁰¹ Ward (2008), 109.

⁴⁰² Barry Jones, 'Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire, 1, The Medieval House', *Historic Buildings Report for the National Trust*, National Monuments Record (Swindon, 2005), 8–9; Neil Guy, 'English Licences to Crenellate 1199–1567', *The Castle Studies Group Journal*, 20 (2006–07), 240–41.

⁴⁰³ *CP*, 6, 144.

⁴⁰⁴ *Pat. Rolls*, 1292–1301, 99; *Pat. Rolls*, 1307–13; *IPM*, 5, 1307–16, 194.

at Cogges built by archbishop Walter de Grey was perhaps preferable to the disruption at Rotherfield.

When Cogges came to Margaret as her principal dower property in 1311, it offered her a measure of independence. It was female-owned by tradition and Margaret may have managed it herself as Isabel Duston had done, and as other landed women typically did in their husbands' absence.⁴⁰⁵ At this point in her life she had done her duty, producing two sons ensuring the continuation of the de Grey line. She was respected by the 'abbots, priors and almost all other good men of those parts' who had attended her churcing in 1300. She had relatives with property nearby: her sister Ida at Wallingford, and her kinsman John Oddingseles and his wife Emme at Broadwell.⁴⁰⁶

Margaret's second husband Robert Moreby was a member of queen Isabella's (d. 1328) household and keeper of the castles of Knaresborough (Yorks) and Brecon (Mid Wales). He held land in Yorkshire and, until Margaret's son John's majority, the de Grey properties in Yorkshire and Oxfordshire as well, fulfilling public duties in both counties. In 1334 he was appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, and in 1335 he was appointed to arrange the Oxfordshire muster.⁴⁰⁷ We do not hear of Margaret's whereabouts but Moreby's movements indicate that she would have spent time at her manor of Cogges during this marriage as well. Her connection with the place coincided with the lengthy incumbency of prior William de Limpeville (in office from 1303–33), and with his successors Ralph de Frison (1333–41) and William Hamon (1341–?67).⁴⁰⁸ The presence of a monastery, however small, may have been a matter of pride. The Oddingseles and de Grey family arms appeared in stained glass in the body of the church as well as the chapel, suggesting that as lady of the manor, Margaret played a role as benefactor, despite not holding the advowson.⁴⁰⁹ A relationship between a generous donor and a grateful prior is likely to have developed. These biographical details, though scant,

⁴⁰⁵ Rowena Archer, 'Administration of Estates', in Schaus (2006), 7–8.

⁴⁰⁶ *IPM*, 4, 1304–07, 215.

⁴⁰⁷ *Parl. Rep. Yorks*, I, 73–75; *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 66, 139.

⁴⁰⁸ Smith and London (2001), 152.

⁴⁰⁹ Bodl, Wood E 1, f. 46.

support the proposal that Margaret chose her place of commemoration herself, for personal reasons.

Local precedents

The death of many of Margaret's relatives and a tradition of chantry patronage amongst those close to her provide ample motivation for Margaret to found a chantry herself. To this can be added the example of two prestigious Oxfordshire neighbours, Joan Fitzalan and Elizabeth de Montfort, wealthy widows who founded chantries during their lifetime for themselves and their relatives. These examples are pertinent as the women moved in the same circles and are likely to have known each other: Elizabeth de Montfort was born around 1271 at Beaudesert Castle in Warwickshire, ten miles from Solihull, the Oddingseles' principal holding in that county.⁴¹⁰ In Oxfordshire she was again Margaret's near neighbour, succeeding Ela Basset at Cassington which she held in dower after the death of her first husband, William de Montacute (d. 1319).⁴¹¹ Elizabeth may have been resident at Cassington (where Montacute had licence to crenellate) as in 1318 she made a number of modifications to the church, raising the tower and adding Decorated windows.⁴¹² Joan Fitzalan, widow of Sir Richard Cornwall (d. 1300), illegitimate nephew of Henry III, was a member of the powerful Fitzalan family of Shropshire.⁴¹³ She was related to Margaret Oddingseles's daughter-in-law Katherine Fitzalan, who belonged to the Yorkshire branch of the same family.⁴¹⁴ It is likely that Margaret would know of the chantry projects of these influential women and aspire to found something similar herself. A number of distinctive parallels between her chapel and theirs increase this possibility but have so far escaped attention.

In 1345, around the date when I propose Margaret Oddingseles was fitting out the chapel at Cogges, Elizabeth de Montfort established her chantry at St Frideswide's

⁴¹⁰ *CP*, 9, 82; < <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/warks/vol3/pp45-49>; <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/warks/vol4/pp214-229>> [accessed 31 May, 2019].

⁴¹¹ *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 141; *IPM*, 10, 1352–61, 147.

⁴¹² *Pat. Rolls*, 1317–21, 29; Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 522.

⁴¹³ Mair (1997), 241–42.

⁴¹⁴ *CP*, 5, 393–8. Margaret's husband John de Grey is listed in the *Complete Peerage* as an executor of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, Richard Cornwall's brother who died in 1301/2, *CP*, 6, 144. I have been unable to confirm this.

Priory where she was a generous benefactor.⁴¹⁵ Once canopied and surrounded by railings, Elizabeth's monument, like Margaret's, is a free-standing chest tomb, brightly painted with recumbent effigy and panelled reliefs on the sides (5.10: 6).⁴¹⁶ The ends have smaller versions of the Evangelists that feature so prominently on Margaret's monument. The symbols of Saints Matthew and John appear in quatrefoils alongside the Virgin and Child at the head end, and those of Saints Mark and Luke with another female saint, probably St Frideswide, at the foot end. Reliefs of ten weepers appear along the long sides. McGee Morganstern proposes that the weepers are not sorrowing participants at Elizabeth's funeral, as implied by the term, but instead represent her ten children for whom intercession was to be offered at the soul Masses offered around her tomb; a motherly choice, indicating that the spiritual function of the tomb over-rode its utility as a social and political statement.⁴¹⁷ As suggested earlier, the stained glass in Margaret's chapel windows at Cogges may have acted in a similar way, bringing the same kind of spiritual benefit to her deceased relatives. Together with the appearance of the four Evangelists—who were powerful protectors—on the tomb itself, this suggests that for Margaret as well as Elizabeth, concern for her own and her family's spiritual health was as important as the display of material status.⁴¹⁸

The same combination of public display and private devotion can be seen at Joan Fitzalan's chantry at Asthall. In 1320, Joan obtained a mortmain licence for a chantry Mass to be said daily for herself and her husband in her chapel in the north transept.⁴¹⁹ However, the physical setting of the chapel is focused wholly on Joan, and its grandiose effigial monument set against the north wall is raised to her alone (5.10: 7). The monument itself retains no distinguishing marks but Joan is identified by her husband's Cornwall arms in a stained-glass window above it, along with a Crucifixion and a (now lost) female donor figure. The window is relatively small and, while the heraldry in the tracery lights at the top is clearly visible, the crucifix

⁴¹⁵ *Cartulary of St Frideswide*, 8–13; David Sturdy, 'Excavations in the Latin Chapel and Outside the East End of Oxford Cathedral, 1962/3', *Oxoniensia*, 53 (1988), 75–102, 98.

⁴¹⁶ Bertram, *Medieval Inscriptions*, 61.

⁴¹⁷ Morganstern, 3–4.

⁴¹⁸ The Evangelists are discussed in chap. 5.12. The Evangelists in late-medieval piety.

⁴¹⁹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1317–21, 495.

and donor in the central main light are largely hidden by the extravagant finial of the monument, adding a sense of privacy to their encounter. The lost figure originally knelt at the foot of the cross and held a bidding scroll reading *Jesu eyet merci de moy* (Jesus, have mercy on me). Katherine Mair notes that the scroll reaches Christ's body at the point where the spear penetrates his side, visualising the kind of affective, sense-based devotion that encouraged the faithful to consider themselves actually sheltering within Christ's saving wounds. The blood of Christ's wounded body was of personal significance to Joan. Her brother-in-law, Edmund, earl of Cornwall, had acquired a relic of the Holy Blood for Hailes Abbey at the same time as his father, Henry III, acquired one for Westminster.⁴²⁰ The grand monument, heraldic display and reference to the holy blood thus evoke Joan's impeccable social and spiritual credentials while the intimate image of the kneeling donor expresses privately her desire for Christ's mercy.

Apart from independent commemoration, another feature shared by the chantries of these women is an apparent desire to involve the wider community as well as their immediate circle. David Sturdy has established that Elizabeth de Montfort's monument was originally located near the shrine of St Frideswide, whose relics were renowned for their healing properties.⁴²¹ This proximity was in itself advantageous but there was more to be gained. Sturdy demonstrates that pilgrims en route to venerate the saint waited their turn alongside the tomb. Its striking appearance and richly painted effigy would be sure to grab their attention and elicit their intercessory prayers. Elizabeth's chantry ordinances included daily Masses offered for herself and her family. She also required the Office of the Dead to be recited daily at the tomb itself after her death.⁴²² The stipulation meant that this important service was made available to the pilgrims circulating past the tomb, increasing their opportunities for prayer while creating an additional prompt to pray for her soul

By contrast, Joan Fitzalan's chapel at Asthall is small and private. The monument at the end of the tiny north transept is invisible from the public parts of the church. Here, the intercessory prayers of the wider community were prompted by means

⁴²⁰ Mair, 264.

⁴²¹ Sturdy (1988), 98.

⁴²² *Cartulary of St Frideswide*, 8–13.

other than the sight of her effigy. A small altar-like structure with integral piscina is built into the south-east corner of the chapel. Mair doubts it was the main altar as it is small and located to the south of the usual altar position under the east window.⁴²³ Given Joan's devotion to the Holy Blood it may have been a credence on which to stand the sacred vessels during Mass or a monstrance for the extra-liturgical display of the Eucharist.⁴²⁴ Both this small 'altar' and the main one which presumably stood alongside are effectively framed by the small archway opposite. This opens to the adjoining aisle, creating a sightline for those looking in, directing attention not to Joan's monument, which is invisible from this vantage point, but to these fixtures on the east wall (5.10: 8–9). Margaret Oddingseles's chapel at Cogges is arranged in a similar way. It also opens through an archway to an adjoining aisle from which the monument is scarcely visible. However, the archway is noticeably tall, framing the altar position in the east wall and the eye-catching stained-glass window acting as a reredos behind it (5.10: 10). The sightlines in both Joan and Margaret's chapels were an important benefit for the parish. Most laity did not receive (that is, consume) the sacrament of Communion very often. Sight of the host, elevated by the priest at the consecration, offered the viewer an alternative 'ocular communion' instead, facilitating sensory participation with the divine (5.10: 11).⁴²⁵ Adoring the host in this way was an act of faith that unified those who witnessed it; it was accompanied by blessings and, unlike consumption, it could be repeated many times on a single day.⁴²⁶ Parishioners who gained from this opportunity would no doubt pray for their benefactor. By positioning their monuments in a sequestered location, Joan Fitzalan and Margaret Oddingseles achieved a sense of private engagement with Christ, while the creation of sightlines actively encouraged public participation in their chantry liturgies. Margaret may have promoted this still further, retaining private space around her tomb by means of a parclose screen but allowing access to the west end of her chapel on certain occasions.

⁴²³ Mair (1997), 263.

⁴²⁴ Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (London, 2002), 133–64, 133,

⁴²⁵ Biernoff (2002), 133–64, 141–45.

⁴²⁶ Donna Sadler, *Touching the Passion—Seeing Late Medieval Altarpieces through the Eyes of Faith* (Leiden, 2018), 22–23.

While they each have their own distinctive look, the memorials commissioned by these women have much in common. They each chose to be buried independently, tailoring their memorials to their own needs. They customised the relatively standardised language of commemorative imagery (a combination of self-promotion and piety) with personal details expressing family and spiritual concerns. Furthermore, in each case, the architectural settings show the patrons creating devotional opportunities for others outside their own circle.

To summarise, my proposal that Margaret Oddingseles was the patron of the north chancel chapel as well as its beneficiary was prompted initially by the fine memorial and expensive, not to say idiosyncratic, sculptural decoration of the chapel—features which imply a personal project rather than the actions of a son, no matter how dutiful. In the absence of supporting documentation, a case has been made by examining the chapel fabric, reviewing antiquarian records of lost heraldry and referring to contemporary records relating to Margaret and her relatives. Analysis of the heraldic glass has revealed a selective roll call of deceased members of her family. A reassessment of her date of death and other biographical details indicate that she had the means and motivation to found a chantry at a date that coincides with the stylistic details of the chapel. Her personal connection to Cogges has been demonstrated, explaining her choice of independent commemoration and location. These factors make it virtually certain that Margaret was the patron of the chapel, placing her in the category of women of means, exemplified by her neighbours Joan Fitzalan and Elizabeth de Montfort, who chose to direct their post-mortem arrangements themselves in order to achieve the memorials and surroundings they wanted. In the following section I consider the unusual subject matter and placement of the sculpture in the chapel for further insights into Margaret's interests.

5.11 Iconography

The marginal frieze

In contrast to the fine Head of Christ over the east window and the stately Tetramorph around Margaret's prayerful effigy, the beast musicians and the leering grotesques capering round the eaves represent discord and chaos. Together they make up a jostling crowd of animal, human, monster and hybrid forms, variously howling, growling, banging gongs and twanging instruments. Those in the frieze are

shoulder to shoulder, forming a continuous, close-linked chain. Some stick out their tongues, expose their genitals or brandish weapons; others grin, growl, hiss and blow horns. Their slinking poses and downward-facing gazes give the impression they are prowling along the top of a wall, peering down and distracting those engaged in prayer below with hisses and cat-calls, challenging them to look up (5.8: 15–23 and 5.8: 45–49). Several of them bite or grasp the tail or limb of the adjacent figure, or hold what might be lengths of cord between them suggesting a ghastly circle dance performed to the cacophonous accompaniment of the beast musicians (5.11: 1–4). Compare with depictions of dancers holding short lengths of ribbon between them in contemporary manuscripts (5.11: 5–7).

Much has been written about the apparently incongruous use of sculptured grotesques in sacred spaces where they appear perched along roof lines, round the edges of shrines, under misericords and as architectural punctuation marks. They have been variously described as ‘the other’; ludic ambiguities; warnings of the wages of sin; examples of a ‘world-upside-down’; references to folk tales or clever riddles; apotropaic figures deterring thieves or warding off the ‘wyked spirytes’ that were believed to ‘flye above in the eyer as thicke as motis in the sunne’, dropping ‘unclene maters’ from the sky.⁴²⁷ However, at Cogges, the carvings are not stationed as lookouts at particular vantage points, nor do they guard entrances. Instead, they act as a framing device, defining the interior contours of a small, intimate space dedicated to the salvation of an individual, Margaret Oddingseles. How did they contribute to this process when their very presence seems to destabilise it?

One aspect of marginalia on which contemporary writers agree is their ability to reference a raft of meanings depending on context and circumstance, and the wide range of sources upon which they draw, including political and legal texts as well as religious material, actual events and oral culture. Take for example the miscellany of grotesques on the ceiling of Peterborough Cathedral. Amongst them high over the

⁴²⁷ Camille (2010), 26–31; Binski (2014), 286–293; Bovey (2011) 324–25; Hardwick (2011), 2; Lesley Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey: the Significance of its Design, Decoration and Location’, *JBAA*, 169 (2016), 71–94; *Jacob’s Well, an English Treatise on the Cleansing of Man’s Conscience*, ed. by Arthur Brandeis (London, 1900), 227; Lincoln Cathedral Library MS A.6.2 f. 133, quoted in Gerald Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1961), 112.

chancel arch, is a motif formed of three ‘unclean’ animals, an ape preaching to an owl, riding backwards on an ass (5.11: 8–9).⁴²⁸ Paul Binski suggests that this might be a mocking reference to disorder in the nave and monastic choir beneath, or an example of ‘Roman salt’, i.e. an array of witticisms, satirical comments and madcap imagery that, according to William of Malmesbury (c. 1095 – 1143), alleviated tedium through variety, an effect that did not rely on informed interpretation.⁴²⁹ Jonathan Foyle discerns a further layer of meaning which is both more learned and more localised, seeing the entire ceiling as ‘one of the great cultural manifestos of medieval Britain’, its pictorial programme embodying the abbey’s tense relationship with the monarchy in the early thirteenth century.⁴³⁰ In this reading, the three-beasts motif, a recognised metaphor for idiocy and sin, becomes the counterpoint to good governance represented by the preceding sequence of wise kings and archbishops. At Cogges, we find, amongst an assortment of similarly unclean beasts, a mouth-puller, an exhibitionist and acrobatic dancers, characters that are familiar from other marginal contexts. Versions of all them appear at Heckington for example. After provoking an initial, visceral response of perhaps laughter or shock, such images were loaded with a range of associations. They no doubt carried connotations of sin and excess in a general sense, and perhaps of ‘Roman salt’, but at Cogges their interaction with the surrounding sculpture and their proximity to the devotions taking place in the chapel space below implies a more specific meaning (such as Foyle has detected at Peterborough), in this case, pertinent to the localised interests of Margaret Oddingseles and her circle and the particular context of a chantry chapel. Such specificity fits well with the poses of the grotesques, several of which appear to address the viewer directly. Binski warns against too literal an attempt to decipher individual marginal subjects, an approach which reduces them to the status of signs to be read rather than savoured.⁴³¹ Nonetheless it may still be possible to identify an organising theme at Cogges, one based less on the interpretation of isolated figures than on the impact—visual and aural—of the whole programme. One possibility is

⁴²⁸ Ruth Mellinkoff, ‘Riding Backwards: Theme of Humiliation and Symbol of Evil’, *Viator* 4 (January, 1973), 153–76.

⁴²⁹ Binski (2014), 302, 309.

⁴³⁰ Jonathan Foyle, *Peterborough Cathedral: A Glimpse of Heaven* (London, 2018), 72–84.

⁴³¹ Binski (2014), 286–93.

that it functioned as a memory aid. Discussing the limits of interpretation, Umberto Eco quotes from a sixteenth-century treatise on mnemonics in which he finds a list of criteria for associating images and words.⁴³² These include the bear standing for an irascible man, the lion for pride, the fool for the sage, the dog for Orion the dog star, and many more, including any monster standing for anything to be remembered. These examples chime to some degree with the chapel sculpture and there were no doubt many more such associations, apparent to viewers immersed in the culture of the day but lost to us in the present. However, Eco uses the list to point out the flaws in such an open-ended system where almost any relationship between two objects can allow one to stand for the other. Some of the associations have become established, surviving in phrases like ‘a bear with a sore head’ and ‘proud as a lion’ but if they are implied by the beasts at Cogges the relationships are imprecise. For example, the bear and the lion are playing musical instruments, an activity that suggests another meaning beyond anger or pride, and which connects them with each other but sets them apart from the rest of the carvings. I therefore propose an alternative approach to understanding the sculpture.

Drawing on Kathryn Smith’s insightful analysis of three fourteenth-century English women and their books of hours, the Cogges chapel seems to me to echo elements of such specially-commissioned, luxury items.⁴³³ Smith’s research into female book ownership shows how the interrelated, visual and textual programmes of books of hours, so popular with élite laywomen, contributed to the construction of the book-owner’s sense of self. The personalised contents served the spiritual and social interests of a living patron rather than a deceased one but otherwise shared many of the same functions as a chantry chapel, reflecting the owner’s devotional preferences and aiding her path to salvation while performing a range of other related functions as well that might include visualising dynastic connections, commemorating events in family history and facilitating literacy; in a sense, embodying the owner’s social self. The sculpture at Cogges employs not just the same type of subject matter but

⁴³² Cosma Rosselli, *Thesaurus artificiosae memoriae* (Venice, 1589), quoted by Umberto Eco, *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Interpretation and Over interpretation: World, History, Texts*. Clare Hall, Cambridge 1990 <http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/documents/a-to-z/e/Eco_91.pdf> [accessed 22 November, 2016], 163.

⁴³³ Smith (2003).

the same border-like composition found in illustrated prayer books, inviting comparison.⁴³⁴ Discussing borders in manuscripts, Smith notes that they were not incidental decoration but had a constitutive function:

Although peripheral in position, the medieval margin was regarded as a zone of structural, semantic, or aesthetic significance, and as integral to the entity of which it formed a part.⁴³⁵

I propose that the sculptured margins in the chapel at Cogges can be seen in the same way, i.e., not as ornament alone but contributing to meaning. While typical of books of hours, inhabited borders are not generally found delineating internal space. The appropriation turns the whole chapel into the monumental equivalent of a page in a bespoke prayer book, the sculptured borders surrounding devotional activity in the same way as the painted borders on a page surround sacred text. The chapel thus becomes subject to the same kinds of analytical approaches employed in the field of manuscript studies. One of the products Smith discusses, the De Bois Hours (S.E. England, probably Oxford, c. 1320–35, New York, PML, MS M 700), made for Hawisia de Bois, provides a pertinent comparison.⁴³⁶ Take for instance folio 37v from the Hours of the Virgin, a richly-decorated page on which illustrations are combined with extracts from Psalms 69 and 122 invoking God’s help and mercy (5.11: 10).⁴³⁷ The sculptured frieze which runs along both long walls of the chapel is like the painted margins which run up both sides of the page. The frieze is punctuated by the corbels which can be likened to the historiated initials, while the heraldic imagery in stained glass and on Margaret’s tomb equates to the armorial

⁴³⁴ John Goodall makes a similar observation in relation to the exterior cornice at Hanwell, noting recumbent figures that harmonise with the architecture, occupying the cornice like line-fillers in a manuscript; and connections between certain figures made apparent through juxtaposition and parity of scale: modes of representation that derive from manuscript art which Goodall proposes as a possible source, Goodall (1995), 329.

⁴³⁵ Kathryn Smith, ‘Margin’, *Studies in Iconography*, 33 (2012), 29–44, 30. See also Caviness, *Reframing Medieval Art*, Chapter 3, ‘Hedging In Men and Women: The Margins as an Agent of Gender Construction’ <<http://dca.lib.tufts.edu/caviness/chapter3.html>> [accessed 27 May, 2020].

⁴³⁶ Smith (2003), 28.

⁴³⁷ Psalm 69: 2, *Deus in adiutorium meum intende: Domine ad adiuvandam me festina.* (O God, reach out to help me. O Lord, hasten to assist me) <http://www.org/studybible/OT-21_Psalms.htm> [accessed 1 August, 2020].

shields in the margins on the page. The east wall of the chapel with its striking window and altar provides a visual focus for devotion similar to the painted miniature at the top of the page. The intercessory liturgies performed for Margaret's soul in the space defined by the frieze thus equate to the pleas for mercy written on the page and surrounded by the painted border.

As with two-dimensional marginalia, the assortment of creatures that crowd the chantry frieze are confined to the outside edges of the sacred space they define, marking them out as 'other'. Such frontiers are of great significance in medieval visual culture, marking the often porous boundaries between zones of different character.⁴³⁸ However, the rabbits, birds and hunting scenes that so often populate the margins of books of hours (referencing the owner's fertility and estate-holding status) are absent from the Cogges sculpture, replaced by a tightly-packed crowd of monsters, dogs and dancers. Seen from a safe distance on the ground, the outlandish appearance of these creatures up in the eaves, and the implied racket they are making, may have had an apotropaic function, keeping evil at bay and protecting Margaret's soul on its passage to heaven. Alternatively, or perhaps simultaneously, they may represent evil itself, in the form of deviants engaged in reprehensible behaviour. Either way, the subversive antics of this motley crew stand in stark contrast to the sounds and actions of the liturgy offered by the priest and people below engaging in spiritually and socially affirming patterns of prayer and behaviour. As Michael Camille puts it, 'Such images work to reinstate the very models they oppose'.⁴³⁹

The comparison between Margaret's chapel and Hawisia's book is validated by a relationship that can be construed between the two women whose families were known to each other. Hawisia's book of hours is peppered throughout with heraldry and includes the arms of Oddingseles, Margaret's natal family, seven times, one of them apparently marking the marriage of an Oddingseles daughter to one of the Revel family, overlords in Warwickshire where the de Bois and Oddingseles families

⁴³⁸ Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson, *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces* (Woodbridge, 2012).

⁴³⁹ Camille (2010), 30–31

were neighbouring landowners.⁴⁴⁰ Margaret is also likely to have known another of Smith's subjects, Margaret de Beauchamp (d. c. 1331), another Warwickshire heiress who, as the wife of Robert de Lisle (1288–1344), also had significant property interests in Oxfordshire.⁴⁴¹ Her book, the De Lisle Hours (England, possibly York, c. 1320–25, New York, PML, MS G 50), provides a further useful comparison with Margaret Oddingseles's chapel. In common with other contemporary examples, it contains a number of images of a woman praying, reflecting back to the reader a performative image of herself. One such 'portrait' appears on f. 19 where Margaret de Beauchamp is shown under the central bay of a triple arcade kneeling before an image of Christ and the Virgin Enthroned (5.11: 11). The top and right-hand borders of the page contain biomorphic figures playing the fife and drum and blowing a trumpet from which flutters a banner with the de Lisle arms. A rabbit, a dog and some birds also appear, benign cousins of the more subversive creatures in the Cogges frieze. Here too the painted margins create and define prayer space. The text within the borders is from the opening of Matins of the Virgin: 'and my mouth shall tell forth thy praise. God, come to my assistance'. The kneeling woman is presumably praying these same words. As part of the monastic liturgical round, and as the core component of books of hours owned by the laity, the Hours of the Virgin are likely to have been part of the intercessory cycle offered at Cogges—where the effigy of Margaret Oddingseles is likewise shown at prayer under an arcade. However, unlike the living Margaret de Beauchamp, who is shown as a kneeling supplicant, the deceased Margaret Oddingseles is presented as if already in the divine presence, her effigy lying in serene repose in a state of perpetual adoration, surrounded by the Evangelists. Discussing these exemplar images in prayer manuscripts in which the book owner/donor is shown alongside sacred figures, Alexa Sand argues that such images presented their subjects as potential intercessors themselves, advocating for the living after death.⁴⁴² In the same way, worshippers in Margaret's chapel, some no doubt with their own book of hours in hand, would see

⁴⁴⁰ Smith (2003), 100.

⁴⁴¹ Smith (2003), 12–19; <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp312-323#p21>> [accessed 19 April, 2019].

⁴⁴² Alexa Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art* (Cambridge and New York, 2014), 290.

the monument as a reflexive image, representing both prayer and the efficacy of prayer, giving them a stake in the health of Margaret's soul and their own.

There can be little doubt that a woman of Margaret's social standing was a book owner herself. Perhaps she even commissioned her own. Cogges was near Oxford, a noted centre of book production, and Margaret's association with Hawisia de Bois and perhaps also with Margaret de Beauchamp places her within a network of other female book owners and patrons. As I have argued, the carved borders in her chapel echo the trend for illustrated margins that appear in the books they owned. The carvings may repeat particular visual motifs in a book she knew or owned herself, something like Walters, MS W 102 (England, c. 1300) for example, a female-owned book of hours now at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. Along with devotional miniatures, this richly illustrated book contains several initials depicting a woman at prayer, including one of mother and son, and is decorated throughout with wrestlers, monsters and animals, some of whom play instruments (5.11: 12–13).⁴⁴³ Margaret Oddingseles is likely to have undertaken the early education of her children herself and probably used a book of hours to teach them their letters, their first prayers, and to understand their family heritage.⁴⁴⁴ As Kathryn Smith demonstrates, women were the keepers of family heraldry, guardians of the most important aspects of family memory for future generations.⁴⁴⁵ A book that was full of animals, real and imaginary, as well as heraldry would certainly have held a small child's attention during these lessons. Margaret's own book of hours, if indeed she owned one, would have been a treasured possession. Such books were often heirlooms, given as gifts, marking a marriage, betrothal or birth.⁴⁴⁶ Virginia Reinburg describes how women customised their personal prayer books over time with the addition of prayers for pregnant women and new mothers and then further modified them with records of

⁴⁴³ Walters, MS W 102, throughout, especially ff 16r, 28r, 29v, 52r, 70r, 74r–78v, 81v.

⁴⁴⁴ Smith (2003), 264–65.

⁴⁴⁵ Smith (2003) 249.

⁴⁴⁶ Lillian Randall, 'Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis (Edith G. Rosenwald Hours) [Paris, 1370s]', in *Vision of a Collector: The Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection in the Library of Congress*, ed. by Kathleen Mang (Washington, 1991), 3.

family events, turning them into family books.⁴⁴⁷ The highly individual sculptured imagery and stained glass heraldry in the chapel personalises the space in a way that seems purposely to evoke such a book, and strongly suggests Margaret's influence in the design. Jessica Barker makes a similar point regarding the later chapel and tomb of Margaret Holland (d. 1439), Duchess of Clarence, in Canterbury Cathedral. She notes that the heraldic pattern in the east window exactly matches the heraldry in the duchess's book of hours, the Clarence Hours (Cologne, Kolumba Museum, Sammlung Renate König, MS III), commissioned in 1429. She concludes that, together with the unusual cohesiveness of the chapel decoration (vault bosses, tomb and glass), it suggests that the duchess herself directed these schemes.⁴⁴⁸ Her findings provide support for the proposal advanced in this chapter that Margaret was the patron as well as the beneficiary of her chapel and that its design echoed elements of a book of hours in her possession.

Noisemakers

Given the prevalence of noisemakers amongst the carvings, the insights of researchers into sound and music in the culture of late-medieval Europe may contribute to interpretation as well as scholars of visual imagery. Emma Dillon notes that, alongside owner portraits, books of hours contained images of lay worshippers attending church ritual. She suggests that these enabled the reader to reimagine her witness of the public event in imagination while sounding out the same prayers in private. The parallel is most obvious with the Office of the Dead as the lay text in a book of hours was unabridged, comprising the same collection of penitential and supplicatory psalms and readings from the book of Job as the clerical text in the Breviary, chanted by the priest at the altar.⁴⁴⁹ Susan Schell, writing about music and text in English illustrated books of hours, notes further parallels between page and performance:

The ideal performance of the Office of the Dead was a musical one, and the presence of notation in books of hours reflects the

⁴⁴⁷ Virginia Reinburg, "“For the Use of Women”": Women and Books of Hours', *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 4 (2009), 235–40, 236.

⁴⁴⁸ Barker (2020), 188.

⁴⁴⁹ Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France, 1260–1330* (Oxford, 2012), 214.

aural reality of the Office as the images attempt a version of the visual reality.⁴⁵⁰

Animal musicians in books of hours and in the Cogges chapel present a challenge to this idealised devotional soundscape. In the Walters text, the last page of the Office for the Dead and the whole of the Hours of Jesus Crucified are accompanied by illustrations of the funeral of Reynard the fox where animals process, playing instruments. At Cogges, sculptured animal musicians presided over Margaret Oddingseles's memorial services in a similar juxtaposition of image and circumstance. In both contexts the trope of the 'world- upside-down' uses animals to mock human behaviour, rendering it ridiculous, evoking the participants' incomprehension, lack of reverence, or worse: their hypocrisy. At Cogges, this is emphasised by the human piper accompanying the beasts, implying there is little difference between people and animals. Such figures may have functioned as attention grabbers but they may also signify more specifically in relation to devotional activity. For example, in the Macclesfield Psalter (East Anglia, *c.* 1330–40, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 1–2005), a bristle-backed hog with a curly tail blows enthusiastically into an enormous trumpet, accompanying Psalm 46. The text reads,

‘[...] with the voice of the trumpet, Sing psalms to our God,
sing psalms [...] For God is the King of all the earth.
Sing psalms wisely’.⁴⁵¹

Later on, beneath Psalm 100, a donkey-headed hybrid with a face for a backside has its mouth open and head thrown back (5.11: 14–15). The text here reads:

‘I will sing psalms [...] And I will have understanding within the immaculate way, when you will draw near to me’.⁴⁵²

The animal musician and the hybrid are absurd impossibilities; their juxtaposition with sacred text suggesting a metaphor for the difficulties men and women have grasping ineffable truth. This was a problem for contemporary preachers who complained about parishioners gossiping, fighting, playing dice, needleworking and

⁴⁵⁰ Sarah Schell, ‘The Office of the Dead: Image and Music in the Book of Hours and Related Texts, *c.* 1250–1500’ (PhD thesis, Scotland, St Andrews, 2011), 198.

⁴⁵¹ The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 69v.

⁴⁵² The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 141,

sleeping during services.⁴⁵³ In the guise of the ass with the lyre, it was an established trope, going back to Boethius and beyond, and was used by both secular storytellers such as Chaucer and religious sermon writers.⁴⁵⁴ Owst quotes several sermons on this theme including one where the image of the ass raising its head from the manger at the sound of pipe or trumpet is a metaphor for the sinful man for whom ‘holy prechyng...commeth in at the one ere, and goyth oute at the othere’.⁴⁵⁵ Schell offers another metaphor in the same vein, proposing that the cryptic markings of musical notation in books of hours, while beautiful, represent a type of praise imperfectly understood except by those with the necessary skills.⁴⁵⁶ Applied to the zither-playing bear, harp-plucking monkey and guitar-strumming lion at Cogges, Shell’s insights suggest that their implied discordance combined commentary on inept or inappropriate musical performance as well as spiritual deafness.

The use of ornamented polyphony and sophisticated stringed instruments was an established part of the repertoire of religious praise, promoted for its ability to excite devotion. However, the potential for music to be misused, even as part of the liturgy, had a long history.⁴⁵⁷ Paul Binski notes that Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) censured the exaggerated manner of clerics who distorted their features and adopted theatrical poses for musical performance in church. He complained that it prompted the common people to

look at the lascivious gesticulation of the singers in a way not without derisive laughter; so that someone might very well think that they had come not to a place of prayer but to a theatre and not to pray but to gawp.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵³ Gerald Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period 1350–1450* (Cambridge, 1926), 178.

⁴⁵⁴ Julia Bolton Holloway, ‘The Ass to the Harpe: Boethian Music in Chaucer’, in *Boethius and the Liberal Arts: A Collection of Essays. Utah Studies in Literature and Linguistics*, 18, ed. by Michael Masi (Berne, 1981), 175–86.

⁴⁵⁵ Owst (1926), 192 and note 1.

⁴⁵⁶ Sarah Schell (2011), 198.

⁴⁵⁷ Paul Binski, *Becket’s Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England 1170–1300* (New Haven and London, 2004), 261–68

⁴⁵⁸ Binski (2004), 261, quoting from Aelred de Rievaulx, *Speculum Caritatis*.

Such extravagant performances continued into the following centuries, as illustrated in two English-made psalters dating to *c.* 1270 and *c.* 1310, respectively, in which clerical singers and a fiddler are shown (5.11: 16–17).⁴⁵⁹ Binski observes that their exaggerated facial and bodily contortions represent just the kind of camp display that was condemned.⁴⁶⁰ Compare for example with an illustration of more seemly musical performance in the Walters book of hours: the text of Matins of the Office of the Dead on folio 22r is accompanied by two tonsured clerics singing from a book containing musical notation (5.11: 18).⁴⁶¹ Their body language is controlled, their hands, held by their sides, gesture upwards in attitudes of prayer. Their eyes too are turned upwards to heaven.

Unease about the proper conduct of the liturgy is spelt out in the De Brailes Hours where, beneath an image of a priest singing the chant, *Salve sancta parens* from the Mass of the Virgin, is a caption reading, '*un p[re]stre chaunta de n[ost]r[e] dame e ne saveit neet plus*' (a priest sang about Our Lady and knew nothing more) (5.11: 19).⁴⁶² The false or ignorant priest was a stock character, well-known from popular culture, appearing as the object of ridicule and censure in the sermons of John Mirk (*fl.* 1382–1414).⁴⁶³ Chaucer's description of his worldly prioress Madame Eglantyne is in the same vein, suggesting that her efforts at sung praise were more for show than genuine religious expression: 'Ful wel she song the service divine, Entuned in her nose ful seemly'.⁴⁶⁴ Practitioners of liturgical music increasingly included skilled laypeople, the *jongleurs* of dubious reputation whose skills crossed over into the temptation-ridden world of popular entertainment and carnival.⁴⁶⁵ Beast musicians seem to reflect this conflict, recalling the stern words of St Paul: 'If I speak in the

⁴⁵⁹ The Marciana Psalter (England, *c.* 1270), Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS Latina 1.77, f. 115; and a Breviary (Chertsey Abbey, *c.* 1307), Bodl, MS Lat. Liturg. D. 42, 25r

⁴⁶⁰ Binski (2004), 264.

⁴⁶¹ Walters, MS W 102, f. 22.

⁴⁶² <<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=23460>> [accessed 23 August, 2020].

⁴⁶³ Johannes Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. by Edward Pecoock (London, 1868), vii; 31, 33; William Langland, *Piers the Plowman*, ed. by Betty Radice and Robert Baldick, trans. Jonathan Goodridge (Harmondsworth, 1966), 26–27.

⁴⁶⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, *Complete Works*, ed. by Walter Skeat (London, 1912), 420.

⁴⁶⁵ Binski (2014), 264.

tongues of men or of angels but have not love, I am a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal'.⁴⁶⁶ With a Benedictine priory next door, the liturgy offered at Cogges is likely to have been musically embellished. The sculpture may thus have sounded a warning to Margaret's chaplain to perform it well, earnestly, and with understanding. If Margaret herself and members of her household were accustomed to sing the Hours, as Dillon has suggested was the case with the female owner of the Walters book of hours, the rebuke may have extended to the laity as well as clergy.⁴⁶⁷

There are two registers of noisemakers at Cogges, the musicians on the corbels and the creatures howling and sounding horns in the frieze. If the musicians are absurd rather than sinful, the figures in the frieze are more obviously transgressive. Take for example the mouth-puller indicating his tongue. A mouth-puller appears in the Macclesfield Psalter accompanying the words of Psalm 64: 4, *Verba iniquorum praevaluerunt super nos: et impietatibus nostris tu propitiaberis* (Words of iniquity have prevailed over us. And you will pardon our impieties) (5.11: 20).⁴⁶⁸ Placed together, verse and image imply the use of wicked speech, but also the penitent psalmist's confidence in forgiveness. At Cogges, the same conjunction occurs, with the mouth-puller in the frieze in counterpoint with those worshipping below (5.11: 21). The figure not only indicates his tongue but pulls it out with his fingers, a gesture that could signify a number of sins committed via speech: slander, gossip, lying, envy, false swearing, blasphemy or the lazy mumbling of prayers. His posture suggests he is leaning forward over a wall or window ledge, directing his obscenities downwards towards those at prayer below. The contrast calls attention to the dignity and salvific power of the liturgy. It presents a warning to onlookers to be respectful in their speech and prayers, and to the priest to pronounce the sacred words with care and devotion. The lolling tongues of the two dogs and gaping mouths of the amphisbaena likewise draw attention to the mouth as a locus for sin, one which was especially transgressive because it was also the means of receiving the Eucharist, and a vehicle for prayer. The scene of King David praising God in song, for example, could be depicted as a man indicating his tongue (5.11: 22). The Macclesfield Psalter

⁴⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians, 13:1.

⁴⁶⁷ Dillon (2012), 282–83.

⁴⁶⁸ The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 89v <http://www.sacredbible.org/studybible/OT-21_Psalms.htm> [accessed 14 February, 2017].

which has several noisy horn-blowers and gaping mouths includes a confession prayer in which ‘dirty talk’ and the negligent recitation of prayers and the Divine Office are specifically mentioned.⁴⁶⁹ The emphasis on gaping mouths in the Cogges chapel—where the Eucharist was celebrated and intercessory prayer was offered—can thus be seen as similarly penitential.

Other figures in the frieze are making a fearful racket with horns, saucepan lids and cudgels, swords and bucklers. There are a number of ways to interpret them. They could represent fighting but look just as much like agricultural bird-scarers. Compare for example with an early fourteenth-century stained-glass roundel at Stanton St John (Oxon) depicting one of the Labours of the Months (5.11: 23–25). The setting recalls Christ’s parable of the sower rather than conflict. As well as protecting newly-sown crops from birds, makeshift drums were used at the beating of the bounds on Rogation days when, led by the priest, parishioners processed round the limits of their parish, singing, ringing bells, drumming and whipping boundary markers, noisily identifying the border between their village and that of their neighbours, driving out the evil spirits that brought disharmony and sickness to people and beasts, and asking God’s blessing on the fields and harvest.⁴⁷⁰ The noisemakers at Cogges may reference this parish celebration, which benefited the whole community while also protecting Margaret’s individual soul. They may equally sound a warning against worldly distractions. Pots and pans were part of the stock-in-trade of the travelling peddler whose reputation for noisy self-promotion suggests he may also have used them as gongs to drum up business, diverting worshippers from their prayers.⁴⁷¹ Similar implements appear in the well-known depiction of *charivari* in the satirical novel *Le Roman de Fauvel* (France, c. 1300, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr.146, f. 34) (5.11: 26). This was the traditional, cacophonous serenading with ‘rough music’ of newly-weds by the community, particularly in the case of re-marriage; also popular in the French court

⁴⁶⁹ The psalter was probably made for a young man in minor orders or at the start of his training, Stella Panayotova, *The Macclesfield Psalter: a complete facsimile* (London, 2008), 42–44.

⁴⁷⁰ Duffy (1992), 136.

⁴⁷¹ Owst (1961), 24–5; 32.

throughout the fourteenth century.⁴⁷² Margaret Oddingseles was herself twice-married, as was her son John. John remarried around the time the chapel was taking shape after an earlier failed attempt to wed Eleanor de Clare, a wealthy heiress and widow of the younger Hugh le Despenser.⁴⁷³ This involved him in a protracted and bitter dispute with William Zouche of Mortimer whom he claimed had abducted Eleanor. The two men quarrelled violently and were temporarily imprisoned after Grey drew his dagger on his opponent in the presence of the king. The matter was eventually settled in Zouche's favour in 1333. Zouche and Eleanor had a son and a daughter but were both dead by 1337.⁴⁷⁴ John on the other hand went on to marry the heiress Avise Marmion who bore him two sons and was still alive in 1379.⁴⁷⁵ The figures performing *charivari* in the frieze may thus resonate with an actual event. Illustrated manuscripts sometimes employ the same device, using imagery to reference events in family or political history, including unedifying incidents where the eventual outcome was favourable, presumably as a cautionary tale for future readers. Michelle Brown has interpreted one series of images in the Luttrell Psalter as the expression of Geoffrey Luttrell's allegiance to the crown, and another as relating to the seduction of Elizabeth, his underage daughter, by an ambitious young cleric.⁴⁷⁶ The second event is included as an exemplar as the seducer was bought off and Elizabeth married as her parents intended.

Other figures in the frieze evoke the secular entertainments of carnival. The 'bird-scarers' could be animal trainers in reverse while those with their elbows up suggest acrobatic display or dancing (5.11: 27–29). Carnivals and fairs epitomised the dangerous distraction from religious devotion offered by worldly entertainment: the singing, dancing, wrestling, acrobatic shows, performing animals, miracle plays, tavern life and so on, railed against by contemporary commentators. John Bromyard (d. 1352) bemoaned the lure of the 'strumpetis dance' that kept people from hearing

⁴⁷² Nicole Belmont, 'Fonction de la dérision et symbolisme du bruit dans le charivari' in *Le Charivari*, ed. by Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Berlin, 1981), 15–21 and Dillon (2012), 106–07. See also Sarah Dillon, *Medieval Music-Making and the Roman de Fauvel* (Cambridge, 2002), 17.

⁴⁷³ *CP*, 6, 145–47.

⁴⁷⁴ *CP*, 12, 960.

⁴⁷⁵ *CP*, 6, 145–47.

⁴⁷⁶ Brown (2006), 15, 45–48.

God's word.⁴⁷⁷ According to Robert Mannyng (*fl.* 1288–1338), some of these entertainments took place in the churchyard and even the church itself, of which he heartily disapproved:

Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour games
Who-sover hanteth any swyched shames
Yn cherche, other yn chercheyerd,
Of sactylage he may be a-ferd;
Or entyrludes, or syngynge,
Or tabure bete, or other pypynges,
Alie swyched thing forbodyn es,
Whyle ye prest stondest at messe.⁴⁷⁸

His reprimand finished with the story of the parishioners of Colbeck who carolled round the churchyard on Christmas Eve instead of attending Mass, and were consequently cursed to continue their dance without rest for the rest of the year.⁴⁷⁹ Not all music and dancing were sacrilegious. Psalm 46, mentioned above, exhorts the reader to sing praises to the Lord with the voice of the trumpet. Psalm 150 lists the trumpet, harp, lyre and timbrel as the instruments of praise. Psalm 30 uses dancing as a metaphor for joy: 'You have turned my mourning into dancing'; while King David 'danced before the Lord with all his might' to celebrate the arrival of the ark of the covenant in the city.⁴⁸⁰ Medieval imagery was consequently positive as well as negative on the subject. In the Queen Mary Psalter lay and clerical figures are seen dancing decorously in groups.⁴⁸¹ In one of many ecstatic images in the Rothschild Canticles nine virgins dance before the Lamb to an angelic violinist in the heavens.⁴⁸² In Exeter Cathedral, sculptures of a vielle player and a tumbler on one

⁴⁷⁷ BL Harley MS 2276, f. 37.

⁴⁷⁸ *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne", A.D. 1303*, I, ed. by Frederick Furnivall (London, 1902), 283.

⁴⁷⁹ *Handlyng Synne*, 284–90 (Carolling, wrestling or summer games: whoever attends such shamefulness, either in church or churchyard, is guilty of sacrilege. And interludes, singing, beating drums or piping – all these things are forbidden while the priest is celebrating Mass).

⁴⁸⁰ 2 Samuel 6:14. The scene is depicted in PML, MS 638 f. 39v.

⁴⁸¹ BL, Royal MS 2 B VII, ff. 176v, 189r.

⁴⁸² The Rothschild Canticles, f. 13r.

side of the nave perform for the Virgin and Child on the other (5.11: 30–31). Where performers are more obviously licentious, such as in illustrations showing carnivalesque mummers and dancers accompanying the psalms, the purpose seems to be condemnation of the behaviour while invoking divine forgiveness for the sinner. In the Macclesfield Psalter, the illustration accompanying Psalm 129, the *De Profundis*, shows three figures dancing along the bottom of the page to the tune of a piper on the next (5.11: 32). The figures have their hands on their hips and feet turned out for the dance. One wears a pig mask and attempts to lead the central figure away. The text above reads: *Si iniquitates observaveris Domine: Domine quis sustinebit?* (If you, O Lord, were to heed iniquities, who, O Lord, could persevere?).⁴⁸³ A similar concept may be behind the transgressive characters in the Cogges sculpture, acknowledging sin while prompting penance and pleading for mercy.

Summary

The distinctive layout of the marginalia in the form of borders suggests that the chapel functioned as an architectural version of a page in a book of hours, using visual imagery to individualise, add interest and intensify experience. The sculpture contains all the elements found on a personalised page in such a book, combined in like fashion for similar effect. It creates a physical space for devotion where the page creates a mind space; it mediates the patron's image, as does the owner portrait on the page, presenting her amidst her dynastic connections, so important for the success of her family, but also close to God and the saints, commended by the Evangelists. The imagery establishes her as both materially and spiritually privileged and envisions her eventual salvation. It draws on recognisable tropes such as the animal musician and carnival, acceptable subjects for a chantry despite, or perhaps because of, their subversive character which encourages earnest piety, wards off evil spirits, deters thieves and warns of the perils of sin. The beast musicians on the corbels are distinct from the monsters in the frieze. Their discordant performances perhaps reveal spiritual deafness rather than active sin which is represented by the more obviously deviant figures in the frieze itself. The unhappy restlessness of this belligerent crowd of reprobates, jeering down from the balcony as it were, presents a

⁴⁸³ The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 187v

preposterous counterpoint to the decorum of the sacred liturgies in the prayer space below. Banished to the side-lines, and immobilised in stone, they point up the power of these rituals to secure salvation. In the midst of all this is Margaret Oddingseles, the principal beneficiary of the chantry, embodied by the monument now described.

5.12 Presenting Margaret

The Evangelists in late-medieval piety

The Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, represented by their beast emblems on Margaret's tomb, were part of the iconography of paradise. The symbolism derives from the visions of Ezekiel and St John who saw four living creatures with the faces of a man, lion, ox and eagle ceaselessly praising God in heaven.⁴⁸⁴ They appear frequently in fourteenth-century parish church art in all media: in stained glass in the chancel at Hitcham (Bucks), for example, and in sculpture on the tower at Heckington (St John is the only survivor). They regularly occur in commemorative settings too, for example on the Harington tomb at Cartmel (Cumbria); on the painted tester over the monument of the Black Prince at Canterbury Cathedral; on Elizabeth de Montfort's monument at Christ Church Cathedral and the tomb of William de la Mare at Welwick (East Riding, Yorks) (5.12: 1). On all these, the Evangelists are subsidiary figures. Their prominence on Margaret Oddingseles's monument—where they are the main focus of the design—is thus out of the ordinary and merits examination.

The Evangelists were popular figures in late-medieval lay piety. They were widely invoked for their protective powers, regarded as potent safe-guarders for the living as well as the dead, with a wide remit that included driving away sickness, bad weather and the devil, and accompanying the soul on its way to heaven.⁴⁸⁵ Eamon Duffy notes that books of hours opened with four gospel passages, one from each of the Evangelists: the *In Principio*, from St John, the Annunciation story from St Luke, the Magi story from St Matthew, and Christ's gift to his disciples of power over demons

⁴⁸⁴ Ezekiel I: 5–10; Revelation 4:6–8

⁴⁸⁵ Alexander Fisher, *Music, piety and propaganda: the soundscapes of counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford; New York, 2014), 196, 199.

and disease from St Mark.⁴⁸⁶ These were powerful talismanic texts and familiar to medieval Christians, whether book owners or not. They were read every day at Mass and on four of the major feasts in the church calendar: Christmas, Epiphany, Annunciation and Ascension. The St John text was recited by the priest as an extra last gospel after the end of Mass each day, bringing special protection to anyone who made the sign of the cross while listening. In the early fourteenth century Pope Clement V added an indulgence of one year and forty days for kissing something (*osculanti aliquid*), presumably a book or sacred object, at the words *Verbum caro factum est*.⁴⁸⁷ According to Duffy, it was these familiar short texts rather than the entire Gospels that medieval Christians associated with the Evangelists who were ‘seen not principally as authors but as the guarantors of blessing.’⁴⁸⁸ St John in particular was especially effective in defeating Satan and was invoked for everything from ensuring a good harvest to protecting women in childbirth.⁴⁸⁹ The Evangelists on Margaret’s tomb thus achieved a number of aims. Surrounded by their apotropaic emblems, Margaret was protected on her journey to the afterlife, shielded from the monsters lurking in the shadows above her tomb. As a successful mother with three living sons, she was perhaps acknowledging their past assistance in childbirth as well. Her effigy shows her permanently at prayer. Surrounded by the Evangelists, or the ‘four living creatures’ offering the almighty ceaseless praise in heaven, her prayers were joined with theirs, distancing her from the bungled attempts made by their mortal counterparts—the human piper and three beast musicians on the corbels above.

Surrounding imagery

As the Evangelists are not usually found in isolation, they were perhaps intended to be seen in conjunction with other imagery. Their role as signifiers of heaven suggests they may have complemented a depiction of Christ in Majesty or Christ in Judgement somewhere in the vicinity, perhaps painted on the putative canopy, as on the monument of the Black Prince, or standing on one of the image brackets by the head of the effigy. The presence of Christ is in any case implied by the eucharistic

⁴⁸⁶ Duffy (1992), 124, 214–17.

⁴⁸⁷ *Transactions of the St. Paul’s Ecclesiological Society*, 4 (London, 1881), 163.

⁴⁸⁸ Duffy (1992), 217.

⁴⁸⁹ Don Skemer, *Binding Words: textual amulets in the middle ages* (Pennsylvania, 2006), 88–89

setting of the chapel but is made visually present as well, embodied in the ‘Head of Christ’ sculpture on the exterior of the east window over the high altar. This connects the monument directly with the window—in which Margaret was identified by the heraldic glass. The relationship invites the viewer to consider the entire chapel as her memorial, with interior and exterior elements combining to create a vision, if not of heaven itself, at least of an antechamber to Paradise with Margaret present, commended to Christ by the Evangelists and other surrounding figures.

In its intended position under the east bay, the monument was topped and tailed by the head-stops over the arch. These sculptures were therefore part of the memorial ensemble, contributing to the construction of Margaret’s persona. The male heads at the east end of the arch enhance the setting but are expressionless and virtually indistinguishable from one another. By contrast, the female heads, which would have been directly over Margaret’s own, are characterful and differentiated. They represent opposing aspects of womanhood, public and private; the more worldly head on the chancel side suggesting the outer social self; the more modest one on the chapel side suggesting the inner contemplative self. Margaret may have had a seat in the choir at High Mass in accordance with her status as lady of the manor.⁴⁹⁰ If so, the head on the chancel side is intentionally positioned, overlooking the space she occupied in life, emphasising her social self. The more prayerful head on the chapel side presides over the space dedicated to her in death, emphasising her spiritual side.

Margaret’s persona was further amplified by the lost object in the channel carved into the effigy. Accessories were sometimes included on medieval monuments, mostly on military effigies. At Dorchester Abbey the thirteenth-century sculptured effigy of a knight includes the handle and cross-guard of a sword in stone. The lost scabbard or blade was in another material, perhaps wood or metal. A rectangular channel in the left hand and a dowel hole in the knee show where it was attached.⁴⁹¹ At Inchmahome Priory (Stirlingshire) the late thirteenth-century effigy of Walter, Earl of Monteith lacks a sword but a mortice on the figure’s left hip and a groove

⁴⁹⁰ While the presence of fashionably-dressed women beyond the rood screen was permitted, it was not acceptable to everyone as it risked ‘dysturblyng of deuocyun’, *Handlyng synne*, 277.

⁴⁹¹ Philip Lankester, ‘A Military Effigy in Dorchester Abbey, Oxon.’, *Oxoniensia*, 52 (1987), 145–172 at 152.

running down to the knee, cutting across the folds of his surcoat, implies that one was attached.⁴⁹² There is some evidence of accessories on female monuments as well. At Holy Trinity, Hull (Yorks), a female effigy of c. 1390 holds a small heart on her breast between her fingertips. Her hands below are cupped around a cavity. Brian and Moira Gittos interpret it as a socket for an upright devotional image, probably in wood or metal.⁴⁹³ The effigy of Margaret Holland at Canterbury wore a collar of esses, probably in precious metal, signalling Lancastrian allegiance. Now lost, it is indicated by a series of small round holes at the base of her neck (5.12: 2–3).⁴⁹⁴

At Cogges, there is no evidence of an attachment point for the lost object, suggesting it was loose. It may therefore have been placed on the effigy only on special occasions such as an anniversary Mass, as happened with statues of saints which were specially decked out on feast days.⁴⁹⁵ One possibility, suggested by the position of the groove, is a set of prayer beads, a paternoster or rosary, looped round the missing hands which were raised and pressed together in a performative gesture of prayer. There is a series of illustrations in the *Très Riches Heures de Metz* (France, c. 1300–10. Metz, Bibliothèques-Médiathèques de Metz, MS 1588, ff. 112r, 125r) showing a woman praying with a long string of beads hanging from her wrists, and another in the *Luttrell Psalter* (53r) (5.12: 4–6). Sculptured beads (although not so far as I know, loose ones) are occasionally included on effigies of women. Examples include the late thirteenth-century effigies at Hornsea and Wistow (Yorks); the monument of Matilda Giffard of c. 1300, at Worcester Cathedral, and the effigy of Blanche Grandisson at Much Marcle (5.12: 7–8). A prayer aid added as an accessory on Margaret Oddingseles' monument would carry a message in the same way as swords and jewels but express her spirituality rather than her status.

⁴⁹² Barker (2017a) < <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-06/jbarker/002> > [accessed 12 May, 2020].

⁴⁹³ Gitto and Gittos (2019a), 172.

⁴⁹⁴ Barker (2020), 189–192.

⁴⁹⁵ Katherine French, “‘I leave my best gown as a vestment:’ Women’s Spiritual Interests in the Late Medieval English Parish Church’, *Magistra*, 4, 1 (1998), 57–77 at 71.

Prayer beads were important items and frequently the subject of bequests.⁴⁹⁶ Roberta Gilchrist writes that

Use of the paternoster was a mnemonic act of the body:
religious meditation was stimulated by tactile engagement
with beads made in materials that were selected for their
sensory and apotropaic qualities.⁴⁹⁷

Beads which had been blessed by a priest or which came into contact with religious statues or a relic would further protect the wearer from harm. If a set was worn by Margaret's effigy, it would suggest that contact with the beads themselves was important. They were perhaps those she had prayed with while alive and were now being used, or shared, by a descendant, both benefitting from their protective qualities.⁴⁹⁸

Location

With or without beads, Margaret is shown at prayer and surrounded by protectors: the Evangelists on the chest, the lion at her feet and the holy figures which once stood on the brackets at her head. As Alexa Sand has argued with reference to illustrated manuscripts, such imagery embodies the effectiveness of prayer by bringing the worshipper into contact with the sacred, demonstrating her certain salvation, thus positioning her as a potential intercessor for future readers, in her turn.⁴⁹⁹ Margaret's monument with its prayerful, almost saint-like effigy functioned in the same way within the parish community. For her own needs, it had to be located close to the altar for maximum spiritual advantage. It had also to be removed from the public space of the church as a mark of status and yet remain accessible to parishioners in order to attract their suffrages. In its original location Margaret's tomb fulfilled these requirements. It was on the north side of the high altar, traditionally the most honorific burial position. Placed under the arcade between the chancel and her chapel, she was present by proxy at the liturgies celebrated in both

⁴⁹⁶ *Early Lincoln Wills, 1280–1547*, ed. by Alfred Gibbons (Lincoln, 1888), 5.

⁴⁹⁷ Gilchrist (2012), 157–58.

⁴⁹⁸ Brian and Moira Gittos suggest that the weapons once carried by the knight effigy at Catterick (Yorks) were the deceased's own, Gittos and Gittos (2019a), 109.

⁴⁹⁹ Sand (2014), 290.

spaces, parish Masses as well as her own chantry services. The chapel piscina—an elaborate angled example with an ornate canopy—is carved into the east respond of the bay where the tomb stood. Margaret’s effigy would thus be in regular close proximity to holy water, exploiting the possibility that drops would splash onto her tomb recalling the asperging of her corpse during the funeral liturgy, itself an echo of Baptism with its promise of redemption and eternal life.⁵⁰⁰ Her chantry priest may have been required to asperge the tomb and recite the *De Profundis* over it as part of his duties.⁵⁰¹ The tomb was also located in an evocative position for viewers. The sightline into the chapel from the north aisle has already been mentioned. For those entering the church through the south door, the tomb would have been visible along diagonal sightlines from the south aisle and the nave through the chancel arch (5.12: 9). Thus, when Mass was celebrated for Margaret in her chapel, parishioners in the south aisle and nave, looking over the tomb in order to catch sight of the Elevation, would see both her effigy and the sacred host in the same glance, a visual device that would bring her powerfully to mind at a most significant moment and place her close to Christ. The attention of parishioners in the north aisle was drawn along a different sightline, through the archway to the chapel and on to the altar. For them, the monument itself was only partially visible, enhancing and mystifying Margaret’s intimate relationship with the sacrament, adding to her saint-like presentation.

The exterior sculpture

The main surviving element of the exterior sculpture is the group of three heads around the window with a haloed head of Christ in the centre. In John Goodall’s group of ‘Head of Christ’ windows, the sculptured heads are integrated into apotropaic circular tracery, increasing the protection they offered to those whose armorials were displayed in the stained glass.⁵⁰² The east window at Cogges seems to be a later version of this theme. The curvilinear tracery has no apotropaic associations and the design does not permit a head at its centre. Instead, Christ’s head is structurally integrated into the apex of the window as a kind of cornerstone: an essential and suitably hierarchical position. The design of the Cogges window

⁵⁰⁰ Anscar Chupungco, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Sacraments and Sacramentals*, 4 (Minnesota, 2000), 376.

⁵⁰¹ Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford; New York, 2002), 26.

⁵⁰² Goodall (1995), 318.

also therefore offered protection to those identified in the glass, the principal beneficiaries in this case being Margaret Oddingseles and her close family. The two heads to either side of Christ could simply be head-stops. However, their integration into the structure of the window at the corners suggests this is not so. Head-stops are usually inserted into the face of the wall, either as part of the hood moulding over the window arch or bolted on separately (5.12: 10–11). Furthermore, their proximity and resemblance to each other shows that the three heads are meant to be seen as a group. They cannot represent the Trinity as the side heads are smaller and without haloes. They cannot be saints or apostles either as such figures would also normally have haloes if not other distinguishing attributes. Nor can they be angels as they are bearded and do not have wings. In a return to the analogy with manuscript illustrations, used earlier to interpret the interior sculpture, they may evoke Christ in Majesty adored by the Saved. Compare for example with images in the Welles Apocalypse (England, *c.* 1310, BL, MS Royal 15 D II), the De Bois Hours, and the Queen Mary Psalter (5.12: 12–15). The identification is supported by the position of the sculpture in relation to other features as well as the window. These are all arranged in ascending order, starting with the window, rising up to the Head of Christ and the two flanking heads, and continuing upwards via the shaft to culminate in the once eye-catching pinnacle. The vertical emphasis contributes to meaning, mirroring the soul's journey upwards from earth to heaven. The frieze-like panel above the window, bisected by the Head of Christ and shaft, is thus implicated in the design, suggesting it may once have contained related imagery. If so, comparison with other fourteenth-century exterior sculpture schemes suggests this is most likely to have related to the end of days, either in relief or painted. At Adderbury, the tip of the Star of David window merges with a relief panel of the Coronation which in turn belongs to the frieze of musicians and grotesques.⁵⁰³ At Bloxham, a sculptured Doom over the west door has relief panels flanking a central Christ in Majesty depicting angels with the instruments of the Passion, the Saved and the Damned (5.12: 16–21). At Heckington, the frieze over the porch is carved with relief figures of Christ in Majesty adored by the Virgin, St John and angels (5.12: 22). Relief panels survive from a truncated Doom on the tower at Higham Ferrers (5.12: 23). There is another on the east wall at Dorrington (Lincs), part of an

⁵⁰³ See chap. 4.2: Seeing and Meaning.

ensemble comprising a window with flowing tracery surmounted by a pinnacle; an empty image niche and an elaborate gable cross—reminiscent of the sculptural elements at Cogges (5.12: 24–25). At Wellingborough (Northants) the embellished east window likewise develops into a pinnacle and (empty) image niche. Reliefs of the four Evangelists round the lower part of the window suggest the niche may have displayed a sculpture of Christ (5.12: 26). As for painted decoration, exterior schemes have mostly eroded away.⁵⁰⁴ At High Wycombe (Bucks) an external mural scheme recorded in the nineteenth century included the punishment of sinners in hell, again presumably part of a Doom.⁵⁰⁵ If the Cogges frieze did contain imagery, the Head of Christ in the centre of the wall adored by flanking heads, and the trend suggested by these other examples, imply an end-of-days vision in some form.

Inside/outside

Whatever the details of the scheme, such an embellished wall would have created a strong visual impact, attracting attention and marking the chapel out as a significant space. Employing the exterior face of a wall in this way brought clear benefits, extending the reach of the imagery to passers-by outside as well as those inside, prompting them to prayer. The technique is employed at the collegiate church of Shottesbrooke, built during the 1340s and housing the magnificent tomb of William Trussell (d. 1363) and his wife in the end wall of the north transept. The tomb cannot be seen by worshippers in the nave, only by those in the crossing or the transept itself. Outside, however, and visible to all, are two shallow arches flush with the flint wall, marking the size and position of the monument inside. Below the arches, a series of large flat stones creates a rectangular frieze, pecked to take plaster and no doubt once displaying an inscription or imagery of some sort, identifying the transept as a sepulchral site and attracting the attention and intercessory prayers of those

⁵⁰⁴ Several are noted in Charles Keyser, *A List of Buildings in Great Britain and Ireland Having Mural and Other Painted Decorations, of Dates Prior to the Latter Part of the Sixteenth Century*....(London, 1883), lviii, lix, 20, 32, 207.

⁵⁰⁵ *The Church Builder, A Quarterly Journal of Church extension in England and Wales* (London, 1865), 168–69.

passing by (5.12: 27).⁵⁰⁶ A similar device is evident in the sculpture programme at Witney where exterior carvings are strategically placed to link to funerary monuments inside, as we shall see in the following chapter. The exterior sculpture programme at Cogges also continues inside: the Head of Christ presides over the window, its heraldic glass identifying Margaret Oddingseles. The window is over the altar where the Eucharist was celebrated. It divides the internal frieze into two halves, banishing the grotesques to the margins, neutralising their threat. The tomb, which faces the window and altar, completes the vision of Christ in Majesty with the symbols of the Evangelists. Seen holistically in this way, the chapel tomb-scape, composed of two and three-dimensional imagery both inside and out, visualises the safe passage of Margaret's soul from death into eternal life. Its closest comparator locally is the combination at Adderbury, discussed earlier, where a burial recess, apotropaic window and frieze of musicians and monsters intersect around a relief sculpture of the Coronation of the Virgin.⁵⁰⁷

5.13 Summary

Despite the lack of foundation documents, there can be no doubt that the chapel at Cogges was a chantry where Masses were offered for the soul of Margaret Oddingseles. That much has been established by earlier scholarship. What this chapter has shown is that Margaret was in all likelihood its patron as well as its beneficiary. She joins the ranks of gentry women who possessed the means and motivation to commission substantial, independent projects, taking an active part in shaping them according to their own needs while leaving a lasting impact on the wider community. Margaret elected to be buried separately from other members of her family. She chose a location that was personally and spiritually significant for her memorial and devised a unique ornamental scheme for its setting. By re-purposing an existing building, she benefited from its previous liturgical associations and gained proximity to the high altar. She also saved on construction costs, allowing more to be spent on decoration—in this case, a complex ensemble of

⁵⁰⁶ It may also have provided a view into the sarcophagus inside. In 1735, Thomas Hearne recorded looking through a 'defect in the wall' and seeing the body of William Trussell encased in lead and his wife in leather at his feet. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 2, 13 (1840), 131.

⁵⁰⁷ See chap. 4.2: Seeing and Meaning.

sculpture, stained glass and mural painting. These actions suggest close personal involvement, demonstrating the exercise of choice and, if not thrift exactly, practicality of both a temporal and spiritual kind; a characteristic that Katherine French has shown is typical of the way in which women engaged with the parish church.⁵⁰⁸

The unusual use of sculptured borders inhabited by grotesques draws on the conventions of a book of hours. The marginal figures mock, amuse, admonish and protect, benefiting both the deceased and the viewer. The heraldic choices displayed in stained glass express personal relationships and identify those to be remembered by name in chantry services. The design of the monument is in some respects unique: Margaret is presented at prayer, perhaps saying the rosary, surrounded by the Evangelists, and with the added protection of a lion. Her effigy faces the window which has her family coats of arms on the inside and the Head of Christ on the outside. What remains of the rest of the exterior sculpture may suggest an end-of-days theme, ensuring the devotional attention of those passing by outside and prompting their intercessory prayers. The saving liturgies celebrated within the chapel were made accessible to parishioners in the rest of the church, their visual participation encouraged by sightlines. Parishioners were perhaps given physical access as well. Through these means, Margaret achieved in death a measure of self-expression and autonomy that was probably unavailable to her in life. The physical remains of the space she created, though damaged and reduced by time, are eloquent testimony of the tastes and interests of an informed and intelligent woman and bring to light aspects of an otherwise obscure life.

⁵⁰⁸ French (2003), 160–61

CHAPTER 6: The north transept at Witney

In contrast with Margaret Oddingseles's sequestered side chapel in the little village church at Cogges, this second case study concerns the grand north transept at the much larger borough church at Witney (6.0).⁵⁰⁹ A canopied monument high up in the end wall attests to a now dismantled upper chapel while architectural features in the lower wall indicate a semi-subterranean crypt, also lost. I argue here that the two-storey complex was a purpose-built charnel house and consider the implications of this for individual and communal post-mortem provision in the parish.

While the existence of two superimposed chambers at Witney has been established by earlier writers, no adequate explanation has been offered.⁵¹⁰ Cook and others simply note Witney's lost 'bone hole', leaving the significance of the crypt and its relationship with the chapel above unexplored.⁵¹¹ The quality and character of the monument and striking curvilinear tracery in the windows of the upper chapel have also been noted but there has been no serious attempt to study the whole context. This is perhaps not surprising as the vault between the two chambers has been dismantled and the crypt filled in, leaving little trace of either one, and rendering the monument inaccessible, stranded above head height in the north wall. At present, a large, locked store cupboard occupying the whole of the north end of the transept means the monument and its setting are entirely out of reach without prior arrangement (6.0:1). My investigations—which required bringing a ladder and crawling over the wire cage on top of the cupboard—have revealed that the male effigy wears legal clothing and has his foot on a woolsack. These hitherto unrecorded details help greatly with identification and point towards John de Croxford of Kidlington, a local lawyer and collector of wool for the Crown for Oxfordshire.⁵¹² In 1331 he and an associate, Richard de Stanlake of Witney, were

⁵⁰⁹ A shorter version of this chapter appeared as 'New Findings at the Parish Church of St Mary, Witney (Oxfordshire)', in *Church Monuments*, 34 (2019), 77–104.

⁵¹⁰ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 844; OAHs, *Proceedings*, 186.

⁵¹¹ Cook (1956), 129; Thompson (1911), 63.

⁵¹² Croxford's biography is given in chap. 6.5: John de Croxford of Kidlington.

granted a mortmain licence for a chantry in Witney church.⁵¹³ The patronage of these two individuals and their post-mortem choices are discussed below.⁵¹⁴

In order to establish the social and spiritual environment into which the two-storey transept was introduced in the early fourteenth century, I start with some background information about medieval Witney and a brief building history of the whole church. This is followed by a detailed description of the transept, its two chambers, the funerary monument and other sculpture before moving onto the issue of patronage. In the final section I discuss the iconography of this intriguing space and how it served the needs of both patron and parish.

6.1 Witney in the medieval landscape

Since 1044 the manor of Witney had belonged to the see of Winchester and was one of the most important of the bishop's estates outside Hampshire.⁵¹⁵ Situated approximately twelve miles west of Oxford within a curve on the river Windrush opposite Cogges, it was strategically connected by road and river to a transport network that lead in all directions: to the Midlands and the north via Adderbury (another of the bishop's Oxfordshire possessions) and Banbury; to the south via the bishop's Hampshire estates to Winchester and onwards to Southampton; east via Oxford and London, and west to Burford, the Cotswolds and the port at Bristol which, along with Southampton, was a major jumping-off point for travel to the continent (0.0: 1). These routes facilitated the traffic of goods and travel and the transmission of ideas locally, nationally and internationally.

The church and a substantial episcopal residence known as Mount House immediately to its east existed by the twelfth century. During the prosperous early years of the thirteenth century, successive episcopal patrons developed the village of Witney to foster trade, rebuilding its church and creating a planned town with

⁵¹³ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34.

⁵¹⁴ See chap. 6.6: A shared chantry.

⁵¹⁵ Tim Allen and Jonathan Hiller, *The Excavation of a Medieval Manor House of the Bishops of Winchester at Mount House, Witney, Oxfordshire, 1984–92*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph (Oxford, 2002), 7.

borough status, licensed for regular markets and two annual fairs.⁵¹⁶ These took place on the large, triangular-shaped Market Green which adjoins the churchyard on its north side opposite the main entrance to the nave and directly in front of the north transept. The church was thus physically as well as spiritually at the centre of local life, providing a backdrop to secular activities as well as facilitating religious practice. The patronal feast day was the Nativity of the Virgin, commemorating the re-dedication of the church in September 1243 after major reconstruction, an event that was marked by an annual royal gift of two roe deer, inaugurated by Henry III.⁵¹⁷

Although overseen by the bishop's manorial bailiff, the borough of Witney was administered by reeves: local residents with property in the town and surrounding areas.⁵¹⁸ The reeves, who held office for one or two years at a time, were elected from amongst their own number by a prominent group of local burgesses who held most of the town's wealth between them, much of it acquired through buying and selling land, and trading in wool.⁵¹⁹ The names of a small élite group emerge from these transactions—Lambert, Raulyn, Hareng, Abingdon and Stanlake—whose members occupied positions of responsibility in local and political life. They witnessed inquisitions, collected the bishop's dues, tolls and market rents and the profits from frequent portmoots and twice yearly Hundred Courts.⁵²⁰ They also maintained the bishop's pillory and tumbrel, where miscreants were punished in painful and humiliating ways, and these were set up on Market Green in front of the church.⁵²¹ The surnames of John and William Cachepol, both tenants of the bishop,

⁵¹⁶ Allen and Hiller (2002), 7–9.

⁵¹⁷ *Cl. Rolls*, 1242–1247, 99, 221

⁵¹⁸ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp111-130#p15>> [9 January, 2020]; *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1301–2*, ed. by Mark Page, Hampshire Record Series 14 (Winchester, 1996), 135.

⁵¹⁹ *Oxfordshire Hundred Rolls of 1279*, ed. by Eric Stone and Patricia Hyde, Oxfordshire Record Series 46 (Oxford, 1968), 89; John Mullan and Richard Britnell, *Land and Family: Trends and Local Variations in the Peasant Land Market on the Winchester Bishopric Estates, 1263–1415* (Hertfordshire, 2010), 121; *Eynsham Cartulary*, 1, ed. by Herbert Salter (Oxford, 1907), 251.

⁵²⁰ Stone and Hyde (1968), 89, 98.

⁵²¹ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp111-130#p45>> [accessed 1 August, 2020]. quoting HRO 11M59/B1/83, HRO 11M59/B1/99 and HRO 11M59/B1/102, and <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp8-33#p44>> [accessed 1 August, 2020].

suggest they were involved in apprehending lawbreakers.⁵²² Seventeen alewives were fined for breaking the assizes during the course of 1301.⁵²³ Flagrant and repeat offenders were liable to corporal punishment, that is a spell at the pillory or cucking stool mounted high on the tumbrel (a dung cart), in full view of the town and church.⁵²⁴ Facing the green, on the exterior of the north transept of the church, a pair of prominent image brackets depict male and female figures tormented by beasts, symbolising the punishment of sinners after death (6.1:1–2). This metaphysical mirror of the physical torments administered on the market green would bring the reality of the wages of sin uncomfortably close.

Despite episcopal efforts and its strategic position on the edge of the wool-producing Cotswolds, Witney did not flourish as a trade centre after the mid thirteenth century, and was only infrequently rated as a borough.⁵²⁵ The wool trade was volatile but there is some evidence that the local economy relied at least in part on it and its dependent activities, enriching certain individuals if not the whole community. In 1268 Roger Hareng of Witney was contracted to buy all the wool produced by Eynsham Abbey.⁵²⁶ In 1279 the occupational surnames Tailor, Textur, Tinctor and Mercer appear amongst Witney's tenants.⁵²⁷ The importance of wool is attested by the attribute of a woolsack on the monument in the north transept. Over the course of the fourteenth century Witney became a collection centre for wool produced at Witney and on the bishop's other Oxfordshire manors of Adderbury and Brightwell.⁵²⁸ The borough seal referenced wool in the form of the Lamb of God. It perhaps functioned in the same way as a cloth seal, certifying the quality and provenance of wool for trade and taxation purposes.⁵²⁹ However, it is not clear when

⁵²² Stone and Hyde (1968), 98, 100.

⁵²³ *Winchester Pipe Roll 1301–2*, 145.

⁵²⁴ James Davis, *Medieval Market Morality: Life, Law and Ethics in the English Marketplace, 1200–1500* (Cambridge, 2011), 270.

⁵²⁵ Hyde (1954), 88; Allen and Hiller (2002), 9.

⁵²⁶ *Eynsham Cartulary* 1, 251.

⁵²⁷ Stone and Hyde (1968), 98–105.

⁵²⁸ Hyde (1954), 180–82

⁵²⁹ An undated matrix for a cloth seal found in Bocking, Essex has the same device. Geoffrey Egan, 'Provenanced Lead Cloth Seals' (PhD, University College, London, 1987), 96. A fifteenth-century

it was first used. The earliest mention is in 1574 when the herald Richard Lee described it as ‘auncient’ on the evidence of the town bailiffs.⁵³⁰ His sketch shows a round seal with the Lamb and vexillum in the centre, bordered by an inscription reading *SIGILL COMMUNE BURGEM ET VILLE DE WITNEY* (6.1: 3). A vesica-shaped seal matrix in bronze-plated iron of *c.* 1300 was found on Oxford Hill, Witney in 1978. It has the same emblem of the lamb and flag but the surrounding inscription is now illegible.⁵³¹ It may have been an earlier version of the borough seal, or belonged to an individual, perhaps a wool merchant, or to a guild: the Lamb of God was one of the attributes of John the Baptist, a popular patron of medieval textile guilds.⁵³² In 1867, part of a mural was uncovered behind an altar in the north transept and identified as St John the Baptist baptising Christ (6.1: 4).⁵³³ Baggs and Chance propose that it may indicate the patronage of a cloth guild although none is recorded for Witney.⁵³⁴ These details are frustratingly incomplete but nonetheless hint at the importance of wool to the medieval economy of Witney from the later thirteenth century.

6.2 The church: building chronology

The church is a large cruciform building boasting a grand, thirteenth-century central tower with broach spire reminiscent of those at Christ Church Cathedral and Bampton (6.2: 1).⁵³⁵ Remaining Romanesque fabric in the nave indicates its origins

lead alloy cloth seal in the Museum of London has the head of St Paul above a shield with the city’s arms, identifying London as the place of origin. Museum of London, object no. 84.132/5.

⁵³⁰ *The Visitations of the County of Oxfordshire taken in the years 1566....* ed. by William Turner (London, 1871), 126.

⁵³¹ ‘Notes’, *Oxoniensia*, 43 (1978), 257.

⁵³² Gary Richardson, ‘Craft Guilds and Christianity in Late-Medieval England: A Rational-Choice Analysis’, *Rationality and Society*, 17, 2 (May 2005), 140, 146.

⁵³³ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 217, f. 25r. The identification is not secure. The writer describes a standing figure holding ‘a Maltese cross with flag’ and ‘blessing or baptising’ a kneeling figure at his feet, with wavy lines beneath. This could be a baptism scene but could equally be a *Noli Me Tangere*.

⁵³⁴ Baggs, Chance *et al* <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp130-144#p18>> [accessed 23 June, 2020]. Very few guilds are recorded for either of the Cotswold counties of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire but are likely to have existed at an informal level, Badham (2015), 168.

⁵³⁵ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 843–46.

as a small linear building of the twelfth century. It was stylishly rebuilt on the present, cruciform plan in the mid thirteenth century. The transepts were larger than usual, having western aisles. Pairs of embellished Early English windows incorporating altar recesses were inserted into the transept east walls (6.2: 2–3). In 1279 a number of rents of 12d and 6d paid by the bishop’s tenants were diverted to the Mass of the Blessed Mary, celebrated on Lady Day (25 March).⁵³⁶ It was perhaps offered at one of these altars. Fourteenth-century alterations were more piecemeal. A number of side chapels were constructed housing altars and monuments, including one running east from the south transept, since demolished but indicated by a scar in the transept’s east wall. Both transepts were lengthened. The development of the north transept is discussed separately in chapter 6.3. The aisle north west of the nave was added: as a chantry chapel—attested by the fourteenth-century stone effigy of an ecclesiastic in a recess in its north wall, beneath a grand aumbry (6.2: 4–5). The tracery in its east and west windows and two-tier buttresses with niches are reduced versions of the fourteenth-century work on the north transept (6.2: 6–7).

By the end of the fourteenth century, there were at least ten side altars in the church, implying a large number of chantries (6.2: 8). During the following century, the west aisle of the south transept was extended southwards, roofs were raised, windows renewed and clerestories inserted. The church has been largely stripped of medieval fixtures and fittings inside but information about some of its monuments and stained glass can be gleaned from antiquarian records.⁵³⁷ In 1866–67 the church underwent an extensive restoration supervised by G. E. Street.⁵³⁸ The remains of two stone medieval reredoses, found in pieces dubbed into the walls of the north transept, were restored: one in the east wall, the other in the adjoining west aisle, now St George’s chapel (6.2: 9–10). A local antiquarian, William Langford of Eynsham, visited the church regularly between 1827–72 and his notes and sketches provide valuable information about the changes that took place during this time.⁵³⁹ Unfortunately a

⁵³⁶ Stone and Hyde (1968), 100–02.

⁵³⁷ BL, Add. MS 5527, f. 15r; BL, Harl. MS 965, ff 31–33; Bodl, MS Don. c 90, ff 354–361; *Visitations of Oxfordshire*, 45–46.

⁵³⁸ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp130-144#p49>> [accessed 22 June, 2020].

⁵³⁹ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 216 and 217.

parish diary, referenced by the *Victoria County History*, documenting post-war and later changes, has been lost.⁵⁴⁰

The fourteenth-century modifications and high number of side altars attest to a high level of engagement by the parish community. The most prominent intervention was the two-tier addition at the end of the north transept, facing the market green.

6.3 The north transept

In the early fourteenth century the north transept was extended further north by means of a tall, gabled extension with large curvilinear windows.⁵⁴¹ It is marked by prominent, diagonal buttresses with pack-saddle tops containing image niches embellished with marginal sculpture. A further plain buttress on the east wall masks the vertical join (6.3: 1–2). The thirteenth-century wall south of this is formed of rubble that is rougher and smaller than the neater masonry of the fourteenth-century wall to the north. Running north from the top of the buttress is a sculptured cornice, inhabited at widely spaced intervals by monsters and human and animal subjects. The cornice is matched on the west face of the transept and marks the roof line of the new work. A string course at sill level and a deep, moulded plinth runs round all three walls of the extension, enclosing the diagonal buttresses at the east and west corners. The walls of the whole transept were subsequently raised and brought under a single, lower-pitched roof, to accommodate clerestory windows at the south end. The scar of an earlier, steeper roof is visible against the north face of the tower. The later roof is edged with a parapet and another cornice of grotesques.

The walls of the transept are tall, and the windows are placed high up, indicating that they served an upper chapel. There is a large, seven-light curvilinear window in the north wall, occupying most of its width (6.3: 3–4). A large flower-like motif of rounded and elongated mouchettes develops from the central light, flanked by three-light, coincident sub-arcs containing mouchettes and daggers and two reticulations. The east and west windows are partial repetitions of the subarcs. All three windows have hoods and sculptured stops. Those on the north window are male and female

⁵⁴⁰ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp130-144#p52-3>> [accessed 9 January, 2020].

⁵⁴¹ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 843.

heads, respectively grimacing and smiling. Those on the east and west windows have mostly crumbled away, the one survival being another head.

In the north wall, there are two rectangular, chamfered apertures in the upper part of the plinth, blocked by stone panels. By comparison with rectangular openings in the same position at Burford, they can be identified as windows to a crypt (6.3: 5–6). The voussoirs remain of a small, blocked doorway in the west wall, once leading to steps descending to the same crypt. The steps were visible under earth and rubble during repairs in the 1970s when the doorway was temporarily opened up.⁵⁴² The arch of the door has been remade. Confirmation that the whole door is not a later insertion is provided by observation of the join between the transept and its western aisle. This shows the east wall of the aisle overlapping the voussoirs of the door (6.3: 7–8). The aisle wall has no string course and there are breaks in the masonry, most noticeably on the east side of the reticulated window where the two cells meet, showing it has been partially rebuilt. This was probably when the aisle was remodelled as a chapel, gaining the stone reredos in its east wall and the new reticulated window. The existence of the crypt and position of its doorway explain why the aisle on this side was not lengthened later, as was the aisle on the south transept.

Diagonal buttresses project from the east and west corners of the north transept. Each contains a pair of canopied image niches, stacked one above the other, under ornate ogee-headed canopies. (6.3: 9). The four niches are finely worked, each enriched with different details. Traces of polychromy indicate that the whole ensemble was once richly coloured. All four displayed a main figure, indicated by an image bracket. The upper niches are narrow, suggesting they held smaller figures than those below. All the statues have gone, leaving only the marginalia that surrounded them, carved onto the brackets and gabled canopies. The condition of this sculpture is much degraded but the remains attest to high-quality work.

North-east buttress, lower niche

The lower niche in the north-east buttress has moulded jambs and an ogee arch with trefoil tracery under a straight arch, the spandrels containing sunk trefoils (6.3: 10).

⁵⁴² This is recorded in the lost parish diary according to the parish office administrator, 31 May, 2016.

There is a pair of mutilated head stops at the springing, the west representing a male head. The image support at the base is a conventional pedestal type: a rounded shelf supported on a tapering shaft.

North-west buttress lower niche

This niche has a similar canopy to its neighbour but with different decorative details. The spandrels contain stylised leaves carved in low relief in two superimposed rows (6.3: 11). There is a pair of hood-stops, still legible as the busts of winged angels flying forwards. Both have long hair and cloaks and once carried something in front of them, now too weathered to identify. The image support in the base of this niche is the same pedestal type as its pair in the lower eastern buttress.

North-east buttress upper niche

This niche has chamfered jambs and a cinquefoil canopy under an acute gable with a sunk trefoil on the front. Weathered, monkey-like grotesques with open, howling mouths crouch at the springing, both facing west. They support flat discs above, possibly for lost sculpture (6.3: 12). A rounded, bowl-shaped bracket with a roll on its front edge occupies the full width of the niche towards the base. Carved on the front of the bracket is the naked torso of a female figure depicted as if emerging from the ground (6.3: 13). The sculpture is worn but the contours of breasts are still visible and there are coils of hair round the ears and down the back of the neck. The identification of the figure as female is supported by the iconography. Her arms are held akimbo with her hands clutching the bodies of two long, thin creatures that stretch diagonally across her body, either suckling or biting her breasts. The one at her left breast has two small front limbs. They may be snakes (which were commonly shown with legs) or another reptile (6.3: 14). The details are those of the *femme-aux-serpents*, a motif that is rarely found in England but common in twelfth-century continental Europe. Compare for example with those at St Pierre, Moissac; Ste Croix, Bordeaux; St Lazare, Autun (France); and Santa Maria, Tudela and Rebanal de las Llantas in Palencia (Spain), (6.3: 15–19). This graphic image is traditionally interpreted as the punishment of lust.⁵⁴³ However, a parallel strand of scholarship has revealed that the woman suckled by snakes also symbolised

⁵⁴³ Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIe siècle en France. Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1922) 374; Weir and Jerman (2013), 58–74.

pitilessness or lack of compassion and it is this tradition, I will argue, that is drawn on by the Witney sculpture.⁵⁴⁴

North-west buttress upper niche

The upper niche in the north west buttress is similar in size and shape to its neighbour. It has a cinquefoil canopy under an acute gable with sunk trefoil tracery on the front (6.3: 20). There are traces of red and black paint inside the niche on the underside of the canopy. Figural sculpture at the springing is too decayed to identify. The image bracket inside is in the shape of a half-hexagonal bowl, occupying the full width of the niche. On the front, in high relief, is a contorted male figure, struggling upwards out of the ground (6.3: 21). Details have been lost but the remains of his hood are clear, the tip just appearing on his forehead. Both elbows are acutely bent with one forearm pointing up and the other down. His right knee juts sharply forward. His other leg is also bent, either up or back (or has sheared off at the knee). It is hidden by a convex, rounded object on his left hip which he is fending off with his left hand. The central part of this object is missing, preventing identification. Given the subject of the pendant sculpture, it is likely to be another ‘loathsome’ creature, associated with the punishment of sin. A small lozenge-shaped projection (at around ‘11 o’clock’) may be the remains of a head attacking the man’s chest, recalling the composition in the pendant niche. The convex, rounded shape of the body could suggest a snail, a common motif in manuscript marginalia, sometimes interpreted as symbolising the male vice of cowardice.⁵⁴⁵ Equally, it could be a toad or other reptile, used to represent the decay of the body after death and found in descriptions of hell torturing those guilty of lust and gluttony (6.3: 22–23).⁵⁴⁶ These two carvings show the punishment of particularised sins after death, using gender for emphasis. They depict figures emerging from the ground, evoking the raising of the dead from the grave at the Last Judgement. The upper niches in which they appear correspond with the upper chapel inside. The male and female sinners on the brackets—and the lost statues they once supported—are thus juxtaposed with the

⁵⁴⁴ See chap. 6.7: The female sinner.

⁵⁴⁵ Lillian Randall, ‘The Snail in Gothic Marginal Warfare’, *Speculum*, 37: 3 (July 1962), 358–367; Panayotova, *The Macclesfield Psalter: a complete facsimile* (London, 2008), 64.

⁵⁴⁶ Sophie Oosterwijk, ‘Food for Worms - Food for Thought: The Appearance and Interpretation of the “verminous” Cadaver in Britain and Europe’, *CM*, 20 (2005), 41–80, 55.

male and female effigies and with other gendered sculpture on the funerary monument. The lower niches are on the same level as the charnel crypt. The statues they displayed were no doubt also related to the mortuary setting. The different elements, surviving and missing, and the charnel house context indicate an integrated sculpture programme on a penitential, end-of-days theme, and this is discussed in section 6.7 below.

The lost upper chapel

The great windows placed high in the walls at the end of the transept flood the area with light. Together with the monument in the upper part of north wall they indicate the existence of a spacious upper chamber, in all probability a chantry chapel. The raised sill of the east window may suggest the altar position. Alternatively, the altar may have been housed in a tall, shallow, gabled recess in the wall below and to the right of the window. This feature retains traces of red, black and white paint on its frame and back wall. The remains of a pattern of white dianthus are clearly visible (6.3: 24–25). The recess resembles a larger example high in the east wall of the south nave aisle at Dorchester Abbey, identified by Warwick Rodwell as the altar recess of another lost, upper chapel (6.3: 26).⁵⁴⁷ The Dorchester niche seems initially to have contained a thirteenth-century timber rood, surrounded by painted scrollwork. This was replaced in the mid fourteenth century by the cross, painted in dark red on an ochre background, which remains today. The Witney recess may likewise have contained a rood group or cross. The gable shape lends itself to the subject while dianthus, also known as ‘nail flowers’, had a symbolic association with the Crucifixion; their rich, clove-like scent and the visual resemblance of cloves to nails bringing to mind the means by which Christ was hung on the cross.⁵⁴⁸ The traces of shape and colour on the back of the niche, while somewhat reminiscent of a rood group, are no longer legible enough to support this suggestion. Nonetheless, a painted image or altar recess in this position provides a clear devotional focus at the east end of the space.

⁵⁴⁷ The Dorchester chapel was part of a three-tier construction: a semi-subterranean crypt, the present chapel in which the altar is raised on a dais, and an upper chapel, the floor of which has been dismantled. Rodwell (2009), 176–77.

⁵⁴⁸ Celia Fisher, *The Medieval Flower Book* (London, 2007), 97.

Both chapel and lower chamber were dismantled early on, having disappeared by 1594.⁵⁴⁹ Nothing remains to indicate the appearance of the south elevation. It may have been a stone wall pierced by windows, as at Solihull; or open, as at Compton (Surrey) where the chapel over the stone-vaulted chancel retains a half-height wooden arcade (6.3: 27–28).⁵⁵⁰

The lost lower chamber

The existence of the semi-subterranean, lower chamber and aspects of its appearance can be gauged from the following observations, which imply a crypt of conventional parish church design.⁵⁵¹ In the lower north wall are two large, pointed arches, each approximately 2 m wide, occupying almost the whole width of the transept. They are more or less hidden behind lumber at present but show clearly in an engraving by Joseph Skelton of *c.* 1823 (6.3: 29). The leading edges are chamfered and the western arch retains flecks of painted plaster in red, bluish-grey and ivory-white on its front face and soffit. In the centre of each arch is a short shaft within a squarish embrasure leading to a chamfered, rectangular aperture blocked by a stone panel (6.3: 30–31). These correspond with the blocked openings in the plinth noted earlier. Sherwood and Pevsner interpret the arches as ‘two doors to a small crypt’.⁵⁵² However, access from outside was provided by the entrance in the west wall, already described. The ‘doors’ are in fact relieving arches for the light shafts which lit a crypt of some size. Compare for example with the arches and light shafts at Irthlingborough (Northants) and St Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (6.3: 32–35). A trench in the base of the wall shows that the arches descend at least a meter below the current floor level. Part of a sculptured capital is visible below the floor in the north-west angle. The capital is four-sided, dying into the wall below, and angled away from it towards the centre of the space, showing the spring of the groin of a vault (6.3: 36). Langford’s notes of 1866–67 record seven of these capitals, with two more conjectured, which he drew as both three and four-sided and described as ‘half or quarter columns attached to the walls [...] two or three of them show the spring of

⁵⁴⁹ BL, Add. MS 5527, f. 15.

⁵⁵⁰ Rodwell (2012), 87.

⁵⁵¹ Rodwell (2012), 52–53.

⁵⁵² Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 844.

the groins.⁵⁵³ They provided him with the base dimensions of a semi-subterranean chamber ‘nearly if not exactly square’ which he drew in plan, without measurements (6.3: 37). As the transept measures 5.8 m from east to west, the north-south extent of the crypt must have been more or less the same, giving a floor area of just under 6 m². The height is more difficult to estimate. The floor level of the upper chapel (and thus the highest point of the vault of the lower chamber) can be inferred from a fragmentary corbel in the north east corner, located approximately 0.5 m below the raised monument in the north wall. This conforms with Skelton’s engraving which shows a horizontal scar beneath the effigies inside the monument at around this depth (6.3: 29). The floor level of the crypt cannot now be determined. The capital in the north-west corner sits about 1 m below the current floor, near the base of the trench. It may mark the original ground level. There are springers starting almost at ground level in the crypt at Irthlingborough. However, in the crypts at Rothwell, Dorchester, Burford and Solihull, the springers are about 1 m above ground.⁵⁵⁴ Those at the almost fully subterranean crypt at Ducklington are a little higher (6.3: 38–39). Based on these comparisons, the roof of the lower chamber was somewhere between 2 and 3 m at its highest point.

During the same works, Langford recorded a trefoil-headed alcove, uncovered in the transept east wall approximately 5 m from the north end, which he describes as ‘a piscina with its bowl broken away’.⁵⁵⁵ If the above assessment of the extent of the crypt is correct, this feature was inside it, indicating that the lower chamber had a liturgical function. The alcove survives but the arch has been almost entirely remade and it is not clear that it was in fact a piscina (6.3: 40). If there was a bowl or drain it has been filled in, and it is too high in the wall to have served a subterranean altar. If it has not been reset, it may have served as a credence shelf or niche for an image or light. Langford also recorded a number of human bones, recovered from beneath the north wall arches.⁵⁵⁶ They were not retained so their age cannot be determined nor when they were deposited. Nonetheless his notes provide useful information to which I return below.

⁵⁵³ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 217, f. 22.

⁵⁵⁴ Sharp (1879), 58; Rodwell (2009), 186.

⁵⁵⁵ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 217, f. 24.

⁵⁵⁶ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 217, f. 21–22.

This large, semi-subterranean chamber was clearly an important space, part of a prominent addition to the church, constructed at some cost and decorated—at least to some degree. There is no contemporary record of its original function but later assumptions that it served as a ‘bone hole’, do not adequately explain its elaboration. In the light of recent research by Jenny Crangle *et al*, I propose instead that it was part of a purpose-built, two-storey charnel house with a chantry chapel raised over a crypt in which human remains were compassionately sheltered rather than simply stored; the whole complex being dedicated to the salvation of the souls of the dead.

The features of the lost crypt at Witney conform closely with a diagnostic model Crangle has devised for identifying the bone chambers of charnel houses. Based on a dataset of fifty-five examples drawn from extant and recorded medieval charnel crypts she lists the following typical features that distinguish a charnel chamber from any other type of underground room:

- Construction date between mid thirteenth and mid fourteenth century
- Semi-subterranean location
- Location beneath a church or chapel
- East-west orientation
- Rectangular or square shape
- Decoration
- Prominent position, maximising awareness and visibility
- Windows sited to encourage ritualised viewing from the exterior
- Exterior access
- Evidence of bones
- Dedication to a saint.⁵⁵⁷

No dedication is recorded for either chamber but otherwise all these features were present at Witney. The crypt was located directly beneath a chantry chapel, indicated by the monument in the wall above. The piscina/ niche in the east wall gives an east-west orientation with the devotional focus at the east end. The paint traces on the relieving arches hardly compare with the large painting of the Resurrection on the

⁵⁵⁷ Crangle (2016), 170–83.

east wall at Rothwell, discussed earlier.⁵⁵⁸ However, assuming they are medieval, they show at least that the space was significant enough to be decorated.⁵⁵⁹ The whole structure occupies a prominent position, on the north side of the church alongside the main entrance, ensuring regular footfall. It faced the town and the green where regular markets and fairs took place. Striking exterior sculpture maximised its visibility.⁵⁶⁰ Low windows in the north wall allowed sight of the interior, and a doorway in the west wall provided access.

There is evidence that it contained bones but Langford's record of this should be treated with some caution as we cannot determine their age nor when they were deposited. His notes include no drawings and only the following brief account:

On the 8th April 1867 we attended with the Rector and the Builder to examine the arched recesses in the north wall. It was found that the western one, to the left hand of the observer, had been disturbed before; only some recent skulls and other bones were obtained by digging there. But the right hand or eastern recess had not been disturbed and gave proof of the ancient sepulture of one of the founders of the crypt. We found some antiquated iron handles, almost turned to rust, and portions of a thick oak chest in the last stage of decay, and a few fragments of bone with one entire femor [sic], all stained black, which is due to the springy nature of the ground here – the water actually rising in the trench made for our search.⁵⁶¹

Despite its shortcomings as a forensic report, Langford's account does provide some useful information. None of the excavated material was retained so it is not possible to corroborate his impression that the bones were from different eras. Neither the colour nor general appearance of human skeletal remains are reliable indicators of

⁵⁵⁸ See chap. 4.2: Parish charnel houses: an under-recognised feature.

⁵⁵⁹ There is evidence of decoration in the crypt at Dorchester Abbey as well. It was rendered and thickly limewashed on all its surfaces. A mortice in the east wall was perhaps for supporting the timber end of a crucifix. Rodwell (2009), 185.

⁵⁶⁰ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp103-107>> [accessed 29 December, 2018].

⁵⁶¹ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 17, ff. 21–22.

age. These details are more likely to relate to the conditions in which they were buried, or to later treatment. Human bones are commonly ivory or yellowish when disinterred from the ground—as were the skulls found under the western arch. The blackened femur and other fragments found under the eastern arch are likely to have become discoloured because of different burial conditions, for example if they had been kept inside a receptacle such as a wooden chest and were not in direct contact with the earth.⁵⁶² Burials are occasionally recorded in charnel chambers so the fragments of wood and bone may indicate coffined burial, as Langford surmises.⁵⁶³ However, the bones were not found deep enough to have been buried below the crypt floor, and an above-ground coffin is likely to have been encased in a stone cist, which was not recorded.⁵⁶⁴ An alternative scenario is that the material represents a secondary deposition. This occurred when an individual was interred in one place and then disinterred after a period of time to be reburied in another; a not infrequent occurrence with a long tradition at both great and parish church level.⁵⁶⁵ One parish example occurred in 1361 when Eleanor, wife of Sir John de Wynkefield, was granted permission by the bishop of Winchester to remove her husband's remains from the church of Byfleet in Hampshire where he had been buried and re-inter them in the church at Winchfield, his place of origin, once a perpetual chantry had been established.⁵⁶⁶ A specific liturgy was used for the reburial of such 'dry bones'. Based on the same prayers and musical items that were used for initial burial rites, this liturgy contained additional rubrics detailing the proper procedure for preparing the bones and transferring them to their new resting place.⁵⁶⁷ As the bones would become disarticulated during this process they were contained within a box or bag

⁵⁶² Personal comment, April 2018, Dr Ana Surto, biological anthropologist, University of Évora, Portugal.

⁵⁶³ Blomefield (1805–10), 55–58; Rousseau (2011), 69; Crangle (2016), 223.

⁵⁶⁴ Daniell (1997), 161–63; Jessica Barker, 'Stone and Bone: The Corpse, the Effigy and the Viewer in Late-Medieval Tomb Sculpture', in Adams and Barker (2016), 113–136 at 118.

⁵⁶⁵ Alexandra Buckle, "'Entumbid Right Princely": The Re-Interment of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and a Lost Rite.', in Hannes Kleineke and Christian Steer (eds), *The Yorkist Age: Proceedings of the 2011 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington, 2013), 399–415 at 414.

⁵⁶⁶ *The Register of John de Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, 1323–1333*, ed. by Roy Haines (Woking, 2010), 56.

⁵⁶⁷ Buckle (2013), 408.

for transportation and re-deposition. In Crangle's account she likens the procedure to the translation of saints' relics.⁵⁶⁸ Being already de-fleshed, they could remain above ground. See for example the mortuary chests displayed at Winchester Abbey which contain the bones of high-status Anglo-Saxon and Norman individuals. One of the earlier boxes found inside those presently on display is a painted wooden chest of c. 1500 with a handle at one end, styled on coffins of the period (6.3: 41).⁵⁶⁹ This tradition and the procedures that attended it could account for the remains found under the east arch and suggest the deposition of such a box in the charnel chamber.

The remains under the west arch comprised 'some' skulls, presumably therefore three or more, and 'other bones'. These are not identified but neither are they described as fragments—as are those under the adjacent arch. They were perhaps therefore whole or large pieces. As Crangle has shown, once disinterred, the disarticulated bones of several individuals became mingled and were then sorted according to type; skulls, long bones and fragments being placed in different heaps. In the charnel houses at Rothwell and St Peter's, Leicester, heaps of skulls alternated with heaps of long bones placed perpendicularly to the wall with a passage between them, allowing visitors to walk up and down.⁵⁷⁰ Similar layouts have been noted at Worcester and Exeter.⁵⁷¹ It is possible that the different groups of bones found under the arches at Witney replicate this arrangement and are not, as Langford supposed, indicative of disturbance but of medieval charnelling practice. The evidence is slight but the position in which the bones were recovered could suggest a heap of skulls and a heap of other long bones displayed side by side within sight of those looking in through the windows above.

While highly suggestive, Langford's report contains no hard facts about the age of the bones nor the date of their deposition. It cannot be taken as definitive proof that medieval charnelling took place at Witney. However, the following observations about the later treatment of the area support the proposal.

⁵⁶⁸ Crangle (2016), 51.

⁵⁶⁹ Litten (1988), 88.

⁵⁷⁰ Crangle (2016), 229; Craig-Atkins *et al* (2019), 154.

⁵⁷¹ Crangle (2016), 220

The crypt had been filled in by 1594 so it could not have been used as an ossuary after then.⁵⁷² However, a group of inscribed grave slabs suggest that the transept was used in the post-Reformation period for intramural burials. In the mid seventeenth century two slabs with brasses were recorded in the north transept floor, one to Thomas Yate, dated 1591 and the other to Mary Brice, dated 1609.⁵⁷³ In 1867, Langford recorded two further slabs in the same floor with inscriptions, one incomplete, the other of Joan Carman, d. 1596.⁵⁷⁴ If Skelton's engraving of the transept can be relied upon, these memorial slabs were all concentrated in the foreground, that is, at the south end of the transept, outside the area of the medieval crypt (6.3: 29). This is still not conclusive as the pavement may have been re-laid but there is good reason to suppose that new burials would not be dug in the area previously occupied by the medieval crypt. Once the practice of charnelling fell out of use, some charnel crypts were cleared and used for other purposes.⁵⁷⁵ A few were taken over as family mausolea—as happened at Shipton-under-Wychwood (Oxon). In 1732 the Reade family obtained a faculty to make the crypt under the south aisle their private vault, the bones already there to be given a decent burial elsewhere.⁵⁷⁶ Others, like those at St Peter's, Leicester and Exeter Cathedral were fully dismantled, the ground levelled and the underground area filled in, leaving the bones in place, effectively re-burying them.⁵⁷⁷ This is probably what happened at Witney where the crypt disappeared early on. Proximity to the river Windrush may have meant it was damp and unsuitable for re-purposing. Langford describes the ground as wet and spongy in 1867 and there was standing water in the trench under the north wall west arch in May 2018. Subsequent intramural burials in the same area would be unlikely if it were already a burial site, filled with medieval bones.

Evidence from other parishes in the area suggests a local trend towards charnelling as an important means of honouring the dead and strengthens the case that the crypt and chapel at Witney served the same purpose. As noted, there are close parallels

⁵⁷² BL, Add. MS 5527, f. 15.

⁵⁷³ BL, Harl. MS 4170 ff. 22–24; BL, Harl. MS 965, f. 32.

⁵⁷⁴ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon d 17, f. 46.

⁵⁷⁵ Litten (1988), 199.

⁵⁷⁶ Information in church, n. d.

⁵⁷⁷ Crangle (2016), 219, 229.

with the largely intact chapel/crypt complex of late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth-century date in the south aisle at Burford. As at Witney, the Burford crypt has low-level rectangular windows giving onto a vaulted, semi-underground space and it is located alongside the main entrance to the church.⁵⁷⁸ A fourteenth-century piscina in the upper space and altar recess in the lower one show that both chambers had altars.⁵⁷⁹ There is no documentary evidence of chantries located in either part but tomb recesses in the upper chapel indicate a memorial function; the deceased presumably benefiting from proximity to the charnel below. The two-storey charnel house at High Wycombe, well documented from the fourteenth century onwards, provides a further useful comparison. Its popularity with parishioners is demonstrated by multiple chantries located there over many generations.⁵⁸⁰ This conforms with Crangle and Craig-Atkins' interpretation of the charnel house as a kind of communal chantry benefitting the collective dead as well as named individuals.⁵⁸¹ Their view is born out by churchwardens' accounts which show that upkeep of the charnel house was, in some cases at least, a parish expense. For example, at Holy Trinity, Cambridge, the churchwardens accounts for 1510–11 include 2d 'For making clene of the Charnell house'.⁵⁸² At this late date, the payment could be for clearing out the charnel. However, at Bridgwater (Somerset), the churchwardens' accounts for 1386–87 include entries for cleaning as well as building the charnel house.⁵⁸³ This was another two-storey complex, located at the north end of the north transept, with a chapel above the charnel chamber.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁷⁸ Cooper (2010), 5.

⁵⁷⁹ OAHS, *Proceedings*, 186.

⁵⁸⁰ Hope (1904), 18–21.

⁵⁸¹ Crangle (2016), 186; Craig-Atkins *et al* (2019), 160.

⁵⁸² Cox (1913), 169.

⁵⁸³ *Bridgwater Borough Archives, 1377–1399*, ed. by T. Bruce Dilks, Tony Woolrich and Jane Woolrich (Somerset, 2019), 9.

⁵⁸⁴ Arthur Powell, *The Ancient Borough of Bridgwater in the County of Somerset* (Bridgwater, 1907), 113. The work must have involved the modification of an existing structure rather than building from scratch. The transept has large Perpendicular windows corresponding to a date in the late 1380s, but small windows and a door giving onto the crypt and a pair of tomb recesses in the exterior north wall are earlier.

These comparators are in large market towns with borough status, similar to the circumstances at Witney. Together with Crangle's research, they point to the lost under-croft at Witney as another purpose-built charnel chamber—a repository for displaced human bones, de-fleshed, disarticulated and arranged for display—occupying the lower part of a two-storey charnel house with a chantry chapel above. Its size, visibility, accessibility and traces of decoration imply that it was a devotionally significant, chapel-like space, open to visitors and perhaps equipped to celebrate the liturgy. Such a building would represent a significant amenity for the deceased of the whole parish as well as for those who chose to establish a named chantry in proximity to the charnel. Such a foundation, located in the upper chapel is clearly indicated by the double monument, to which I now turn.

6.4 The monument

The monument is built into the north wall forming an ensemble with the grand window above, matching it for width and using its sill as an upper frame (6.4: 1). It comprises two recesses placed end to end under traceried canopies, containing male and female effigies. The whole ensemble appears to be carved from the same oolitic limestone. The top edge of the frame continues as a horizontal roll moulding to either side of the window, occupying the full width of the wall and creating panels to left and right of the monument, perhaps intended for further, painted decoration. The effigies have suffered some damage, mainly to their fingertips and feet, and the entire monument has been thoroughly scrubbed of colour and surface detail. Apart from the legal attire worn by the male effigy discussed below, there are no surviving marks identifying the individuals they represent.

The canopy design resembles window tracery. Compare for example with the east window of the chapel at Cogges (0.3). The twinned recesses are divided by a central mullion but enclosed within a single rectangular frame, forming a contained unit. The design of the tracery is the same over each recess: an ogee arch enclosing a large vesica with flowing trefoils to either side, cusped spandrels above and a pair of foiled arches below. The main bars of the tracery are deeply cusped and lavishly decorated with ballflower, a characteristic Decorated detail. Symmetrical joins in the frame and the canopy (one roughly mended with cement) show that the carving was done in sections and assembled in place (6.4: 2)

The arch over each recess is supported by a finely-worked demi-figure protruding from the back wall, acting as a corbel. In the east recess, over the female effigy, this corbel figure is female with a shoulder-length veil and a pleated wimple covering her mouth attached to padding or coils of hair at her temples. Her gown is plain with a wide scooped neckline, girdled at the waist. Her hands are missing but once met in front of her body. In the west recess, over the male effigy, the corbel figure is male, with a high forehead and hair falling in elaborate curls to below the ears. He wears a gown over a long-sleeved undergarment. The palms of his delicately-worked hands are pressed against the back wall (6.4: 3–4). This elaborate feature is not common in the region but does appear further afield. See for example the monument to Roger Berkerolles (d. 1351) and his wife at St Athan (Glam). The vesicas carried by the Witney figures contain pedestals, perhaps for lights or further sculpture, as on a contemporary monument at Winterbourne Bassett (Wilts) (6.4: 5–6).

Female effigy

The female effigy faces east, her head on a single, square cushion (6.4: 7–8). Her expression is serene, her features generically youthful. Her hands, missing their fingertips, are pressed together in prayer. A wimple covers her neck and chin but leaves her mouth free, tucking into the round neckline of her gown. A faint indentation suggests the neckline was ornamented. The wimple fastens to small coils of hair above the ears at the temples and to a band that runs across her forehead. A folded veil falls in loose pleats to below her shoulders. Her floor-length gown is unstructured with long sleeves and loose cuffs. The tight sleeves of the chemise worn underneath show at her wrists. A raised seam may indicate buttons. Her full skirt is pulled up and bunched under her right forearm creating a series of V-shaped folds across the stomach, similar to those on the effigy of Margaret Oddingseles at Cogges, although less finely-worked and without the tubular-shaped rolls of fabric. Two pointed shoes appear under the hem, resting on a small, now headless beast: a dog, judging by its paws. The clothing is that of a wealthy married woman or widow. Like that on the Cogges effigy, it suggests a date in the early-to-mid 1330s.

Male effigy

The male figure also lies facing east (6.4: 9–10). His head rests on a square cushion with one surviving corner tassel. Like his female counterpart, his hands, missing

their fingertips are pressed together in prayer. His face is youthful. His mouth has been roughly recut. His hair curls to below the ears with a short fringe, a style that echoes the sculptured heads at Cogges, pointing to the early fourteenth century. He is bareheaded but otherwise dressed in legal attire, i.e., a long-sleeved, floor-length, hooded gown under a 'collobium'.⁵⁸⁵ The hood is represented as a series of folds at the base of his neck. The collobium is a loose, calf-length over-garment with elbow-length, cape-like sleeves and two tabs at the neck. It has a cut-out detail at the waist which would enable the wearer to reach a purse, pen or knife hanging from a girdle inside. The tabs are shown as two, wide, conjoined rectangular flaps with rounded outer corners, descending from the neckline. The tight, fitted sleeves of a chemise show beneath the loose sleeves of his gown. The folds of the collobium are delicately worked showing that the fabric was intended to appear fine and full. His left foot is missing. Part of an oblong object with rounded corners survives under his right foot, resembling a woolsack (6.4: 11).

While the costume worn by the male effigy is clearly that of a lawyer, the details are not straightforward and merit further discussion. As both Anthony Musson and Nigel Saul have demonstrated, a small but growing number of medieval lawyers commissioned memorials from the fourteenth century onwards, some choosing to depict themselves in the robes of their profession.⁵⁸⁶ These men were for the most part serjeants-at-law or judges. The serjeants were an élite group of pleaders who had the right to appear at the court of common pleas at Westminster and it was from their ranks that judges were selected.⁵⁸⁷ The costume of both was indistinguishable early on but diverged gradually, becoming distinct by the end of the fourteenth century. The serjeants wore a coif, a close-fitting head covering that tied under the chin, as their distinguishing garment and they became known as the Order of the Coif. The judges dropped the coif and adopted a fur mantle instead, fixed at the left shoulder.⁵⁸⁸ In his discussion of monuments to lawyers and administrators, Nigel

⁵⁸⁵ John Baker, *The Order of Serjeants at Law: A Chronicle of Creations with Related Texts and a Historical Introduction*, Selden Society Supplementary Series 5 (London, 1984), 70–71; Saul (2009), 271–79.

⁵⁸⁶ Saul (2009), 274–75.

⁵⁸⁷ Baker (1984), 8–27, 36.

⁵⁸⁸ Baker (1984), 68–72.

Saul demonstrates that the details of legal costume are inconsistent during the fourteenth century. For example, the effigy of John Cokayne (d. 1372) at Ashbourne (Derbys) wears a coif with doublet and hose. He was neither a serjeant nor a judge, but he did serve as a justice of the peace on the local bench.⁵⁸⁹ Thomas Frisby at Flamstead (Herts) was a serjeant, elected in 1401.⁵⁹⁰ He wears the tabbed collobium but no coif. The costume on the Witney effigy therefore only indicates a lawyer, not his rank. No record of a serjeant or judge with close links to Witney has emerged from the records.⁵⁹¹ The effigy may therefore represent a lawyer of a different degree, perhaps an apprentice. These were lawyers of lower rank with practices outside Westminster, for example in the service of magnates with large estates. They did not however have the right to wear the collobium or coif. Nigel Saul has found that they wore a turban-like hat instead as their distinguishing mark.⁵⁹²

Another group were the attorneys, a group of country solicitors acting as agents for landowning clients and representing them in court. However, it is not certain what form of legal attire attorneys wore, if any, in the fourteenth century as their memorials show them in ordinary lay attire without professional attributes.⁵⁹³ The Witney effigy therefore presents a puzzle. Whatever his degree, the deceased evidently wished to be identified in his professional capacity as a man of law. Another puzzle is the oblong object with rounded corners, part of which survives under his right foot. This appears to be a woolsack, a detail often included on the monumental brasses of wool merchants.⁵⁹⁴ For ease of carrying, merchants tied a pebble into the corners of these sacks of wool, creating 'ears' or handles. This example retains only one, on the outer, lower corner. The left foot and the rest of the sack are missing. If this is indeed a woolsack it is an extremely unusual detail, both for this date and medium. They are relatively common on monumental brasses although the earliest I am aware of is to William Adynet (d. 1409) at Northleach

⁵⁸⁹ Saul (2009), 244.

⁵⁹⁰ Saul (2014), 11.

⁵⁹¹ Baker (1984), 140–57.

⁵⁹² Saul (2009), 280.

⁵⁹³ Saul (2009), 284.

⁵⁹⁴ Nigel Saul, 'The Woolmen and their Brasses', *TMBS*, 17 (2008), 315–35.

(6.4: 12). They do not occur at all on stone effigies, as far as I know.⁵⁹⁵ The Witney effigy may therefore be a unique survival. In the absence of heraldry or other family emblems, this detail and the legal costume will provide essential clues to the identification of the individual commemorated.⁵⁹⁶

The monument was first recorded in 1594 when the chamberlain for Oxford observed, ‘In the north yle of the church highe under the window is the fine [...] monumente of a manne and a woman pretely cutt out in stone but I cold not forme what they were’.⁵⁹⁷ From this brief note it is evident that the chapel had already been dismantled by this date and that the effigies were in their current high-level position within the recesses. In 1660 Anthony Wood noted that ‘they lay in two arches up in the said wall, almost twice the height of a man, one at the foot of the other.’⁵⁹⁸ As the effigies match the monument in date, style and material and fit neatly within the recesses it is likely that they belong to it. As noted, the female effigy occupies the east recess, the more honorific position. Subsidiary sculptural details show that this is intentional and not the result of later re-ordering (which is in any case unlikely given the difficulties of access). The corbel figure supporting the canopy over the female effigy is female while that over the male effigy alongside is male. The sex of the marginal figures outside also matches: the woman suckled by snakes is in the east buttress; the man cowering from a beast is in the west. There are many other instances where the sex of the deceased is a contributory factor in memorial design. The practice of including daughters at the feet of the mother and sons at the feet of the father on monumental brasses to couples is well attested.⁵⁹⁹ Other designs include placing male and female head-stops on the appropriate side of semi-effigial slabs to couples shown lying side by side. There are early fourteenth-century examples at Bredon (Worcs) and Careby (Lincs) (6.4: 13–14).⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁵ Many thanks to Sally Badham for discussing this with me.

⁵⁹⁶ See chap. 6.5: John de Croxford of Kidlington.

⁵⁹⁷ BL, Add. MS 5527, f. 15.

⁵⁹⁸ Bodl, MS Wood E 1, f. 18v.

⁵⁹⁹ Jerome Bertram, *Oxfordshire Brasses* (Lulu, 2019), 19, 32, 50, 65, 66, 68

⁶⁰⁰ See Nigel Saul, ‘The Early 14th-century Semi-effigial Tomb Slab at Bredon (Worcestershire): Its Character, Affinities and Attribution’, *JBAA*, 170 (2017), 61–81; and Sally Badham, ‘The

There are very few examples of conjoined, end-to-end recesses which retain their effigies. Their usual position is thus difficult to establish. Sally Badham argues convincingly that in the original layout at Northmoor, two tombs with effigies representing Thomas Laurenz de la More (*fl.* 1361) and Isabella his wife were side by side under the western recess, while two earlier cross slabs, also side by side, representing older members of the family occupied the eastern recess.⁶⁰¹ Where there is one effigy under each recess (as at Witney), the female occupies the more prestigious east recess at two other sites: the early fourteenth-century monument at Minchinhampton (Glos) and an early-fifteenth century example at Toddington (Beds). Nigel Saul's recent discussion of the Toddington monument shows that the female effigy represents Margaret Loring, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Nigel Loring of Chalgrave. She was perhaps wealthier or of higher status than her husband Thomas Pever whose family were lords of Toddington.⁶⁰² The woman commemorated at Witney may likewise have been socially or financially better placed than the man, justifying her position in the east recess. Nonetheless, the arrangement has local features of its own that benefited the man. The sill of the east window is raised (perhaps to accommodate an altar). Consequently, morning sunlight does not fall on the effigy in the east recess. The west recess is better lit, particularly in the late afternoon when sun slanting in through the west window casts a dramatic light on the male effigy but does not reach the female (6.4: 15).

The design of the monument and the paired effigies strongly suggests a married couple, as it does in the examples quoted above. The Minchinhampton monument retains the effigies of John of Ansley and his wife, Lucy, proprietors of the manor around 1330.⁶⁰³ Another example at Kirklington contains effigies of *c.* 1370, probably of Elizabeth Musters and her first husband, Alexander de Mowbray.⁶⁰⁴ The double monument at Shottesbrooke has no effigies but has nonetheless been taken to

Iconography and Meaning of Semi-Effigial and Related Monuments in Lincolnshire, *c.* 1275–*c.* 1400', in Steer (2020), 113–49.

⁶⁰¹ Badham (2008), 16–19.

⁶⁰² Nigel Saul, 'A Further Sequel', *CM*, 34 (2019), 105–123 at 106–07.

⁶⁰³ David Verey and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire: The Cotswolds* (Harmondsworth, 1979), 317.

⁶⁰⁴ Gittos and Gittos (2019b), 104–05.

commemorate a married couple (6.4: 16–17).⁶⁰⁵ Mid fourteenth-century twinned recesses at Little Baddow and at Sparsholt containing male and female oaken effigies have been interpreted in the same way.⁶⁰⁶ Despite this handful of precedents, it was more usual to represent husband and wife side by side on chest tombs, slabs and brasses. It is this form that is adopted elsewhere for the few contemporary monuments to lawyers and their wives that survive. See for example those of two serjeants-at-law, Nicholas Gour (*c.* 1370) at Pembridge (Herefordshire) and Thomas Frisby (*c.* 1408) at Flamstead (Hertfordshire) (6.4: 18–19).⁶⁰⁷ We should not therefore assume on the basis of appearance that the Witney monument represents a married couple, and further evidence in support is offered in the following section.

6.5 The patrons

As noted, the manor of Witney had belonged to the see of Winchester since 1044. The town had borough status and was administered by reeves, selected from a group of prominent local burgesses who held land in the town and surrounding area. The lay effigies in the north transept show that the monument was neither an episcopal nor a noble commission so it is to this group of well-to-do lower gentry that we should look for its patrons. Richard de Stanlake immediately stands out. He was by far the wealthiest among them and is the only one known to have founded a chantry in the parish church. His chantry licence, granted in 1331, was jointly held with John de Croxford who, as I demonstrate below, was a lawyer, linking him with the effigy in the lost upper chapel. No connection has yet been established between these men, the licence and the monument. In order to argue for one, I start with what can be learned about Richard de Stanlake from documentary sources.

⁶⁰⁵ Budge (2017), 73, 204.

⁶⁰⁶ Saul (2017b) 19, 20, 21; Saul (2002), 273. The Sparsholt effigies have been moved more than once and may not be in their original locations.

⁶⁰⁷ Frisby's monument is discussed in a series of articles by Nigel Saul: 'The early fifteenth-century monument of a serjeant-at-law in Flamstead church (Hertfordshire)', *CM*, 27 (2012), 7–21; Saul, 'The sculptor of the monument of a serjeant-at-law at Flamstead (Hertfordshire): a sequel', *CM*, 29 (2014), 7–21; and 'A Further Sequel', *CM*, 34 (2019), 105–123.

Richard de Stanlake of Witney

The Stanlake family had been well established in the area since the thirteenth century.⁶⁰⁸ They held land in the borough and surrounding area and added regularly to their property interests.⁶⁰⁹ Between 1263 and 1349 they were involved in one hundred and fifty-nine land transactions.⁶¹⁰ Richard de Stanlake's personal assets included a mill, agricultural land and rents from town and country properties.⁶¹¹ Members of his family had been reeves during the thirteenth century.⁶¹² Richard may have been reeve himself in 1301–2.⁶¹³ He was evidently working for the bishop in some capacity in 1319 when he appears as plaintiff in an angry dispute over market profits. He and a group of the bishop's servants 'deputed to keep his manor and market and to collect the tolls thereof and persons going to the market' were assaulted and robbed.⁶¹⁴ Richard is the only named victim of this attack (perhaps an indication of his status) for which he personally brought individual suit against his neighbour at Ducklington, Henry Dyve.

By 1327 Richard de Stanlake's financial worth far outstripped his neighbours and he paid tax on £30 or 12% of the combined wealth of the entire town.⁶¹⁵ He was well connected, his property holdings across the county bringing him into contact with gentry figures such as John de St Philbert and Hugh de Plessis from whom he held land in Little Minster.⁶¹⁶ Through his wife Joanna (*fl.* 1344) he was connected to Thomas, Lord West and his wife Eleanor de Cantilupe, neighbouring landowners in

⁶⁰⁸ Stone and Hyde (1968), 91.

⁶⁰⁹ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 368; *Calendar of the court books of the borough of Witney 1538–1610*, ed. by James Bolton and Marjorie Maslen, (Oxford, 1985) liii; *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 194.

⁶¹⁰ Mullan and Britnell (2010), 121.

⁶¹¹ TNA CP 25/1/189/17, 102; *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 368.

⁶¹² <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp111-130#p15>> [accessed 10 August, 2020].

⁶¹³ *Winchester Pipe Rolls 1301–2*, 135.

⁶¹⁴ *Pat. Rolls*, 1317–21, 368–69.

⁶¹⁵ <www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp73-77#p8> [accessed 28 November, 2019].

⁶¹⁶ *IPM*, 1327–36, 368.

Minster Lovell.⁶¹⁷ He had two brothers, John and Hugh.⁶¹⁸ In 1322 a group of men comprising Hugh de Stanlake, John de Croxford, father and son, and Hugh de Plessis all had letters of protection to travel to Ireland together in the king's service.⁶¹⁹

Richard de Stanlake was heir to his brother John, a wealthy man who had accumulated a considerable property portfolio in the local area before his death, much of it with his younger brother Hugh.⁶²⁰ John was a wool merchant. In 1310 Simon Bere of Witney was in debt to him for six sacks of wool, worth £9 each.⁶²¹ In 1315 John stood as MP for Witney.⁶²² He may have been dead by 1327 as Richard's wealth in that year suggests he had already inherited. Both John and Hugh were dead by 1331 when Richard founded his chantry for the benefit of their souls.⁶²³

Richard Stanlake had two sons, one of whom, John, was killed in a violent quarrel in 1342 and his assailant pardoned.⁶²⁴ Ironically, in *c.* 1345–46 Richard was himself indicted for murder.⁶²⁵ His victim was John Fisher, and two other men were accused with him: William Bygnet and Thomas atte Halle, both men of some standing locally.⁶²⁶ The circumstances of the incident are not recorded but Stanlake fled,

⁶¹⁷ In 1344, Thomas West gave Joanna several acres of land at Brook on the Isle of Wight. She was perhaps a relative. Isle of Wight Record Office, AC95/32.25. All three families, West, Cantilupe and Stanlake held land at Little Minster, *IPM*, 6, 1316–27, 338; *PRO, Liber Feodorum. The book of fees commonly called Testa de Nevill*, 2, 1242–93 (London, 1920–31), 827; *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 368.

⁶¹⁸ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 194; *Pat. Rolls*, 1361–64, 27.

⁶¹⁹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1321–24, 80.

⁶²⁰ *Eynsham Cartulary*, 2, 148; TNA CP 25/1/189/14, 128; TNA CP 25/1/189/15, 30; *Cl. Rolls*, 1360–64, 281.

⁶²¹ TNA C 241/76/28.

⁶²² *The Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons*, 1, ed. by Francis Palgrave (London, 1827), 174.

⁶²³ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 194.

⁶²⁴ *Pat. Rolls*, 1340–43, 529.

⁶²⁵ HRO 11M59/B1/98, m. 34.

⁶²⁶ Members of Bygnet's family were Witney merchants, TNA C 241/98/8 1332; TNA C 241/104/121 1332. Another was in minor orders in 1336, *The Registers of Bishop Henry Burghersh 1320–1342*, 3, ed. Nicholas Bennett (Woodbridge, 2011), 279. Thomas Halle witnessed a land deal in Wytham (Oxon) for Godstow Nunnery, *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, near Oxford: Written about 1450*, ed. by Andrew Clark (London, 1905), 60.

perhaps to avoid execution.⁶²⁷ For his crime he forfeited assets worth £40 2s 4d to his lord, William Edington (d. 1366), bishop of Winchester, including a house called ‘the priests’ house’ in Witney.⁶²⁸ His chantry licence was also taken over by the bishop who in 1348 bought both Stanlake and Croxford out for the princely sum of £100.⁶²⁹ What happened to Stanlake himself is not clear. Execution was the usual sentence for homicide along with the forfeit of all a person’s possessions, their chattels going to the king and their lands to their lord.⁶³⁰ Stanlake seemed to have escaped this fate, at least in the short term. He is recorded witnessing a land deal in 1349 in Sutton Courtney, Berkshire.⁶³¹ He was still alive in 1350 when his son Richard, in court recovering a debt of £20, was described as Richard, son of Richard de Standlake of Witney.⁶³² It is possible that he was pardoned as, at his death, he remained in possession of sixteen messuages, a carucate of land and fourteen acres of meadow in Witney and the neighbouring township of Caswell, property which his son inherited.⁶³³ His date of death is not recorded but it must have been before 1361 when Bishop Edington re-founded the chantry on his own behalf, financed by lands ‘late of Richard, brother and heir of John de Stanlak’.⁶³⁴

John de Croxford of Kidlington

John de Croxford was from a prominent and established Oxfordshire family. He and his father, another John, were bailiffs of the Hundred outside the north gate, Oxford between 1290 and 1313.⁶³⁵ Between them they were MP for the shire nine times,

⁶²⁷ Ada Levett and Adolphus Ballard, *The Black Death on the Estates of the See of Winchester; with a Chapter on the Manors of Witney, Brightwell, and Downton* (Oxford, 1916), 195.

⁶²⁸ Hyde (1954), 75; HRO, 11M59/B1/101 m. 26d.

⁶²⁹ CP 25/1/190/20, 2; *Pat. Rolls*, 1348–50, 43; Appendix 3b and 3c

⁶³⁰ Sara Butler, *Forensic Medicine and Death Investigation in Medieval England* (Routledge, 2014), 53.

⁶³¹ Berkshire Record Office D/EBp/T69/1.

⁶³² TNA C 241/126/23.

⁶³³ *IPM*, 1370–73, 264–65. For pardons for homicide, see Thomas McSweeney, ‘Pardoning as Almsgiving in Medieval England’, *Reading Medieval Studies*, 40 (2014), 159–175.

⁶³⁴ *Pat. Rolls*, 1361–64, 27; Appendix 3d.

⁶³⁵ Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections, 1.5. Ebor. 7b [7 January 1313] <http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s1xs55mc05t.xml> [accessed 16 January, 2020].

from 1290 to 1345.⁶³⁶ Since at least the 1260s, the family had land in Kidlington which they held from the de Plessis family.⁶³⁷ Hugh de Plessis was born and baptised at Kidlington, and in later years John de Croxford would act for his widow.⁶³⁸ In 1327 John de Croxford was among the wealthiest local residents of Kidlington, assessed at 6s 8d. Hugh de Plessis was assessed at 7s.⁶³⁹ The Croxfords held other properties across the county and in the city of Oxford, although not in Witney itself.⁶⁴⁰ John de Croxford's mother, Eva, may have come from Gillingham (Kent) where she held land.⁶⁴¹

Croxford was evidently successful, wealthy enough in 1309 to lend £100 to John Giffard (son of Sir Osbert Giffard, knight), who held a portion of the manor of Cogges.⁶⁴² He first appears practising law in 1301 in his home town of Kidlington, documented in the accounts of Bicester Priory under the heading 'Costs of the Plea of Curtl(inton)'.⁶⁴³ This was a dispute with Aulnay Abbey over tithes for which Croxford was paid 6s 8d. The service he performed is not specified and he is not described as a lawyer but this seems to have been his role. While other men under the same heading are given 'expenses', Croxford's payment is recorded as a 'fee'. The same amount, 6s 8d, was the sum given as annual wages in subsequent years to other men called either 'advocate' or 'Prior's attorney' for their services 'suing out writs', clearly referring to legal practice.⁶⁴⁴ When Croxford next surfaces, it is unquestionably as a lawyer. In 1303 and 1306 he appeared in court acting for members of the Giffard family over property rights, and in 1337 he represented

⁶³⁶ Edmund Fryde and Edward Miller (eds), *Historical Studies of the English Parliament, 1, Origins to 1399* (Cambridge, 1970), 165.

⁶³⁷ Mary Stapleton, *Three Oxfordshire Parishes; a History of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke* (Oxford, 1893), 9, 23–24, 109; *Oseney Abbey*, 78, 92–93.

⁶³⁸ *IPM*, 1316–27, 79. *Cl. Rolls*, 1337–39, 133–34.

⁶³⁹ Baggs, Blair *et al* <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol12/pp194-203#p16>> [accessed 1 July, 2020]

⁶⁴⁰ Stapleton (1893), 23; *Liber Albus*, 11, 19, 22, 49, 52; TNA CP 25/1/189/15, 93.

⁶⁴¹ The two Johns, father and son, and Eva transferred a parcel of land and rents in Gillingham to Thomas de Marleberge in 1309, *IQD*, TNA C 143/72/22.

⁶⁴² TNA C 241/64/53.

⁶⁴³ James Blomfield, *History of the Present Deanery of Bicester, Oxon*, 2 (Oxford, 1882), 143.

⁶⁴⁴ Blomfield (1882), 164, 175, 180, 190.

Hugh de Plessis' widow Millicent in court, pursuing her dowry claim.⁶⁴⁵ In 1319, following the death of Sir William Montagu, Croxford had charge of the extensive Montagu holdings in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk during the minority of the younger William Montagu, the future lord Salisbury.⁶⁴⁶ He also acted as attorney for John Wyard of Stanton Harcourt (d. 1349) during the latter's absence on royal business in Scotland in 1333.⁶⁴⁷ The Montagus, father and son, and Wyard were all trusted royal servants. The elder Montagu had been steward of the royal household in 1317 during the reign of Edward II, while the younger was a friend and confidante of Edward III.⁶⁴⁸ Wyard was engaged on secret business for the king in 1327 and 1328 for which he was rewarded with a bejewelled gold cross, although he would later turn informer.⁶⁴⁹ It was perhaps through these connections that Croxford himself gained a position at court. He is recorded in 1325 in the household of Prince Edward and again in 1336 after the young prince had been crowned Edward III.⁶⁵⁰ On the second occasion he was required to make offerings on the king's behalf of a number of gold coins at the high altar of the royal chapel at Eltham on Good Friday. The gold was then redeemed for the equivalent amount in base coinage and made into 'cramp rings', inscribed with the names of the Three Kings and Jesus of Nazareth, for the king to give as gifts for the relief of epilepsy. This was a complex, time-consuming process involving offerings made at the first Mass on Good Friday at five different churches, the recitation over five days of five *Pater Nosters* offered to the Five Wounds, with the manufacture of the rings

⁶⁴⁵ *A descriptive catalogue of ancient deeds in the public record office*, 4 (London, 1902), 21; *Cl. Rolls*, 1302–07, 446; *Cl. Rolls*, 1337–39, 133–34

⁶⁴⁶ *Fine Rolls* 1319–27, 13.

⁶⁴⁷ 'Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, 2, 5, Supplementary', 372, <https://www.electricscotland.com/history/records/bain/020VolumeFiveSupplementaryRotuliScotiae.pdf> [accessed 19 January, 2020]; *IPM*, 9, 1347–52, 305.

⁶⁴⁸ Mark Ormrod, 'Montagu, William [William de Montacute]', *ODNB*, 2004; <https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/19001> [accessed 31 January, 2020].

⁶⁴⁹ 'Roll of Expenses, 1 Edw III', TNA E 101/383/3, m. 6; 'Account Book of John de Brunham, lieutenant of the controller of the wardrobe. 1 and 2', TNA E 101/383/8 f. 25v; Ian Mortimer, *The Perfect King: The Life of Edward III, Father of the English Nation* (London, 2008), 2, 81, 449.

⁶⁵⁰ Noël Denholm-Young, 'Edward of Windsor and Bermondsey Priory', *The English Historical Review*, 48, 191 (1933), 435–36; J. Stevenson, 'On Cramp Rings', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1, new series (1834), 49.

themselves to take place on a Friday.⁶⁵¹ The episode demonstrates the close interweaving of politics and professional services with personal and religious interests in medieval society, and reveals Croxford as a trusted royal servant of potentially pious disposition.

Croxford's legal background made him a useful public administrator. Between 1317 and 1340 he served several times as sub-escheator, on commissions for oyer and terminer, and to array, keep the peace and determine trespass in Oxfordshire.⁶⁵² While commissions such as these were for the purpose of administering the law, they were led by knights and landowning gentry who did not necessarily have formal legal training. However, from the time of Edward III (1327–77), they were obliged to include those who were 'wise and learned in the law', and justices were to be accompanied by a quorum of lawyers.⁶⁵³ John de Croxford belonged to this group. His regular appearances suggest he was chosen for his legal expertise. His duties would have brought him into contact with other legal figures in the county such as William de Shareshull (1290–1370), with whom he shared commissions, Lord Chief Justice John de Stonore, and justice itinerant Ralph de Bereford (d. 1329).⁶⁵⁴ Stonore and probably Bereford chose to be commemorated by effigies in legal costume similar to that at Witney: Stonore's at Dorchester Abbey, and an effigy which may be Bereford's at the parish church of Deddington (Oxfordshire), indicating a trend towards self-identification as public servants by members of this middle-gentry class (6.5: 1–2).⁶⁵⁵ Between 1339 and 1344 Croxford was a royal agent, acting as assessor

⁶⁵¹ The process is described in a thirteenth-century English manuscript, BL, Arundel MS 275, f. 23, transcribed by Stevenson in *The Gentleman's Magazine* as above, 49–50. Enthusiasm for the king's perceived thaumaturgical powers caused royal expenditure on cramp rings to rise during Edward III's reign from 5s to 25s annually. Mark Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum*, 64, 4 (1989), 849–77 at 864.

⁶⁵² *I. Misc.*, 2, 77; *Cl. Rolls*, 1318–23, 223; *Pat. Rolls*, 1324–27, 209, 215; *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 135–36.

⁶⁵³ John Baker, *An Introduction to Legal History*, Fifth edition (Oxford, 2019), 28.

⁶⁵⁴ Bertha Putnam, *The Place in Legal History of Sir William Shareshull, Chief Justice of the King's Bench 1350–1361* (Cambridge, 1950), 20–23; *Pat. Rolls*, 1327–30, 209, 215, 285.

⁶⁵⁵ Stonore's effigy is identified by his coat of arms on the monument base. The Deddington figure is unnamed but is probably that of Ralph de Bereford, justice and administrator, who in 1324 and 1327 sat on commissions with Stonore and was appointed with him as justice itinerant, *Pat. Rolls*, 1321–24, 162; *Pat. Rolls*, 1324–27, 349, 351; *Pat. Rolls*, 1327–30, 202, 454. The Berefords (or Barfords) were

and collector of wool for the Crown, raising funds to finance the French wars.⁶⁵⁶ Nigel Ramsay makes the plausible suggestion that Croxford was awarded this lucrative position as a reward for his public service.⁶⁵⁷

The effigy in the north transept with its distinctive and highly unusual combination of legal attire and woolsack is a close match for Croxford's career. As Croxford jointly founded a generously endowed chantry at a date that coincides with the style of the monument and the chapel which houses it, it seems safe to conclude that the effigy is his. Croxford is first documented collecting wool for the Crown in 1339.⁶⁵⁸ The inclusion of the woolsack on the effigy thus suggests a date in the late 1330s, a few years after the date indicated by the clothing of the female effigy. The effigies were perhaps produced after the monument itself and consecutively, allowing for the woolsack to be added as a finishing touch.

Croxford emerges from the record as an individual of some standing in the county. He had connections with Bicester Priory and at least three prestigious Oxfordshire families: Giffard, Montagu and de Plessis. His professional abilities would have brought him wealth and social advancement, introductions to other legal professionals, and exposed him to the tastes and manners of the court. His service in the royal household coincided with that of William Trussell (d. 1363), a knight of the royal household, whose chantry college at Shottesbrooke, founded in 1337, has already been mentioned.⁶⁵⁹ The two men were no doubt acquainted particularly as, like Croxford, Trussell had a connection to Montagu, Lord Salisbury. In 1337 Montagu granted some forest land in Binfield to Trussell and quitclaimed his own

a legal family with extensive landholdings across the midlands including in Deddington <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol11/pp81-120#p53>> [accessed 29 June, 2020]. Ralph de Bereford held land in the Deddington townships of Milcombe and Bereford, *Feudal Aids*, 4 (1906), 166.

⁶⁵⁶ *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 294, 295, 297; 1340–43, 394, 569; 1343–45, 240. For an explanation of the way this worked, see <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/manchester-uni/london-lay-subsidy/1332/pp137-177#p15>> [accessed 13 November, 2019].

⁶⁵⁷ Nigel Ramsay, personal comment, January 6, 2020.

⁶⁵⁸ *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 294, 295.

⁶⁵⁹ Matthew Hefferan, 'Edward III's household knights and the Crecy campaign of 1346, *Historical Research*, 92, 255 (February 2019): 24–49.

property interests in Shottesbrooke at a time when Trussell was apparently struggling to support his chantry foundation.⁶⁶⁰ Noting parallels between the sculpture of the monuments and window tracery at Witney and Shottesbrooke, Nigel Saul has proposed a possible route for the transmission of ideas from Oxfordshire to Berkshire via Bishop Burghersh (1292–1340), based on similarities between the moulding profiles of the windows in the Latin chapel at St Frideswide’s, where Burghersh had a chantry, and those at Shottesbrooke (3.3:2; 3.3: 6; 3.3: 8). Burghersh was a leading figure in the government of Edward III and, as a royal courtier and administrator, would have been well known to Trussell.⁶⁶¹ To this can now be added the somewhat closer link between Croxford and Trussell who were presumably also acquainted as members of the royal household, as well as through Montagu. Not only is there a strong resemblance between the tracery designs at Witney and Shottesbrooke but the distinctive end-to-end monument combined with a north transept end window also appears in both places. Trussell’s monument, constructed in the 1340s, is considerably more complex and ambitious than Croxford’s—which as we have seen probably dates to the end of the 1330s. It is possible therefore that the Witney chapel and its monument was the prototype which was then taken up and developed by Trussell at Shottesbrooke.

6.6 A shared chantry

John de Croxford was based in Oxfordshire but unlike Richard de Stanlake he was not a Witney man. He hailed from Kidlington some ten miles away where there was a spacious parish church patronised by his overlord, Hugh de Plessis. He also had interests in Oxford as bailiff of the Hundred outside the north gate, and he owned a number of tenements in the city. These were in the parishes of St Mary Magdalene, St John the Baptist, St Giles and St Martin, which also had substantial churches.⁶⁶² Yet he chose to establish a chantry in the church at Witney and to be memorialised there with a costly monument. Why he should have done so is not immediately obvious. The situation is further complicated by the licence which was not granted to

⁶⁶⁰ *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 430; Saul (2002), 266–72.

⁶⁶¹ Saul (2002), 267.

⁶⁶² *Liber Albus*, 11, 19, 22, 49, 52.

Croxford alone but to him and Richard de Stanlake together, in terms that clearly favour the Stanlake family.

Licence for the alienation in mortmain by Richard de Stanlake of Whitteneye, and John de Croxford, the younger, of six messuages, 100 acres of land, the passage over the river at Sandford by Oxford, and 20s of rent in Whitteneye, Sandford, Yiftele, Littelmores and Couele, to three chaplains to celebrate divine service daily in Whitteneye church for the souls of John de Stanlake of Whitteneye, Hugh, his brother, and their ancestors. By fine of 10l. Oxon.⁶⁶³

The foundation was clearly a Stanlake family chantry. It was in the grand parish church of the borough in which they lived, and divine service was to be celebrated daily for Richard Stanlake's ancestors and his two brothers, John and Hugh. Croxford's involvement can best be explained by an undocumented alliance between the two families, most likely through marriage. He was married by 1326 to a woman named Elizabeth who outlived him.⁶⁶⁴ Elizabeth's birth name is not recorded but if she were one of the wealthy Stanlakes, the connection would provide both a plausible explanation for Croxford's involvement (perhaps acting on her behalf) and good reason to assume that the double monument was raised to both of them as husband and wife.⁶⁶⁵ Furthermore, if Elizabeth provided the motivation for the monument and perhaps financed it, it would justify the occupation of the east recess by the female effigy, while Croxford ensured respect and recognition for himself by means of the individualised male effigy. The apparent lack of monuments to other members of the Stanlake family can be explained by the destruction of the upper chapel, and with it any other memorials it might have contained.

In 1329 Richard de Stanlake and John de Croxford can be seen preparing for their chantry, buying up a parcel of land and rents south of Oxford. In June, they acquired

⁶⁶³ *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–34, 194.

⁶⁶⁴ TNA CP 25/1/189/16, 98; *Liber Albus*, 49.

⁶⁶⁵ Elizabeth may have been John's widow. As Richard was John's heir, she cannot have been his daughter. Nor was she the widow of either Richard (who founded the chantry and whose wife Joanna was alive in 1344) or of Hugh (whose wife Agnes outlived him, *Eynsham Cartulary*, 2, 148). She may have been their sister, or the daughter of Richard or Hugh, or related in some other way.

from Thomas and Alice atte Legh of Oxford two messuages, twenty-three acres of land, two acres of meadow and threepence rent in Church Cowley, Iffley and Littlemore.⁶⁶⁶ In November they bought a further six messuages and one and a half virgates of land in Littlemore from the same couple.⁶⁶⁷ The deal is likely to have been brokered by John de Croxford. Thomas Leghe was a long-standing town clerk of Oxford, serving from 1321 until his death in 1344, and one of its leading solicitors.⁶⁶⁸ As we have seen, Croxford was also a lawyer and owned a number of properties in the same city. Their shared professional interests would mean they were acquainted. The licence granted to Stanlake and Croxford two years later permitted them to alienate the bulk of these considerable purchases, together with further valuable assets, to found their chantry in Witney church. The licence itself provides few details about the chantry but from the manorial records of the bishop of Winchester, lord of Witney manor, we learn that Richard de Stanlake owned a house known as the ‘house of priests’ (*I ten[ementi] p[re]sbito[rum]*) in Corn Street, Witney, a few hundred yards from the church.⁶⁶⁹ This was probably where the chantry chaplains lived. Wood-Legh notes that it was a common requirement for chantry priests to lodge together, indicating a kind of collegiate life or at least a measure of religious propriety.⁶⁷⁰ On its own, this detail is not enough to claim that Stanlake and Croxford’s chantry was of college status but, together with the generous endowments, it indicates a foundation of some standing. Until now there has been no obvious way to identify it with any of the several chantry spaces in the church. There remains no tangible connection between Stanlake and the north transept upper chapel beyond his licence, its date and obvious cost. It is Croxford who provides the missing link via the male effigy with its distinctive attributes of legal costume and woolsack.

Although not of lordly status themselves, both Stanlake and Croxford were wealthy and well connected.⁶⁷¹ They were prominent throughout the county and were

⁶⁶⁶ TNA CP 25/1/189/17, 20.

⁶⁶⁷ TNA CP 25/1/189/17, 31.

⁶⁶⁸ Graham Pollard, ‘The Medieval Town Clerks of Oxford’, *Oxoniensia*, 31 (1966): 43–76, 52, 57.

⁶⁶⁹ HRO 11M59/B1/101, m. 26d. David Rymill, archivist, personal comment, 20 July 2018.

⁶⁷⁰ Wood-Legh (1965), 235–39.

⁶⁷¹ The Croxfords were armigerous later, after 1417. Stapleton (1893), 25.

socially and spiritually aspirational, as indicated by the chantry. They fit the profile identified by Peter Coss and Nigel Saul of the type of self-made men and their families of gentry status who emerge as patrons of church monuments in the early fourteenth century, and whose post-mortem arrangements indicate a desire to emulate the actions of the knightly classes with whom they associated.⁶⁷² They were the wealthier town burgesses who wielded influence in their local communities, and the small landowners who earned a living as merchants, lawyers, civil servants, stewards and administrators. Their work took them round the country and brought them into contact with a broad cross-section of late-medieval society. Anthony Musson has focused on the lawyers within this emerging gentry class.⁶⁷³ He sees little evidence that lawmen were universally regarded with suspicion as agents of the state by the general public (as has been suggested) but instead finds them locked into the community through neighbourhood and family ties, land ownership and public good works. He notes that some justices chose to be memorialised in parish churches rather than monasteries, sometimes in legal robes, indicating a wish to be identified with their profession. He quotes several building projects and educational endowments established during their lives by these same men. They were necessarily often away from home and the motivation for these charitable actions, he concludes, was to bring them recognition and appreciation in their absence and provide them with a feeling of belonging and a stake in local society. After death, their legacy in the form of contributions to roads, churches and schooling meant they would be remembered in the prayers of beneficiaries and fellow parishioners.⁶⁷⁴ Croxford's patronage of Witney's charnel house, and his self-identification as a lawyer, puts him within this group. As little is known about his foundation, the better-documented chantry of his presumed acquaintance Thomas Leghe, clerk of Oxford, may throw some light on the kind of concerns behind it.

The clerks of Oxford were the leading solicitors of their day, acting as notary and witness, proving wills, recording coroner's inquests and the transfer of property.

⁶⁷² See note 20.

⁶⁷³ Anthony Musson, 'Centre and Locality: Perceptions of the Assize Justices in Late Medieval England', in *Law, Governance, and Justice: New Views on Medieval Constitutionalism*, ed. by Richard Kaeuper (Leiden, 2013), 211–41.

⁶⁷⁴ Musson (2013), 235–39.

They acted for the mayor and other prominent citizens on private business, owned property themselves and managed other commercial interests aside from their legal work. Leghe was no exception. In addition to his duties as clerk, he was executor in 1340 of the will of the twelve-times mayor of Oxford, the highly regarded William de Burncestre (Bicester), described in the city records as ‘prudent and mighty’.⁶⁷⁵ He owned several properties in the city, messuages, tenements and shops, and apparently a bakery business.⁶⁷⁶ Leghe exhibits the same sense of charity and obligation to the public that Anthony Musson has identified as characteristic of influential figures, particularly lawyers like himself with local interests. In 1340, Thomas and his second wife Joan established a chantry in the Lady chapel of their parish church of St Michael at the South Gate, including in its ordinances prayers for a range of individuals outside their family including Thomas’s fellow burgesses of Oxford and all the faithful departed.⁶⁷⁷ The chaplain William de Tochale was to join the rector and other ministers of the church in saying matins and the canonical hours daily, celebrating Mass ‘as often as possible’, after High Mass on Sundays and festival days, and the Mass of St Thomas the Martyr on Tuesdays.⁶⁷⁸ William was further required to live outside the city walls ‘among the scholars’, and hear confessions of those taken ill at night when the city gates were shut preventing the rector from coming out to them. This was an extremely important service. Dying unshriven was to be avoided at all costs as it meant entering the next world with unconfessed sins on one’s soul, extending the purgatorial sufferings required to expiate venial sins and, in the case of unconfessed mortal sins, ensuring the sinner was destined for hell. These stipulations show that Thomas and Joan’s foundation was intended to benefit the parish community as well as themselves and their immediate circle. Thomas also left money for the maintenance of the Lady chapel where the chantry was located. He clearly knew the building well and was familiar with its problems. The old, pitched roof was in need of repair and he specified its replacement with a lean-to roof of lead, built ‘as strong as possible’ and nearly flat so

⁶⁷⁵ Pollard (1966), 52; *Liber Albus*, 24.

⁶⁷⁶ *Liber Albus*, 27–28; *Records of Mediaeval Oxford*, ed. by Herbert Salter (Oxford, 1912), 24.

⁶⁷⁷ *Liber Albus*, 27–28.

⁶⁷⁸ This is a frequent stipulation. It prevented a clash between services, allowing participants to witness the elevation of the host at both the high and side altars.

that the existing gutter between the adjacent chapel and church roofs could be dispensed with (the same configuration that allowed water to leak into the chapel at Cogges). The chantry project was evidently dear to Thomas who, as we have already seen, cursed his offspring in his will should they fail to fulfil his wishes.⁶⁷⁹ His public-spirited actions shed light on the incentive behind Stanlake's and particularly Croxford's patronage, which, as we have seen, was associated with a significant public amenity in the form of the parish charnel house, one which served the spiritual needs of the whole community as well as their own while making sure their identity as public figures and their generosity as donors was clearly recognised.

It should not be assumed that Stanlake and Croxford financed the whole of the two-storey north transept extension. There is nothing in the licence to suggest they did, and the cost is likely to have been beyond their reach. Indeed, in 1334 Stanlake transferred five messuages, a mill, 340 acres of land, twenty-seven and a half acres of meadow and a penny rent in Little Minster and Witney to his son Richard and daughter-in-law Isabel, a generous gesture that suggests he was not financially committed elsewhere.⁶⁸⁰ Both Stanlake and Croxford were well-off in comparison with their neighbours but not in the same league as the estate-owning nobility or even the upper ranks of the gentry—many of whom struggled to meet building costs themselves. William Trussell for example resorted to borrowing to finance his college at Shottesbrooke, and was no doubt grateful for the contributions made by Montagu.⁶⁸¹ Gabriel Byng has compared medieval gentry incomes with those of the nobility from around 1300 and concluded that only the most affluent of upper gentry families could have funded a major building project on their own and that even where family insignia or inscriptions imply that the work was the gift of a single individual, expensive parish projects were often jointly funded. Such enterprises were likely to be run by contracting committees and subcommittees acting for the parish. Members would be drawn from amongst the wealthiest and best-regarded local families who also provided the lion's share of the finance; smaller contributions coming from individuals according to their means, and parochial fundraising

⁶⁷⁹ See chap. 3.1: Physical and archival challenges.

⁶⁸⁰ TNA CP 25/1/189/17.

⁶⁸¹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 430.

activities.⁶⁸² Apart from the desire to speed one's soul through purgatory through the performance of good works, the motivation of contributors was complex, incorporating as Byng puts it,

civic pride, social competitiveness, corporate pride,
solidarity, familial loyalty, votive offering, aesthetic pleasure,
memorialisation, the display of wealth, the expectations of
contemporaries, religious injunctions and the desire for
assimilation, popularity or reputation.⁶⁸³

One notable example of a joint project is the rebuilding of the nave of Harlestone church (Northants), in 1325. Henry de Bray supplied the stone and timber while two other men, John Dyve his son-in-law, and Roger de Lumley paid for the ironmongery and carpentry. The rector also contributed.⁶⁸⁴ As Byng points out, none of these men would have been able to fund the work alone but each had access to enough surplus income to contribute to a collaborative venture.⁶⁸⁵ The example is pertinent as there are connections between the donors at Harlestone and the patrons at Witney. Henry de Bray was a lawyer, suggesting a possible association with Croxford.⁶⁸⁶ John Dyve was related to Henry Dyve, Stanlake's landlord at Little Minster.⁶⁸⁷ Their shared overlord was Hugh de Plessis, Croxford's employer.⁶⁸⁸ Furthermore, Henry Dyve was one of those who attacked Richard Stanlake at Witney Market in 1319.⁶⁸⁹ The Dyve family were behind the rebuilding of the north

⁶⁸² Gabriel Byng, *Church Building and Society in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series 107 (Cambridge, 2017), 180–81.

⁶⁸³ Byng (2017), 49.

⁶⁸⁴ *The Estate Book of Henry de Bray of Harlestone, Co. Northants, c. 1289-1340*, ed. by Dorothy Willis (London, 1916), xxi–xxii.

⁶⁸⁵ Byng (2017), 124.

⁶⁸⁶ *Estate Book of Henry de Bray*, xxi–xxii.

⁶⁸⁷ The John de Dyve who married Henry de Bray's daughter Alice in 1308 was another branch of the family, from Brampton (Northants), *Estate Book of Henry de Bray*, xxii; A family tree is given in *The Visitations of Bedfordshire; Annis Domini 1566, 1582, and 1634*, ed. Frederick Blaydes (London, 1884) 21–22. See also *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 10.

⁶⁸⁸ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol15/pp184-192#p20>> [accessed 30 August, 2019]; *Cl. Rolls*, 1337–39, 133.

⁶⁸⁹ See chap. 6.5: Richard de Stanlake of Witney.

aisle at Ducklington around an extravagant monument of similar design to that at Witney (discussed in chapter 7). The links show that the men are likely to have known of each others' commemorative projects while the hint of rivalry suggests they may have been trying to outdo each other.

Like the nave at Harlestone, the Witney charnel house is likely to have been a collaborative project. Given their wealth and standing in the community, the generous funding of their chantry and Croxford's costly double monument, Stanlake and Croxford were clearly among its main financiers. The integration of Croxford's monument with the window and the exterior sculpture scheme suggests that they were closely involved. No contract survives for Witney (such as those on which Byng has based his findings) but they perhaps acted as project managers ensuring that their own interests were served.⁶⁹⁰ Stanlake, as the local man, would have been well placed to hire and oversee contractors and there was plenty of raw material easily available, timber from Wychwood Forest and building stone brought from local quarries such as those at Burford—a short trip down river—or Wheatley and Headington.⁶⁹¹

Stanlake and Croxford appear to have been canny businessmen when planning their chantry. They applied for their mortmain licence in 1331 and paid £10 for it, based on the value of the assets. However, instead of delivering the assets immediately into the 'dead hand' of the church, they continued to develop them by means of 'divers arrentations, approvments and buildings put in void plots', greatly increasing their value, and appointing one of their chaplains, John de Newebury, as 'feoffee' or trustee.⁶⁹² By 1348, when Bishop Edington bought up the endowments, the original six messuages had doubled to twelve; an extra six acres of meadow had been acquired and the twenty shillings of rent had increased to £4. 3d, a pound of cumin and a capon; a transaction which cost him no less than £100.00.⁶⁹³ Nigel Saul notes that chantry founders often avoided the expense of buying a licence at all, appointing

⁶⁹⁰ Byng (2017), 41.

⁶⁹¹ Horsfield (2017), 2, 5, 6.

⁶⁹² *Pat. Rolls*, 1348-50, 53; *The Register of William Edington, Bishop of Winchester, 1346-1366*, 1, Hampshire Record Series 7-8, ed. Stanley Hockey (Winchester, 1986), 75; Appendix 3c and 3a.

⁶⁹³ TNA CP 25/1/190/20, 2; Appendix 3b.

feoffees or endowing land informally, hoping the escheator would not pick up on the transactions and fine them.⁶⁹⁴ At Witney, Stanlake and Croxford stayed within the law, buying a relatively cheap licence for under-developed land, thus keeping their outlay down while retaining control of its revenue.

In 1348, things changed. Richard de Stanlake fled after his indictment for murder, having forfeited a significant sum in money and possessions to the bishop, including the house in Corn Street. John de Croxford died.⁶⁹⁵ His widow Elizabeth followed in 1349.⁶⁹⁶ The date may suggest they were victims of the plague, which was virulent in both Oxford and Witney.⁶⁹⁷ At the same time, Bishop Edington took over the chantry licence and bought out its assets.⁶⁹⁸ It was perhaps unsustainable after Stanlake's disgrace and the cost of his fine. At around this time priests' wages went up as their availability went down in consequence of the Black Death.⁶⁹⁹ If the original perpetual foundation had failed, relatives may have continued to pay for obits on an ad hoc basis. In 1373, an inquiry into the ability of Richard de Stanlake's grandson Roger (described as an idiot) to manage the family lands shows that they were not by any means impoverished—and even murderers could benefit from chantry prayers if properly penitent.⁷⁰⁰ However, over the course of the second half of the fourteenth century, Roger de Stanlake gradually divested himself of most of the family's property in Witney while the Croxfords' interests continued to be in Kidlington and Oxford.⁷⁰¹ The involvement of the original families is likely to have ceased, leaving other patrons, existing or new, to take over: other parishioners perhaps, or members of a merchants' guild, if such existed. As part of a charnel house, the upper chapel would be a desirable chantry location, as demonstrated by the charnel house chapel at High Wycombe where we have seen there were multiple

⁶⁹⁴ Saul (2017a) 139.

⁶⁹⁵ *Liber Albus*, 132.

⁶⁹⁶ *Liber Albus*, 49.

⁶⁹⁷ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol4/pp3-73#p45-76>> [accessed 20 November, 2020]; Hyde (1954), 167.

⁶⁹⁸ TNA CP 25/1/190/20, 2.

⁶⁹⁹ Wood-Legh (1965), 93.

⁷⁰⁰ *IPM*, 1370–73, 264–65; Cook (1963), 24.

⁷⁰¹ *IPM*, 1370–73, 264–65; *Pat. Rolls*, 1377–81, 26, 238; Stapleton, 23–25.

foundations.⁷⁰² One of these patrons may have been bishop Edington himself, firstly to prevent the chapel becoming a burden on the community, and secondly to provide a daily chantry mass for the parish and for all the Christian dead, both of which were matters of episcopal concern.⁷⁰³ However it was not until 1361 that the bishop formally re-founded the Stanlake/Croxford chantry, and there is no evidence of its location.⁷⁰⁴ The records say only that his priest was to celebrate Mass at the altar of St Mary in ‘the said chapel’, but this could mean any one of several side altars in the church. Baggs and Chance put forward the now lost chapel that ran east of the south transept, which they suggest the bishop may have built for the purpose.⁷⁰⁵ Nineteenth-century views of the church show a range in this position with Perpendicular-style windows which could match with the date of 1361 (6.6: 1). However, Edington alienated only part of Stanlake and Croxford’s chantry assets—which argues against an expensive new building; and he employed one priest in place of the original three, a certain John Bushe who was to live in Stanlake’s former property in Witney—which suggests continuity with the earlier foundation.⁷⁰⁶ It was perhaps founded at the same altar. Moreover, the terms were altered in a way that suggests a corporate rather than a personal chantry, the beneficiaries being the standard ones of the bishop himself, the king, their families and ‘all the faithful departed’. By this date, Edington had already embarked on extensive, and costly, post-mortem projects elsewhere, namely his chantry college at Edington (Wilts), founded in 1351, and the rebuilding of the nave of Winchester Cathedral where he established another chantry, housing a grand alabaster tomb.⁷⁰⁷ His will includes bequests to a long list of chantries, religious houses and individuals who were to celebrate Mass and pray for his soul.⁷⁰⁸ His small-scale foundation at Witney is not amongst them suggesting it was not a major or personal concern. The Chantry

⁷⁰² See note 149.

⁷⁰³ Wood-Legh (1965), 55, 59; Blomefield (1805–10), *Norwich*, 56.

⁷⁰⁴ *Cl. Rolls*, 1360–64, 281; *Pat. Rolls*, 1361–64, 27.

⁷⁰⁵ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol14/pp130-144#p19>> [accessed 1 August, 2020].

⁷⁰⁶ *Pat. Rolls*, 1350–54, 63.

⁷⁰⁷ Budge (2017), 37, 99; Sally Badham, ‘The Rise to Popularity of Alabaster for Memorialisation’, *CM*, 31 (2016), 1–43 at 16.

⁷⁰⁸ *Wiltshire Notes and Queries. An Illustrated Quarterly, Antiquarian and Genealogical Magazine*, 3 (Devizes, 1902), 217–21.

Certificates of 1547 record a ‘free chapell or chauntre of oure Ladye’ whose priest said Mass ‘for all Crysten soules’ and lived in accommodation owned by the bishop, ‘after the custome of the manor of Wytney’.⁷⁰⁹ This corporate chantry, dedicated to the Virgin and still functioning in the sixteenth century, may be the remnants of the bishop’s re-founding of the Stanlake/Croxford chantry. However, its location is not identified and the connection with the charnel house ultimately remains unproven.

6.7 Interpreting the sculpture

Having established the function of the north transept extension as a charnel house and its most prominent patrons as Richard de Stanlake, John de Croxford and probably Elizabeth, Croxford’s wife, I now return to the sculpture that once adorned the outside. Much has been lost and, apart from the Resurrection fragment at Rothwell, there is no remaining imagery on charnel houses elsewhere in the UK with which to compare. Yet a theme for the overall programme at Witney may yet be identifiable through observation of what does remain and by comparison with imagery in other, related settings. As the main figures are missing, this will depend upon the interpretation of ancillary details which would not normally be the main focus of investigation, specifically the pair of figurative image brackets in the upper niches described earlier. A discussion on this basis must remain speculative but is justified here for a number of reasons: the carvings themselves are highly distinctive, depicting male and female figures and specific sins; they appear to emerge from the ground, as if rising from the grave; they occur in the context of a charnel house; and they and the larger sculptures they once supported are closely associated with the effigies of a lawyer and his wife inside the upper chapel, suggesting a carefully planned, integrated scheme. In the following discussion, I argue that, in combination, these surviving details evoke a Last Judgement scenario emphasising the twin themes of justice and mercy, with the patronal monument at their centre.

Four large statues were once displayed in superimposed niches in the buttresses at the end of the north transept. No remnants of these figures survive but some surrounding sculpture remains. Lost or mutilated statuary can sometimes be identified from surviving attributes or other iconographical details. At Welwick, on

⁷⁰⁹ *The Chantry Certificates*, 17.

the mid fourteenth-century monument of William de la Mare, a partial female figure can be identified as St Margaret by the dragon at her feet. At Llantwit Major (South Glam) an empty stone niche of c. 1200–50 rests on an image bracket carved with the sleeping figure of Jesse while the branches of the Jesse tree, inhabited with the heads of kings and prophets, form the sides and arch. The iconography suggests it displayed an image of the Virgin and Child (6.7: 1–2).⁷¹⁰ The supporting sculpture in these instances belongs to an established visual tradition, thus hinting strongly at the subject of missing material. This is not always the case. On the south porch at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, a series of image brackets is carved with lively carvings depicting defeated monsters and crouching caryatids and atlantes (6.7: 3). Their contorted poses and facial expressions indicate generic wrongdoing but not the particular sins for which they are paying. The statues they once supported were by implication saintly figures but the sculptured brackets give no clue to their individual identities. By contrast, the supporting sculptures at Witney are individualised and hint at specific sins. While not as instantly recognisable as the wheel of St Katherine or the dragon of St Margaret, they may still point towards the theme of the sculpture groups, if not the specific identity of the lost presiding statues.

The pair of image brackets at the upper level carry the intriguing carvings already described: a woman suckled by snakes, and a man attacked by a rounded, eroded creature. As at Bristol, the statues standing over them were no doubt holy figures representing the defeat of sin, or the triumph of Virtue over Vice.⁷¹¹ The subject is an appropriate subject for a charnel house, a powerful visual metaphor for Purgatory where the dead were cleansed of their sins.⁷¹² The Virtue and Vice motif is a common theme in medieval imagery. It frequently takes the form of a standing figure trampling a fallen one; for example, the Virgin standing on a snake, St Katherine defeating her pagan oppressor Maxentius, and the saints Margaret, Michael and George defeating their respective dragons. Another type shows a series of personified virtues striking a victorious pose over their opposite vices who lie

⁷¹⁰ Marks (2004), 49, 53.

⁷¹¹ Eva Kimminich, 'The Way of Virtue and Vice: A Medieval Psychology', in *Comparative Drama*, 25, 1 (1991) 77–86; Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art* (New York, 1964).

⁷¹² Reinburg (2012), 169; Crangle (2016), 190–91.

crushed at their feet. See for example the thirteenth-century font at Stanton Fitzwarren (Wilts) (6.7: 4).

The carvings at Witney belong to this general tradition and yet stand out. They have a narrative character and appear to represent the punishment of specific, gendered sins. Such iconographic detail is unusual at parish level where moulded image brackets tend to be standardised: carved as foliage or caryatids, but are more often non-figurative. As we have seen, even where figurative brackets depicting sinners do occur, as at St Mary Redcliffe, they do not replicate the Witney conceit of particularised sins. At Heckington, only a handful of the image brackets are carved with grotesques, none portraying an identifiable sin. In the sculpture-rich chancel at Edington, there is a pair of sculptured image brackets in niches to either side of the east window. The larger figures they supported are lost but, on the south side, the bracket depicts a young man hanging his head and struggling to rise from the ground. Its pendant on the north shows a seated priest with his hand on the head of another youth, denoting Penance (6.7: 5–6). Seen together they evoke sin and repentance, but the sin is generic and the carvings do not replicate the grouping of particularised sin and presiding figure found at Witney.

A closer example is to be found at Donington (Lincs). Its early fourteenth-century detached west tower has prominent buttresses with canopied image niches inside them, recalling those at Witney. Another niche is positioned over the doorway. The statues they held are lost but the niches themselves are much adorned with architectural flourishes and grotesques, one of which depicts the ‘ship of fools’ (6.7: 7). Further narrative subjects are carved onto the front of the image pedestals, similar in appearance if not in subject to those at Witney. On the west front, the figures to left and right, respectively, show a woman crawling and a bearded man spearing something with a sword. In the centre is a human figure flanked by animals, too degraded to identify (6.7: 8a–c). Seen together they have a sequential, anecdotal character and recall the cautionary tales that unfold in bas-de-page images in contemporary illustrated manuscripts; for example, the stories of Beves of Hampton and Guy of Warwick, illustrated on consecutive pages in the Teymouth Hours (England, c. 1325–50, BL, MS Yates Thomson 13, ff 8–17). Katherine Smith has shown how closely the scenes in this manuscript relate to the devotional texts they

accompany and other imagery on the same pages. For example, a bier carrying the corpse of a young nobleman, violently killed by Guy of Warwick, is depicted beneath an image of the scourging of St Katherine. The accompanying prayer extols the saint's refusal of earthly honour and wealth because of her perfect love of God (6.7: 9).⁷¹³ The combination, Smith claims, contrasts St Katherine's spiritual motives with Guy's misplaced worldly concerns, positioning her as model to his anti-model.⁷¹⁴ The sculpture at Donington is likely to have functioned in the same way. The corbel figures would attract attention through narrative, evoking a story of human sinfulness or folly, while the contrast with saintly figures above would prompt penance and point the way to salvation.

These examples demonstrate that the juxtaposition of antithetical imagery was an established trope. It occurred in the chancel at Edington, in the public space around the tower at Donington, and in the pages of the Taymouth Hours, an expensive, privately-owned prayer book. Its patterns were thus known to a broad-based audience. It is safe to assume that the sculpture programme at Witney would be readily identified by viewers as belonging to this saint/sinner tradition—even if the particular subject matter departed from the familiar.

The female sinner

The carving of the woman suckling snakes at Witney is an oddity both in terms of date and subject but has not so far attracted comment. Known as the *femme-aux-serpents*, this penitential motif was widespread in the twelfth century, found on portals and capitals of religious buildings in France and northern Spain, particularly along pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela.⁷¹⁵ It does not feature in the repertoire of later sculptors, and, even while bearing in mind the scale of loss, does not ever seem to have been popular in England, particularly at parish level.⁷¹⁶ The only insular examples I have found are on the Last Judgement frieze at Lincoln Cathedral, c. 1140s, and a badly eroded version on the porch at Malmesbury Abbey,

⁷¹³ The Taymouth Hours, f. 16v.

⁷¹⁴ Kathryn Smith, *The Taymouth Hours* (London, 2012), 95.

⁷¹⁵ Jerman and Weir (1993), 123–44

⁷¹⁶ A trawl through the CRSBI website did not reveal any <<https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/>> [accessed 20 August, 2020].

c. 1170s (6.7: 10–11). Its prominent appearance at Witney is thus unusual, meriting attention.

Since the early nineteenth century, iconographers have interpreted the image as a representation of lust, an identification that continues to be widely accepted.⁷¹⁷ Lust was one of the seven deadly sins and one to which women were particularly prone, according to humoral theory. The phallic shape of creatures like snakes and lizards meant they were associated with sex. They were understood to be cold and damp to the touch. This affiliated them with women—who were also cold and damp, and thus sexually voracious by association.⁷¹⁸ However, on the frieze at Lincoln, serpents attack male as well as female sinners, coiling round the legs of both and attacking their groins but not in fact suckling them, while the sins punished in this way include avarice as well as lust and sodomy. The image evidently took different forms: it was not exclusively female, nor was it restricted to lust. Recent scholarship suggests that the woman with snakes at her breasts had a more generic meaning in relation to female sinfulness. Udo Becker notes that Christian art, which frequently represents the Mother of God nursing the infant Christ (*Maria lactans*), ‘distinguishes between the good mother, who gives the milk of truth, and the evil one, who suckles serpents at her bosom’.⁷¹⁹ Anne Ashton notes that it also evokes Eve, the Christian anti-hero, condemned to the pains of birth and the humiliation of breastfeeding through her association with the snake, but redeemed by Mary.⁷²⁰ It may also have had a more nuanced meaning. In her analysis of the much-discussed *femme-aux-serpents* in the south porch at Moissac, Amanda Luyster claims that one of its meanings was pitilessness or lack of compassion—the woman suckling snakes instead of babies

⁷¹⁷ Amanda Luyster and Raphael Guesuraga both provide an overview, demonstrating that the proposal made initially by Arcisse de Caumont in 1840 and consolidated by Emile Mâle in 1922 has been reused by commentators since. Amanda Luyster, ‘“The Femme-Aux-Serpents at Moissac: Luxuria (Lust) or a Bad Mother?”’, in *In Between Magic and Religion: Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and Society*, ed. by Sulochana Asirvatham, Corinne Pache, and John Watrous (Oxford, 2001), 165–91 at 175–76; and Raphaël Guesuraga, ‘La femme allaitant des serpents et ses liens avec la Luxure’, *Bulletin du centre d’études médiévales d’Auxerre* (2019), 1–24.

⁷¹⁸ Phillips (2003), 24–25.

⁷¹⁹ Udo Becker, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Symbols* (London, 2000), 198.

⁷²⁰ Anne Ashton, ‘Interpreting Breast Iconography in Italian Art, 1250-1600’ (PhD, Scotland, St Andrews, 2012), 40.

representing 'bad mothering' (6.3: 15). This was underscored at Moissac by the scene of the Visitation opposite in which both the Virgin and St Elizabeth clearly gesture towards their breasts, emphasising their idealised motherhood (6.7: 12).⁷²¹ In support of her argument, Luyster quotes from two widely-circulated visionary accounts of journeys to hell: the fourth-century vision of St Paul and the twelfth-century vision of Alberic the monk, both of which were available in vernacular translations.⁷²² In these stories, the protagonists encountered women in hell being suckled by snakes. They were identified as pitiless women who had abandoned or killed their babies in horrible ways or had refused to wet-nurse orphans. Luyster notes that in St Paul's account, the women had also erred through prostitution but this was not the primary sin for which they were being punished as, instead of being in the company of other adulterers and fornicators, they were placed alongside usurers and those who had refused to show mercy to women and children. The women were suffering a reflexive punishment for going against their female nature and failing to act with compassion as mothers. Their sin was thus mercilessness first and sexual incontinence second.

Raphael Guesuraga takes up the argument. He distinguishes between the widespread depiction of women with snakes and other reptiles at their breasts and the much smaller group in which reptiles simultaneously target the genitals. In a survey of one hundred and ten examples in France and northern Spain, he finds only four of the second type, including that at Moissac. He further notes that those of the first type are sometimes clothed.⁷²³ See for example the blind south arch on the west front of the Abbey of Ste Croix, Bordeaux which shows four clothed women with snakes at their breasts and demons whispering into their ears (6.7: 13). The difference indicates that the two images belong in separate iconographic categories, the Moissac type carrying more obvious sexual connotations than the other. Guesuraga quotes the same sources on mercilessness as Luyster and demonstrates that, in the twelfth century, the female breast was associated more with reproduction than with eroticism. He thus considers that Romanesque carvings of women suckling snakes

⁷²¹ Luyster (2001), 165–91. See also Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Art* (New York, 1977), 236.

⁷²² Luyster (2001), 176–78.

⁷²³ Guesuraga (2019), 4, 9.

where their genitals are not targeted were more likely to indicate sins of a maternal than a sexual nature (*les images romanes de femmes allaitant des serpents, peu ciblées dans leur parties genitales, aient une signification plus maternelle que sexuelle*).⁷²⁴ He goes on to show that while the image disappeared from the sculptor's repertoire after the twelfth century, it continued into the fourteenth century in oral form. In one story of c. 1320s, a woman who had gone against her female nature by killing her babies found them transformed into dragons which she was condemned to breastfeed for eternity.⁷²⁵ In others, there is evidence that the top and bottom halves of the body were treated differently, further demonstrating that it was the genitals, not the breasts that were primarily associated with sexual offences and their punishment. One of these stories concerns a wealthy woman buried in a monastery. In life she had been guilty of pride and garrulousness but had remained chaste. At night, demons dragged her from her grave and burnt her body above the waist, as punishment for her sins, but left her untouched below, on account of her virginity.⁷²⁶ At Witney, the lower half of the *femme-aux-serpents* remains out of sight, below ground. Her torment is directed only at her breasts, indicating that the sin she represents is likewise related not to sex but to motherhood or female nature.

The breast has a long history in this context, both as a symbol of compassion and its opposite. The first-century Roman writers Valerius and Pliny the Elder tell stories of compassionate women who breastfeed their starving parents who have been wrongfully imprisoned, a scene known as 'Roman Charity'.⁷²⁷ In Christian iconography, images of the Virgin breastfeeding the infant Christ (*Maria Lactans*) symbolise her essential role in the Incarnation while stressing her maternal compassion (6.7: 14). In some visual representations of the Last Judgement, she intercedes for sinners by baring her breast to her son as a reminder, prompting him to

⁷²⁴ Guesuraga (2019), 7.

⁷²⁵ Guesuraga (2019), 6, quoting *La scala coeli de Jean Gobi*, ed. Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris, 1991), no. 250.

⁷²⁶ *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. by Thomas Crane (London, 1890), 113.

⁷²⁷ James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (London, 1979), 52. Weir and Jerman observe that a woman suckling animals can also carry the related meaning of *Terra* ('Mother Earth'), symbolising the earth's bounty, Weir and Jerman (1993), 69.

show compassion in his turn (6.7: 15). A mural at Beckley combines the two ideas, with a central *Maria lactans* surrounded by Last Judgement imagery (6.7: 16). The same image occurs in oral culture. In the early fourteenth-century *Processus Sathanae* (The Trial of Satan), the Virgin begs her son to be merciful towards humankind, falling to her knees, cutting open her garment at the breast and sobbing, ‘My blessed son, [...] I am your most dear mother that carried you for nine months and piously nourished you with milk from these breasts.’⁷²⁸ Stories of compassionate women interceding with powerful men to obtain mercy beyond justice are a commonplace of both biblical and secular traditions and show that compassion was culturally understood to be a female virtue. Examples include the Old Testament story of Esther pleading with the Persian king Ahasuerus to save the life of the Jews, and the pregnant Queen Philippa throwing herself at the feet of Edward III to plead for the life of the burghers of Calais in 1347.⁷²⁹ The strong association between the female breast and compassion meant it could equally symbolise the opposite, mercilessness. In one story, a woman who had quarrelled with her son dispossessed him and handed him over to the devil. She cursed him by falling to her knees, tearing open her gown to reveal her breasts saying, ‘I give you my curse with these breasts which you sucked and my womb in which I carried you’.⁷³⁰ The image continued to have currency into the seventeenth century when Shakespeare used it to express the unnatural ruthlessness of Lady Macbeth,

I have given suck and know how tender ‘tis to love the babe
that milks me—I would, while it was smiling in my face,
have pluck’d my nipple from his boneless gums, and dash’d
the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done to this
(Macbeth 1.7).⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ Karl Shoemaker, ‘The Devil at Law in the Middle Ages’, *Revue de l’histoire Des Religions*, 4 (1 December 2011), 567–586 <<https://doi.org/10.4000/rhr.7826#31>> [accessed 2 June 2019].

⁷²⁹ Book of Esther, 8: 3-8; Susan Rose, *Calais: An English Town in France, 1347-1558* (Woodbridge, 2008), 20.

⁷³⁰ Michael Goodich, *Violence and Miracle in the Fourteenth Century: Private Grief and Public Salvation* (Chicago and London, 1995), 78.

⁷³¹ William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. by Peter Alexander (London, 1978).

The motif of the woman suckling snakes may thus be seen as representing mercilessness, an inversion of the cultural ideal of compassion symbolised by a nursing mother and epitomised in Christian art by the Mother of God. The form of the Witney carving suggests that it was this meaning that was intended, rather than lust. By the fourteenth century, viewers may have been more familiar with moralising tales than the visual image but its symbolism would be nonetheless clear. The subject of the lost sculpture above it cannot now be recovered but, drawing on the familiar trope of antithetical images of vice and virtue, it is most likely to have represented its opposite, i.e., mercy, perhaps embodied by the Virgin (as at Moissac), in one form or another. The location of the sculpture group in the upper east buttress brought it physically close to the east tomb recess inside the chapel where the female effigy lay, with a female demi-figure above. If the above reading is correct, this is an intentional compositional device, the juxtaposition conferring the female attribute of mercy onto the deceased woman by association.

The male sinner

The eroded sculpture on the corresponding pedestal in the neighbouring buttress is more difficult to decipher. The twisted figure of a man emerging from the ground is clearly visible, his contortions evoking either pain or fear, but all that remains of the object which threatens him is a convex shape, apparently a creature with rounded contours, perhaps biting him. A man struggling away from a beast threatening to devour or attack him has many parallels, all of which carry connotations of sinfulness and punishment. As demonstrated, the pendant carving in the east buttress shows the gendered representation of sin, punished in a reflexive way. It is reasonable to assume that the same applies here as well, and that the west pedestal was carved to represent the targeted punishment of a sin traditionally understood to be male. At Moissac, the *femme-aux-serpent* appears alongside the personification of avarice: a hag-ridden male figure with a bag of money hung round his neck. At Ste Croix, Bordeaux, the women with snakes at their breasts round the south arch are countered by male figures weighed down by money bags round the north arch. The same pairing does not seem to have been repeated at Witney: the damaged shape does not lend itself to identification as a moneybag, and other possibilities should be considered.

In the context of a charnel house, the rounded remains of the attacking beast may suggest a toad, a creature loathed for its association with death and decay, horribly envisioned as we have seen at Great Bromley (6.3: 23). The image was widespread and long-lived, as shown by the image of *Frau Welt* at Worms, c. 1300 and by the later tradition of verminous cadavers (6.7: 17).⁷³² The toad was believed to feast on decaying flesh but also attacked the living.⁷³³ It was one of the animal torturers in purgatory and a sinister harbinger of evil, appearing in a variety of moralising stories and sermons. In one of these, told by Caesarius of Heisterbach, a monk named Theodoric killed a toad only for it to repeatedly regenerate and pursue him. The monk eventually allowed the toad to bite him and was freed. The story symbolises the endless struggle between good and evil and the purifying effect of punishment on sinners.⁷³⁴

Another tale appears in John Mirk's *Festial*:

A knight suffered from the sin of gluttony and died. His son suffered from the same sin. He forgot to say his devotions at his father's grave until in the middle of hosting a dinner. He quickly went to the grave and when he got there he felt a great desire to see his father, so he had his men undo the tomb and found a great foul toad devouring his father's throat. The son then reformed from his gluttonous ways.⁷³⁵

A third example is the tale of *Crapaud* which tells of an avaricious and ungrateful young man who allows his wife to dominate him and lead him on to ill-treat his foolish, overly generous father.⁷³⁶ He is punished by a toad that attaches to his face, growing larger and larger, only disappearing when the son repents. These stories have at their core the redemptive power of purgatorial punishment, an appropriate subject for a chantry setting. However, although the stories feature male

⁷³² Oosterwijk, 50–55.

⁷³³ Luyster (2001), 182–86.

⁷³⁴ Nora Flores, *Animals in the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, 2016), 33–34.

⁷³⁵ *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkus*, I, ed. by Theodore Erbe (London, 1905), 85.

⁷³⁶ Adrian Tudor, *Tales of Vice and Virtue: The First Old French Vie des Pères* (Amsterdam, 2005), 357–375.

protagonists, the sins themselves are not specifically male. One sin which *is* regularly shown as male is cowardice, usually depicted as a young man frightened by a harmless animal. For example, to either side of the Judgement portal at Amiens cathedral there is a series of mid thirteenth-century quatrefoils containing reliefs of virtues and vices. Amongst these is a young knight who drops his sword and turns to flee when startled by a rabbit (6.7: 18). There is a similar example at Notre Dame, Paris. It is hard to see the sculpture at Witney as a rabbit but it may be the remnants of another creature with similar connotations, the snail, for example, which is found fighting or terrorising knights in both sculpture and manuscript illustration (6.17: 19–21). The motif has been variously interpreted as an image of the Resurrection, a symbol of sloth, a social climber, a pest and a sexual pun but it is perhaps most often interpreted as representing unchivalrous, cowardly behaviour, demonstrating a lack of faith, and thus a sin against God.⁷³⁷

There are other possible identifications for the creature at Witney. Despite its condition (or perhaps because of it) it bears a passing resemblance to a bas-de-page illustration in the Macclesfield Psalter of a frightened youth menaced by a giant skate. The skate was once well-known off English coasts, fished from estuaries and commonly eaten (6.7: 22–23).⁷³⁸ As it swims, it undulates, has an eerily human-like face in the centre of its body and spiny scales round its eyes, central ridge and tail. Although harmless, it can grow large and it is easy to see how it could be imagined as threatening. The image in the Macclesfield Psalter accompanies a verse from Psalm 45 which calls on God in times of trouble and anticipates the end of days:

God is our refuge and our strength, our helper in times of
tribulations that have greatly overwhelmed us. Therefore, we
will not fear when the earth trembles and the mountains tumble
into the sea.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁷ Camille (2010), 32–36.

⁷³⁸ Peter Hammond, *Food and Feast in Medieval England* (Stroud, 2005), 62; Terence Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1997), 75; *The Household Book of Dame Alice de Bryene, of Acton Hall, Suffolk, Sept. 1412–Sept. 1413*, ed. by Vincent Redstone, trans. M. K. Dale (Ipswich, 1931), 24.

⁷³⁹ Psalm 46 (45): 2–3.

Stella Panayotova sees this combination of text and image as contrasting faith with spiritual cowardice; symbolism it shares with the rabbit and snail, and perhaps therefore with the creature at Witney.⁷⁴⁰ The condition of the sculpture makes it impossible to say for sure which creature was intended, only that the subject is penitential and appears to represent sin (perhaps cowardice) in the guise of a man threatened by a beast of some sort. The sequence of sins including cowardice at Amiens Cathedral and Notre Dame, Paris appear in association with Last Judgement tympana, as do the women suckling snakes at Moissac and at Ste Croix, Bordeaux. At Malmesbury, the sins that include the woman suckled by snakes are carved on the outer porch, constituting a call to penance and a warning of the coming Judgement represented by Christ in Majesty inside the porch.⁷⁴¹ At Witney, the tormented sinners emerge from the ground as if rising from their graves. Sharpened by the charnel house context, this suggests that they too were part of an end-of-days scenario.

Like its pendant, the sculpture group in the west buttress is gendered. The sinner on the bracket is male and the niche is positioned to coincide with the male effigy and male demi-figure on the inside of the wall. I argued earlier, based on the woman suckling snakes, that when entire, the female group represented the sin of mercilessness defeated by divine mercy. If so, the male group ought to obey the same organising principle. Due to the erosion of the exterior sculpture, we have to read it in the opposite direction—with the effigy inside providing the key to the theme of the sculpture outside. As the effigy depicts a lawyer, this theme is likely to have been justice: the lost figure presiding over the fearful, perhaps cowardly sinner symbolising the triumph of divine justice at the end of time. Justice could be personified as either a seated judge, or man or woman holding sword and scales.⁷⁴² Here we are expecting a male figure. Its specific identity can only be guessed at but given the probable end-of-days theme for the whole programme, Christ the judge or

⁷⁴⁰ Panayotova (2008), 64.

⁷⁴¹ Rita Wood, 'Malmesbury Abbey: the sculpture of the south entrance', *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine*, 91 (1998), 42–56 at 47.

⁷⁴² See for example the series of images in James le Palmer, *Omne Bonum*, (Engl. c. 1360–75), BL, MS Royal 6 E VI–6 E VII between folios 247 and 392; and *La somme le roi* (France, c. 1325–50), BL, Royal 19 C II f. 49v.

St Michael weighing souls are possibilities, countered by the merciful figure of the Virgin proposed for the adjacent niche. Given the scale of loss, these identities can only be suggestions. However, the overall premise of a Last Judgement scenario of some sort suggested by the surviving material is given weight by the location of the sculpture: the charnel house directly faces Market Green with its markets and fairs, the juxtaposition providing a stark reminder that the concerns of this world in the form of commerce and entertainment were fleeting in comparison with eternity. The plight of lawbreakers suffering temporal justice at the pillory would provide an all too literal metaphor for purgatory and divine justice and the need sinners had for merciful intercession if they were to avoid eternal damnation.

Justice and Mercy

As Karl Shoemaker explains, the end of time had been described in juridic terms since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. It was understood as a day of judgement when mankind would come before an omnipotent God in a kind of courtroom scene and be judged, ‘each according to his works, the reprobate as well as the elect.’⁷⁴³ St Matthew’s gospel, which recounts Christ’s description of the Son of Man enthroned in all his glory dividing the sheep from the goats, frames the Last Judgement in these same terms.⁷⁴⁴ Yet divine justice was not blind. In some Last Judgement stories, the Virgin appears as a skilled, even wily, legal advocate who acted as counsel for the defence and beat the devil or his emissary in argument, making sure that his malicious insistence on strict adherence to the law did not mean it was unjustly applied. From the early fourteenth century, these stories appeared in sermons as well as legal textbooks, suggesting they were widely known.⁷⁴⁵ However, the Virgin was more frequently invoked as a compassionate intercessor, pleading for mercy on behalf of those sinners who called upon her at the Last Judgement. The mural at Beckley provides a conceptual version of this scene (6.7: 16). It is much damaged but the subject can still be made out. The central image is the Virgin suckling the Christ child, framed within a cusped lozenge. The child’s hand is raised in blessing as in representations of Christ in Majesty but here pointing to the image immediately

⁷⁴³ Shoemaker (2011), 567–586.

⁷⁴⁴ Matthew 25:31–46.

⁷⁴⁵ Shoemaker (2011), 18–20.

above, contained within a second, interlocking frame. This shows St Michael weighing souls, with the Virgin on one side, using her rosary beads to tip the balance of the scales in favour of the penitent, and a devil on the other, attempting the opposite. Graphic depictions of the punishment of sinners are arranged around the perimeter of the composition, including spit-roasting and hanging by the heels. The message to the viewer is clear. Gesturing towards St Michael, Christ, who is both suckling infant and divine judge, acknowledges his mother's request for clemency towards the penitent soul, while images of torture warn of the eternal torments awaiting those who remain unrepentant, and are justly punished.

These examples, drawn from both visual and oral sources, demonstrate that a medieval audience was aware of the distinction between the law applied blindly and justice tempered by divine mercy, an apposite subject for the purgatorial context of a charnel house where the bones of the dead were sheltered until resurrected at the Last Judgement. The remains of the Witney sculpture evoke this theme, its message directed outwards to the community and inwards to the patrons—whose monument is the anchor for the whole programme. Precedents for relationships between interior and exterior imagery have already been identified at Cogges, Adderbury and Shottesbrooke. At Witney the benefits of the juxtaposition are clear, presenting the lawyer John de Croxford as a just man, and Elizabeth as a merciful woman, exploiting cultural tropes and emphasising qualities they would wish to identify with in life and from which they would hope to benefit in death.⁷⁴⁶

The lower image niches are wider and deeper than those above, able to accommodate large, almost life-sized figures presented at eye-level. Their position corresponds with the charnel chamber and while nothing in the supporting sculpture hints at their identity they were no doubt part of the same complex of images, contributing to the salvation of those whose bones were displayed within. Whatever the precise details of the missing elements, the sculpture and the charnel house itself would have communicated to the whole parish an important and essentially redemptive message about the experiences of the body after death and before judgement, envisioning

⁷⁴⁶ The amounts of wool extracted from Oxfordshire merchants were less than in other counties. Croxford perhaps considered himself to have acted fairly, even generously < <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/manchester-uni/london-lay-subsidy/1332/pp137-177#p15> > [accessed 19 April 2020].

them as a series of purging processes, physical and spiritual, readying the souls of the dead for the afterlife while encouraging the living to repent, perform good works and offer intercessory prayer.

6.8 Summary

The involvement of Stanlake and Croxford in the construction of the charnel house is not mentioned on the chantry licence but can be inferred from the close integration of the Croxford monument into the fabric and the iconographic programme. While they are unlikely to have been the only donors, their engagement in the project would have enabled them to commission imagery reflecting their own interests while benefiting the wider community for whom a charnel house was a significant amenity. Their strategy in associating their personal chantry with the public character of the charnel house was an effective one, ensuring a permanent place in the consciousness of the community, the people with whom they had associated in life and on whose intercessory prayers they relied in death.

The monument is of considerable importance to the study of medieval commemorative practice. Its location in a well-appointed chapel raised over a charnel crypt indicates the value of proximity to charnel in post-mortem soul care, an under-recognised feature of parish commemoration. The male effigy represents a significant addition to the small corpus of known medieval lawyers' monuments with its unusual combination of attributes: legal garb and the device of a woolsack. The woolsack renders the monument unique as it is not otherwise known in these circumstances. It advertises not wool-derived wealth as on later brasses but the deceased's prestigious role as an agent of the Crown. The prominence of the female effigy, plausibly identified here as Elizabeth de Croxford, hints at the influence of a previously unknown woman on a visually complex and spiritually effective memorial. Together, charnel house and monument provide a fascinating glimpse of the ellipse between devotional and professional interests in a late-medieval Oxfordshire parish.

CHAPTER 7: The north aisle at Ducklington

As at Cogges and Witney, the chantry chapel at Ducklington is the most conspicuously decorated part of the church (7.0). Like them, it has elegant curvilinear windows, much figurative sculpture and an eye-catching founder's tomb (0.8–9). It is also located close to a charnel crypt. It is distinguished from the other two by a series of interior sculpture panels depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin, placed at the top of the walls around the east window. It is further differentiated by its architectural setting, being located at the east end of the north nave aisle rather than in a self-contained structure. The patrons of the chapel have not been satisfactorily identified while brief references to the sculpture made by earlier writers leave many unanswered questions. In order to tackle these issues, I start with the historical background to medieval Ducklington, placing it in its religious and social context. This is followed by a brief building chronology of the whole church and a more detailed description of the Decorated north aisle and its chantry chapel. I then consider the identity of the patrons. These have been assumed to be the Dyve family, longstanding lords of the manor and holders of the advowson, but the connection has not been fully explored.⁷⁴⁷ In the final section, I analyse the sculpture and its setting in relation to the themes identified in chapter 4, i.e., the concerns of the patrons and other members of the wider parish community; trends in commemorative practice, the possibility of female involvement, and the influence of books of hours on chantry imagery, here focussing on forms of prayer practiced by the laity, using contemporary devotional texts as a key.

The names Dyve and Dyne are indistinguishable in medieval orthography and have been transcribed in both forms. For example, in 1308 'John Dyve or Dyne' is named as keeper of the peace for Oxfordshire.⁷⁴⁸ In 1318, 'Margery Dyne (or Dyve)' is listed as abbess of Godstow.⁷⁴⁹ In 1325, Henry Dyne is recorded as holding land in

⁷⁴⁷ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 256, f. 3.

⁷⁴⁸ *Pat. Rolls*, 1307–13, 54.

⁷⁴⁹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1317–21, 223.

Little Minster.⁷⁵⁰ At the inquisition after his death in 1327 he appears as Henry Dyve.⁷⁵¹ I use the spelling Dyve for consistency.

7.1 Historical background

The ancient estate of Ducklington was established by 958 on the west bank of the river Windrush.⁷⁵² It is situated approximately one mile south of Cogges and a mile and a half south of Witney following the route of Colwell Brook, a tributary of the Windrush (0.0: 1). In the early fourteenth century, in addition to the manor house and its demesne land (on which there were a dovecot, garden and fishery) its assets included around 250 acres of arable land, several acres of meadow, a wood, a park, three mills (two water and one fulling) and the rents and services of a number of free tenants, villeins and cottars. Further income was derived from the proceedings of the manor court.⁷⁵³ The Dyve family held the manor of Ducklington from 1195 until 1360 when the male line died out.⁷⁵⁴ The advowson of the church went with the manor.⁷⁵⁵ By 1408 John, lord Lovel had acquired part of the manor and by 1449 his grandson William Lovel, lord Lovel and Holland (d. 1455) had obtained the rest, reuniting the manor and settling it on trustees.⁷⁵⁶ These details will be important for establishing the likely patrons of the chantry chapel.

The medieval parish of Ducklington included the small townships of Hardwick and Cokethorpe, and bordered Stanlake, Witney and Cogges.⁷⁵⁷ The patrons of the other two chapels in this study were established proprietors in the area. The de Greys of Rotherfield who held Cogges also held Hardwick and Stanlake.⁷⁵⁸ The Stanlake

⁷⁵⁰ *Cl. Rolls*, 1323–27, 261.

⁷⁵¹ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 10.

⁷⁵² Walter de Gray Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum: a collection of charters relating to Anglo-Saxon history*, 3 (London, 1893), 239; George Beardoe Grundy, *Saxon Oxfordshire: Charters and Ancient Highways* 15 (Oxford, 1933), 28–33.

⁷⁵³ *Cl. Rolls*, 1307–13, 312.

⁷⁵⁴ *Eynsham Cartulary*, 1 (1907–08), 85; *IPM*, 13, 1370–73, 161–62.

⁷⁵⁵ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, ff 147–48.

⁷⁵⁶ *IPM*, 19, 1405–1413, 141–170; TNA CP 25/1/191/28, 31.

⁷⁵⁷ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp110-118#p5,1>> [accessed 31 January, 2020].

⁷⁵⁸ *Ch. Rolls*, 1226–57, 285; *Feudal aids* 4, 162.

family held property in and around Witney.⁷⁵⁹ In 1327, Richard de Stanlake also held land in Little Minster from Henry de Dyve.⁷⁶⁰ John de Croxford and the Dyve family held adjacent lands from the same overlord (de Plessis) in the townships of Kidlington and Kirtlington.⁷⁶¹ The shared associates of this group, their gentry status, wealth and proximity suggest they would be known to one another, permitting the transmission of ideas between them.

The manor of Ducklington had an important claim to fame. The dependent chapel at Cokethorpe, first recorded in 958, held a cult image of the Virgin, attracting pilgrims and their offerings.⁷⁶² It also had a holy well with curative properties and possibly a hermitage as well.⁷⁶³ The chapel retains eleventh and twelfth-century fabric and was well appointed, judging by a font with interlaced arches decorated with nailhead, a more elaborate version of a similar one at Ducklington (7.1:1–2). In 1549 Cokethorpe chapel was described as ‘founded, erected and used principally for the oblation and offring to the picture of our Lady in the same Chapell and [...] in the well’.⁷⁶⁴ The origins of the medieval cult may therefore have been ancient. In 1250 William Dyve presented a chaplain to Cokethorpe. This was despite its status as a dependent chapelry which gave the rector of Ducklington the right to appoint.⁷⁶⁵ An active cult would explain Dyve’s interest. It was presumably lucrative as in 1365 the living was granted to John of Norwich, a king’s clerk, no doubt on account of the cult’s reputation and the income it generated.⁷⁶⁶ It remained popular, lasting until the Henrician reforms of the 1530s–40s by which time a young lad, John Bullock, aged around eight or ten, was selling wax versions of the cult image from a kiosk, with the proceeds going to the vicar.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁵⁹ Stone and Hyde (1968), 103–04.

⁷⁶⁰ *IPM*, 7:1327–36, 10.

⁷⁶¹ *IPM*, 9:1347–52, 183; *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 2 (London, 1818), 823.

⁷⁶² OHC, MS Ch. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c 22, f. 67.

⁷⁶³ The earliest record of these is in 1732, Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, ff. 301–02.

⁷⁶⁴ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon. b 78, f. 300.

⁷⁶⁵ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon. b 78, f. 147v.

⁷⁶⁶ *Pat. Rolls*, 1364–67, 101.

⁷⁶⁷ OHC MS Ch. Oxf. Dioc. Papers c 22, f. 67.

As a dependent chapel, the church at Cokethorpe did not have burial rights. Despite a long-running series of disputes with Bampton which had a rival claim, Cokethorpe parishioners, and those of Hardwick which the chapel also served, were interred at Ducklington, bringing revenue and visitors.⁷⁶⁸ The site on which the church stands is enclosed by a retaining wall and is raised by approximately 1 m above the adjacent Church Road (7.0). An archaeological report of 1994 shows that the difference in height was evident by the twelfth century, suggesting that the site was already a much-used burial ground by then.⁷⁶⁹ Burial space is likely to have been at a premium as the medieval churchyard was not large and needed to accommodate the deceased from these neighbouring townships as well as its own parishioners. The crypt underneath the north porch, identified as a charnel in the *Victoria County History*, was perhaps built in consequence, providing a compassionate resting place for the remains of the dead initially buried in the churchyard but disturbed later as more space was required.⁷⁷⁰ The two churches of Cokethorpe and Ducklington were thus closely associated. There is clear evidence of devotion to the Virgin at Ducklington as well as at Cokethorpe, as the description below will show. While this is hardly unusual, the presence of a cult image is likely to mean she was venerated with extra enthusiasm in the area.

7.2 The church: building chronology

The following building chronology will establish that an early Romanesque church was substantially rebuilt at intervals during the thirteenth century. The lavish re-modelling of the north aisle in the early fourteenth century represents the only other significant medieval intervention. Establishing the scale and approximate dates of these events will help narrow down the range of potential patrons.

The church comprises chancel, nave, west tower, north and south nave aisles, and north and south porches (7.2:1). Sherwood and Pevsner describe it as Transitional Norman with fourteenth-century alterations including some ‘spectacular’ work in the

⁷⁶⁸ *The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280–1299*, 8, Lincoln Record Society 76, ed. by Rosalind Hill (Lincoln, 1986).

⁷⁶⁹ Durham (1995), 51.

⁷⁷⁰ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p23> [accessed 30 January, 2020].

north aisle.⁷⁷¹ Survivals of the twelfth-century building are evident in the Romanesque tub font decorated with interlaced arcading, and in the round piers of the south aisle. These sit on square, spurred plinths and have capitals also carved with interlaced arcading as well as nail-head and foliage, details indicating a date of around 1180–1200 (7.2: 2–7). Two low, flat buttresses against the exterior west wall flanking the tower may belong to this phase (7.2: 8–9). The tower itself is Early English with an arch to the nave of two chamfered orders springing from rectangular capitals carved with stiff-leaf under a plain abacus (7.2: 10–11). The details of the chancel are also thirteenth-century. There are lancet windows in its north and south walls, an Early English piscina and credence in the south wall and a triangular-headed aumbry in the north wall (7.2: 12–14). Later medieval changes to the chancel were minimal, restricted to the renewal of the chancel arch in the fourteenth century and the insertion of a Perpendicular east window with a stretch of vine scroll carved into its rear-arch (7.2: 15–16).

The Romanesque south aisle was modernised in the mid thirteenth century. It has trefoil-headed lancet windows, and the line of an earlier, steeper-pitched roof can be seen in the exterior west gable. A three-light window in the east wall, composed of stepped, trefoil lancets, has broad flat splays occupying the full width of the wall (7.2: 17–18). An Early English trefoil-headed piscina in the south wall alongside indicates the presence of an altar, showing that this end of the aisle was set up for the celebration of Mass in the thirteenth century. It received painted decoration in the early fourteenth century, of which some traces remain. The best preserved is a faded mural of *c.* 1330 in the south splay of the east window, depicting a ‘Throne-of-Grace’ Trinity in tones of red, yellow, orange and dark blue, beneath a Decorated ogee canopy.⁷⁷² The scene includes a praying donor figure at lower left, its features no longer distinguishable. Jessica Barker notes the popularity of the ‘Throne of Grace’ iconography in the fourteenth century and discusses its prevalence on memorials to married couples.⁷⁷³ Isobel Davis also notes its metaphorical relationship to marriage and family, discussing its role in ‘articulating a particular

⁷⁷¹ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 588.

⁷⁷² Ernest Tristram, *English Wall Painting of the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1955), 166.

⁷⁷³ Barker (2020), 45–47.

ideal of family and household', citing books of hours which show couples and their children kneeling in front of it.⁷⁷⁴ The south aisle altar may thus have been a focus for family devotion for the parish when the north aisle altar was appropriated for patronal use.

7.3 The north aisle: exterior

The north aisle extends the whole length of the nave. It is distinguished from the rest of the church by a separate gabled roof. Three buttresses support the north wall, two diagonal at the corners with pack-saddle tops, and a third with a sloping top between the two eastern windows. Each buttress contains a large, canopied sculpture recess with an image pedestal, now empty but signalling the status and importance of the aisle. The windows display a variety of eye-catching curvilinear tracery designs, described below. A roll-and-fillet string moulding runs between and over the windows in the north wall. A similar string at canopy height on the diagonal buttresses continues over the east and west windows too (7.3:1–2).

The north aisle windows

All the windows contain elegant flowing tracery. In the north wall are three two-light windows with acutely-pointed heads. The arches spring from below the middle of the window, and the main lights are short with cinque-foiled arches. The tracery thus occupies more than half of the window. The design in the north-east and north-west windows is the same: a three-petalled form developing upwards from the central mullion with curved mouchettes to either side. The middle window is simpler, consisting of a large trefoil, the side lobes having a pronounced downward turn, over a quatrefoil within a curved diamond. The window in the west wall is larger, having three lights. The central light has a cinquefoil ogee arch while those to either side have rounded trefoil arches. The tracery above resembles a three-petalled flower filling the apex emerging from clasping leaves, with a pair of pinnate leaves below and flame-like mouchettes to either side (7.3: 3–4) The east window is larger still, of four lights. The design consists of two coincident sub-arcs, each enclosing the same trefoil design as in the middle window in the north wall. Between the sub-arcs a

⁷⁷⁴ Isobel Davis, "The Trinite Is Our Everlasting Lover": Marriage and Trinitarian Love in the Later Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 86, 4 (October 2011), 931–37.

large pear-shaped light reaches into the apex of the window containing a flower-like design with eight lobes. While the upper and lower lobes of this figure are glazed, the other six are blind. The stone panels that fill them are continuous with the bars of the tracery (7.3: 5). The reason for this unusual arrangement is apparent from inside where the blind panels support a sculpture of the Coronation of the Virgin, integrated into the tracery (7.3: 6).

The north porch

Entrance to the church is through a windowless porch with a steeply gabled roof opening into the north aisle. The outer door is Early English with a much-moulded arch carried on engaged shafts with bell capitals and moulded bases, mostly decayed. The inner door is Decorated, with three rows of roll moulding separated by deep hollow chamfers containing small ballflowers, under a roll-and-fillet hood (7.3: 7–8). The porch must post-date the aisle windows as the string course running round them continues inside. The outer, Early English door must therefore have been re-used. It faces the village and was probably the main entrance, the south door being much plainer, and its porch post-medieval.

The crypt

Directly beneath the porch is a crypt accessed from inside the aisle via a set of six worn steps winding down behind a narrow door in the north wall west of the porch. The walls are constructed of coursed rubble. Immediately inside the door on the left there is a large square stone with a smooth surface, perhaps for a painted image. Below it there is a rough recess, perhaps for keeping candles (7.3: 9–10). The crypt has two cells, one medieval, one modern. The medieval chamber comprises a single bay with a quadripartite vault of neatly coursed rubble, measuring approximately 2.5 m square and 2 m high. It was originally lit by a small window in the apex of the west wall, now blocked with stone and cement leaving just the top open for ventilation. It has two lights, a straight head, chamfered sides and a chamfered, central mullion (7.3: 11–12). The vault groins are double chamfered suggesting a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century date. They rest on large, chamfered quoins, the springing stones curving outwards. The masonry in the top half of the east wall is different to that lower down, possibly suggesting another feature such as a window but this can no longer be determined as the northern half of the wall has been

knocked through, opening to the second, post-medieval chamber: a smaller rectangular space with a flat, corrugated-iron roof and brick walls (7.3: 13–14). Both chambers are now empty. The medieval chamber was cleared in 1910 and found to be ‘full of skulls and bones, accumulations of many years’.⁷⁷⁵ These were collected and reburied in the churchyard. No record was kept of the quantity, age or composition of this bone deposit. At the same time the floor was concreted, leaving a sump in the north-west corner.

While the bones cannot be dated, the crypt exhibits many of the characteristics identified by Crangle as diagnostic of a medieval charnel chamber, i.e., it was built between 1250–1350; it is semi-underground with a small window, and is prominently located alongside the ornate main entrance to the church, with permanent access provided by a stone staircase.⁷⁷⁶ In this case it is adjacent to, rather than beneath, a chapel. The significance of this structure in relation to the chantry is considered below.

7.4 Dating the north aisle.

The stylistic details are reminiscent of the north transept at Witney, which also has diagonal buttresses containing canopied image niches, and the north aisle east window at Cogges, which has flowing tracery of a similar design. As established earlier, these neighbouring projects date to the 1330s–40s. Similar tracery designs appear around a decade earlier at Heckington and at Prior Crauden’s chapel at Ely (Cambs), giving a slightly wider possible date range for the Ducklington windows of between 1320s–40s (7.4:1–2) However, the window openings and surrounding masonry show that the rest of the fabric is older. The arches are unusually acute, and the tracery occupies proportionately more of the window than is typical for Decorated architecture. There are changes in the thickness of the walls surrounding the windows above the springing, indicating that the walls have been raised and the window arches renewed above this point (7.4: 3). Confirmation is provided by a 1994 archaeological report which shows that the footings of the north aisle wall, including those of the buttresses, are continuous with the thirteenth-century

⁷⁷⁵ *Witney Deanery Magazine* (1910) 4.

⁷⁷⁶ See chap. 6.3: The lost lower chamber.

chancel.⁷⁷⁷ The curvilinear windows are thus insertions into the walls of an existing thirteenth-century aisle. The Early English door reused in the porch was presumably salvaged from this aisle.

7.5 The north aisle: interior

The interior of the aisle is rich in sculpture. Visitors in 1871 describe being ‘surprised at the wonderful detail all around’.⁷⁷⁸ However, some of the sculpture is damaged and there are occasional anomalies in its setting, leading some commentators to question whether it is *in situ*.⁷⁷⁹ The following description will show that the sculpture does belong and that the apparent discrepancies are the result of an ambitious project of the early fourteenth century which was left unfinished in some details, while others have since been lost. The decoration included wall paintings, and a heraldic display in stained glass relating to the Dyve family, pointing towards their patronage.⁷⁸⁰

The aisle opens from the nave through an early fourteenth-century, three-bay arcade on quatrefoil shafts with finely moulded pointed arches, bell capitals and hoods. The hood over the central bay ends in the finely carved heads of a king and a queen (7.5: 1–3). There are knotted serpents in the corresponding position on the nave side of the bay. The hood over the west bay of the arcade ends in an unworked block on the aisle side. Its pair on the nave side, presumably also unfinished, was carved into the face of an imp in 1873.⁷⁸¹ A bracket in the form of a hooded male head projects from the east face of the central bay, below the capital (7.5: 4–6). A mortice above the head contains a timber stump. It perhaps belonged to a bracket for a lamp or candle holder, lighting whatever stood above.⁷⁸² Alternatively, it may be the end of a rail or screen. Such a screen would have required a door as this bay was the main route

⁷⁷⁷ Durham (1995), 51.

⁷⁷⁸ NOAS, *Notes of an Excursion to Ducklington, Cokethorpe, Stanlake, Yelford and Bampton* (Oxford, 1871), 5.

⁷⁷⁹ OAS, *Report for the year 1891* (Oxford, 1892), 10–11; < <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p21-22> > [accessed 1 August, 2020].

⁷⁸⁰ OAS (1891), 11; BL, Cotton Lansdowne 874, f. 180.

⁷⁸¹ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, f. 170.

⁷⁸² Rodwell (2012), 185.

through to the nave from the north door, its role as an entranceway emphasised by the royal heads and coiled serpents which flank it.

A continuous frieze of ballflower encloses the aisle, running along the interior north and south walls at eaves height and rising to include the heads of the windows in the east and west gables. The frieze is concave, approximately 10 cm deep, and overhangs slightly at the top. The top has a flat front edge while the bottom has a narrow roll with a quirk beneath. The ballflowers are large, measuring some 5 cm across, and evenly spaced, approximately 8 cm apart (7.5: 7–8).

The modification of the windows noted outside is confirmed inside. The jambs of all five windows have been cut back dramatically, beyond the span of the rear-arches, leaving abruptly truncated arches with wide, blank splays below (7.5: 9–11). The effect is of work left unfinished and implies the intention to introduce further imagery exploiting the extra light coming in through the modified windows. In the late nineteenth century, the walls of both aisles were found to be ‘covered with frescoes’.⁷⁸³ The mural of the Trinity in the east window splay in the south aisle, and traces of paint on the window jambs in the chancel, suggest the aisle window jambs were also painted, perhaps with a sequence of standing saints such as those in the window splays at Chalgrove and South Newington (7.5: 12–13). Alternatively, mortises in the stonework of the western windows may suggest that a more ambitious, sculptural treatment was planned, in keeping with the ornate character of the rest of the aisle. There are examples of window splays with sculptured finials and head stops at Ampney Crucis (Glos) and Thenford (Oxon). At North Marston (Bucks) the jambs of the north aisle east window have image niches with nodding ogee canopies (7.5: 14–16)

7.6 The monument

A double funerary monument is recessed into the wall under the window in the north-east corner, probably carved of oolitic limestone from the Windrush valley.⁷⁸⁴ It takes the form of a Tree of Jesse with two branches carrying the heads of kings

⁷⁸³ OAS (1891), 11.

⁷⁸⁴ Sally Badham, personal comment, 15 July, 2020.

and prophets emerging from a central, sleeping figure and arching out sideways to form ogee canopies over a pair of end-to-end tomb recesses. The whole ensemble is enclosed within a rectangular frame formed of a thick roll-and-fillet moulding, the upper edge rising in front of the window by some 0.30 m (7.6: 1). Each recess measures approximately 2.16 m in width. The height of the frame is also 2.16 m, although the wooden floor is modern and the level may have been altered. The overall impression is similar to the monument under the north transept window at Witney although effigies are missing (7.6: 2). The ogee canopies and Decorated figure style suggest it was made some time in the 1340s.⁷⁸⁵ The west recess contains a plain, tapering cross slab which may be earlier than the monument itself.⁷⁸⁶ It is approximately 2 m long, 0.70 m wide at the head end, 0.35 m wide at the foot end and 0.15 m deep. It is very slightly coped and has a hollow chamfer along the front edge. Two small projections from the head end create a square notch. There is a deep socket, also squarish, of approx. 0.15 x 0.15 m within the slab towards the foot end (7.6: 3–4).

The canopies over the recesses are covered with a vine of bubbly leaves carrying bunches of grapes interspersed with fifteen male heads, mostly damaged. They are all slightly different, some with beards, some with headgear including a crown and a mitre, each framed by the tendrils of the vine. The upper sprigs of these tendrils extended above the canopies in several places but have been broken off. Towards the centre, two roughly semi-circular indents in corresponding positions, one in the east canopy, one in the west, show that there was sculpture rising from these points too, perhaps further branches continuing onto the wall above (7.6: 5–6). A figure of a man curled up asleep is tucked into the spandrel. He is wrapped in a cloak, his feet are crossed and he rests his head on his right hand. He has the remains of a two-pronged branch emerging from his side, confirming the subject as the Tree of Jesse, a symbolic representation of Christ's ancestry.⁷⁸⁷ The choice of subject and the

⁷⁸⁵ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 589.

⁷⁸⁶ Badham (2008), 16.

⁷⁸⁷ For a history of the development of the iconography, see Susan Green, 'Origin and History of Tree of Jesse Iconography', in *Tree of Jesse Iconography in Northern Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Routledge Research in Art and Religion (Abingdon, 2020), online preview

twinned recesses indicate a genealogical theme for the monument. Behind the figure of Jesse is a short, narrow ledge with upright sides, creating a clearly-defined support for more sculpture (7.6: 7). There are a number of joins in the upper crosspiece of the frame. Directly above the figure of Jesse there is a section some 0.40 m wide with patches of repair on the underside, one a regular oval shape, perhaps indicating the point where missing sculpture joined the frame in the same way as the tips of the ogee arches do on either side (7.6: 8–9). The wall has been re-plastered but the blank areas within the frame (and around the proposed missing sculpture) were almost certainly painted with a complementary background.⁷⁸⁸

The canopy arches each have a large trefoil underneath. The main cusps are carved with a trefoil of bubbly leaves around a bearded male head. All the subsidiary cusps have sunk tracery, except one in the east recess which remains blank (7.6: 10–13). The lower west corner of the canopy over the western recess has been shaped to match the arch and prepared for surface detail but has also been left blank, indicating unfinished work. The whole of the lower part of the frame is also unfinished. The mouldings on the bottom half continue those of the canopy and the pieces fit together like a jigsaw but the joins do not quite match. For example, the west jamb has not been chamfered in line with the canopy. Neither it nor the central mullion have been smoothed off (7.6: 14–16). Symmetrical joins in the arches to right and left of the Jesse figure and another beneath it show that the elaborate canopy was carved in sections (7.6: 7). It was then joined at the springing of the arches to the plainer section beneath, as was often the case. In the chancel at Charlton-on-Otmoor there is a visible join between the canopy and jambs of the piscina and sedilia complex in the south wall. Likewise, at Shottesbrooke, the complicated tomb canopy was made in sections and joined to the lower part of the frame, most evidently in the central image niche (7.6: 17–18). At Witney, the construction was more seamless with joins in the arches of the canopy rather than at the springing (6.4: 12).

The east jamb of the Ducklington monument is obscured by plaster. The stonework of the frame in the corner continues upwards for a few centimetres past the

<https://www.routledge.com/Tree-of-Jesse-Iconography-in-Northern-Europe-in-the-Fifteenth-and-Sixteenth/Green/p/book/9780367664732> [accessed 15 November, 2020].

⁷⁸⁸ Sally Badham, personal comment, 4 July, 2016.

crosspiece, indicating missing sculpture. There are repairs and joins in the crosspiece itself, and the tips of the canopies are somewhat truncated where they meet it. This suggests that the monument is missing some details, perhaps finials over the canopies. Compare for example with the monument in the south nave wall at Little Baddow. As at Ducklington, it is formed of twinned canopied recesses contained within a rectangular frame beneath a large window (7.6: 19). The tips of the two canopies butt up against the underneath of the crosspiece while carved finials sit on the top. There are further finials at the outer corners and one over the central mullion. Similar architectural flourishes were perhaps provided, or at least intended, for the Ducklington monument.

The monument occupies an honorific position beneath the window in the north-east corner of the aisle, adjacent to the altar. However, unlike at Witney where the monument is the same width as the window and neatly integrated into the space beneath it, the Ducklington monument is offset to the west while its upper frame encroaches on the window. The window itself is closed up at the bottom with three courses of masonry (7.6: 20–21). Together with the joins and the apparent mismatch between the upper and lower parts, this has led Baggs and Chance to suggest that the monument may not belong. They concede that it is ‘probably the remains of a sepulchral monument of the 14th century’ but ‘much altered and possibly wholly reset’.⁷⁸⁹ However, the inconsistencies can be accounted for by the construction method just described and the fact that the monument was left unfinished.

Furthermore, the building chronology established earlier shows that the fourteenth-century monument was inserted beneath an existing window. The off-set position may be explained by the patrons’ requirement to fit in a large, double tomb next to the altar. It may equally have been intentional. Micro-architectural features such as sedilia and tomb monuments frequently encroach on windows. See for example the sedilia at Compton Dundon (Somerset) and Blakeney (Norfolk) (7.6: 22–23).

Monuments which do the same include those we have already seen at Asthall and Adderbury (5.10: 7; 4.2: 20). There are others at Stanton St John and Winchelsea (Sussex) (7.6: 24–25). There were benefits to such settings: at Asthall the monument almost obscures an image in the stained glass behind, creating a sense of intimacy

⁷⁸⁹< <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p21> > [accessed 17 March, 2020].

between the deceased and Christ, while at Adderbury, the arch of an ogee canopy over a funerary monument develops into the space of an apotropaic window, providing protection for the deceased.⁷⁹⁰ Brian and Moira Gittos have recently studied the complex, canopied monument in the south aisle at Welwick. They conclude that its unusual position—partly obscuring the south-east window and offset to the west—was an intentional part of the design. The centrepiece of the canopy, now damaged, was a pedestal-mounted image which stood in front of the west half of the window, its upper part backlit with ‘something akin to a corona’. Other parts of the canopy were pierced through to the exterior, creating light channels for points and rays of light. The eastern half of the window, they conclude, would have been filled with complementary stained glass, ‘creating a seamless vision’ (7.6: 26).⁷⁹¹ At Swine (Yorkshire) the same authors note bases for a missing canopy over a sepulchral recess which would have framed painted images in stained glass in the window above.⁷⁹² At Aldworth (Berks) there are several fourteenth-century monuments to members of the de la Beche family, six of which are arranged in rows of three along opposite walls of the nave and south aisle. The two at the east ends are beneath windows and have grand canopies which embrace, rather than encroach on the window openings (7.5: 27–28). Sally Badham notes that the effigy in the north-eastern one reclines in a Jesse-like pose, and proposes glazing on a genealogical theme in the window behind.⁷⁹³ The encroachment of the Jesse Tree monument at Ducklington over the window is a good indication that its glazing was likewise related in some way, perhaps displaying heraldry. Heraldic stained glass was recorded in 1595, identifying two if not three generations of the local manorial family, the Dyves.⁷⁹⁴ The whereabouts of this glass and the probable patronage of the Dyves is discussed below.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁰ See chap. 4.2: Seeing and Meaning.

⁷⁹¹ Gittos and Gittos (2019a), 195–96.

⁷⁹² Gittos and Gittos, (2019a), 79.

⁷⁹³ Badham, ‘The de Cheltenham Chantry at Pucklechurch (Gloucestershire) and its Associated Effigies’, *JBAA*, 162 (2009), 125–145 at 141.

⁷⁹⁴ BL, Cotton Lansdowne 874, f. 180.

⁷⁹⁵ See chap. 7.8: Stained glass. Group 2.

Incised slabs

The twin alcoves may have displayed effigies—as at Witney—but this cannot be assumed. As we know, work on the monument was interrupted. If effigies were planned, they may not have been executed, and there were other means of representing the dead such as incised slabs which could be combined with canopied recesses. There are several examples locally. At Swalcliffe, twinned, late thirteenth-century recesses built under a south aisle window contain a tapered cross slab and a matching stone coffin (7.6: 29–31). At Great Haseley, a monument of *c.* 1300 with a fine, cusped canopy contains a stone sarcophagus with a floriated cross on the lid.⁷⁹⁶ At Kingham an early fourteenth-century canopied monument on the outside of the chancel north wall contains a low sarcophagus with a cross slab cover (7.6: 32–33). The incised slab in the Ducklington monument, although apparently earlier than the recesses themselves, should therefore be discussed.

Memorial slabs were versatile in size, design and use. They could cover double as well as single burials and could commemorate a range of relationships that included but were not restricted to marriage. Aleksander McClain notes one to a mother and son, and another where a priest and female relative are commemorated on a single-sized slab.⁷⁹⁷ Discussing their enduring popularity, Sally Badham has demonstrated that, while they were cheaper than the brasses and raised sculptural monuments that would eventually supplant them, inscribed slabs were nonetheless a desirable option. Enhanced with painted decoration, coloured inlay and identifying inscriptions, they could be just as eye-catching as other forms, while a low monument was in some cases preferred to a raised one. Badham cites numerous instances of their popularity well into the fifteenth century with the *élite* as well as with patrons further down the social scale.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁶ Thomas William Weare, ‘Some Remarks Upon the Church of Great Haseley, Oxfordshire’, *Memoirs of Gothic Churches*, (Oxford, 1840), 14; Bertram (2019), 184.

⁷⁹⁷ Aleksandra McClain, ‘Symbols on Medieval Cross-Slabs. What Have We Learned?’, in Steer (2020), 46–66 at 60–01.

⁷⁹⁸ Sally Badham, ‘“A New Feire Peynted Stone”. Medieval English Incised Slabs’, *CM*, 17 (2002), 20–52 at 22–23 and 44–47. See also Aleksandra McClain, ‘Cross Slab Monuments in the Late Middle Ages: Patronage, Production and Locality in Northern England’, in Badham and Oosterwijk (2010), 37–65.

Two grave slabs are historically associated with the Ducklington monument: the one currently in the west recess and another of the same dimensions now lying outside on the other side of the wall in the churchyard. It has a similar notch to the one inside, this time projecting from the foot end. Jerome Bertram considers the two to be a pair.⁷⁹⁹ The outside slab is flat and bears faint traces of what may be a cross. A deep crack across the middle suggests it has been moved (7.6: 34–35).

An account of 1805 describes a slab inside the monument.

In the north wall are two highly adorned OG arches curiously sculptured, they are sepulchres and one contains a flat stone engraved with a cross on three steps and by it a singular ax [sic] or hatchet'.⁸⁰⁰

This description does not fit the plain slab currently in the monument. It may relate to the slab outside, but it is now too worn to be sure. If so, it could be that both slabs were in the monument in 1805 but that only the embellished slab merited description. An engraving by Joseph Skelton of c. 1823 shows paving slabs under both recesses (7.6: 36). If either or both grave slabs were in place at this time, the paving must have been laid on top of them—and this is perhaps suggested by the floor level in the engraving which is raised along the perimeter of the aisle by the thickness of a paving stone. Both slabs were outside in 1871.⁸⁰¹ They were perhaps moved to accommodate re-flooring which took place around that time.⁸⁰² Some time after 1891 the plain one was placed (or replaced) under the west recess.⁸⁰³ The cracked one was presumably too damaged to be moved.

The usual reason for assemblies of different dates is that a cross slab has been moved into an empty recess as part of later, usually post-medieval re-ordering. However, memorials were moved during the medieval era as well, for example at the Gyverney chantry of 1329 at Limington (Somerset) and the mid fourteenth-century de la More

⁷⁹⁹ Jerome Bertram, *Minor Medieval Monuments in Oxfordshire. Cross-Slabs, Grave Markers and Churchyard Tombs* (Oxford, 2014), xiv.

⁸⁰⁰ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, f. 132.

⁸⁰¹ NOAS (1871), 5.

⁸⁰² *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (July 27, 1872).

⁸⁰³ OAS (1892), 9–11.

chantry at Northmoor.⁸⁰⁴ The slab now in the Ducklington monument has no remaining surface decoration or identifying marks that would seem to merit salvaging it. Yet it and its pair seem to have been in and out of the monument more than once. The care taken to maintain the association between them suggests it was historic, inviting investigation.

Jerome Bertram describes the unusual notches at opposite ends of the slabs as grooves for fitting into recesses.⁸⁰⁵ However, the notch in the interior slab does not line up with the monument frame and there are no other recesses either inside or outside the church which might have sheltered them. It may be that they were initially set up outside, in the churchyard, with the notches housing grave markers. At Hanborough (Oxon), low stone crosses remain in the ground 1.75 m apart, at either end of a grave. The mortice in the interior slab would also be consistent with an exterior setting as would the wear and tear suffered by both. Bertram does not mention the mortice (it is hidden under a heavy fragment of masonry) but interprets another local example (a quatrefoil mortice in a cross slab on a low, panelled tomb in the churchyard at Spelsbury) as intended for a standing cross.⁸⁰⁶

These indications of missing sculpture show that the Ducklington slabs were more prestigious than they now appear. However, there is nothing left on them nor on the monument in the wall to suggest who they might commemorate. The axe symbol recorded in 1805 is something of a mystery. Medieval cross slabs were sometimes provided with carved emblems, generally interpreted as signifying the rank, gender or occupation of the deceased. They occur with some frequency in the north of England with occupational symbols appearing on around 9% of all recorded slabs.⁸⁰⁷ However, symbols of any type are vanishingly rare in the south. Hertfordshire for

⁸⁰⁴ The tomb of Gunnora, second wife of the founder, Richard de Givernay, pre-dates the construction of the chantry chapel. It was moved into its present prestigious position once it was ready for occupation. Rachel Dressler, 'Spatial Politics in the parish church' in Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson (eds), *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces* (Woodbridge, 2012), 218–38 at 230–33; Badham (2008), 14–44.

⁸⁰⁵ Bertram, (2014), xiv.

⁸⁰⁶ Bertram (2014), xxvi.

⁸⁰⁷ McClain (2020), 54.

example has none.⁸⁰⁸ Bertram's survey of minor medieval monuments in Oxfordshire contains only one survival: the mallet and set square of a master mason at Steeple Aston.⁸⁰⁹ The axe symbol at Ducklington is thus a rarity, if indeed it was correctly recorded. It perhaps represented a huntsman or forest warden although the usual sign for this occupation was a hunting horn.⁸¹⁰ The office of forest warden was an important administrative role, appointed by the king.⁸¹¹ There were large pockets of forest around Ducklington including areas emparked for hunting in the early fourteenth century.⁸¹² To date, however, no evidence of a forest warden connected with Ducklington has come to light, and the slabs in their present form bring us no nearer identifying the deceased.

When they became associated with the monument is not known but, given the genealogical overtones of the Jesse Tree design, they may have commemorated members of the same family and been intentionally brought together in the mid fourteenth century as part of a design incorporating older commemorative material into a multi-generational memorial. There is a local precedent for exactly this scenario at nearby Northmoor, described in an illuminating article by Sally Badham.⁸¹³ The de la More family chantry in the north transept houses a mid fourteenth-century twinned monument built under the end window. Drawing on antiquarian sources, Badham argues convincingly that the eastern recess originally housed two incised slabs of earlier date, lying side by side, while under the western recess were two contemporary effigies on low chests, also side by side, the whole ensemble honouring two generations of the same family (7.6: 37).⁸¹⁴ A related example at Lowick (Northants), concerns the reuse of memorial glass rather than burial slabs. In the north aisle, parts of a Jesse Tree and donors in stained glass of 1310–30 have been retained and used in later fenestration designed around it (7.6:

⁸⁰⁸ McClain (2010), 45.

⁸⁰⁹ Bertram (2014), xxvi.

⁸¹⁰ McClain (2020), 54.

⁸¹¹ <<https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2015/05/magna-carta-and-the-kings-forests.html>> [accessed 7 June, 2020].

⁸¹² Stephen Miles, *Parks in Medieval England* (Oxford, 2009), 60–61.

⁸¹³ Badham (2008), 14–44.

⁸¹⁴ Badham (2008), 17–19.

38).⁸¹⁵ These examples, which have echoes of the setting and subject of the Ducklington monument, demonstrate the symbolic value of reusing material from an earlier generation to express dynastic continuity. This was evidently an important concern at Ducklington, embodied by the genealogical theme of the monument and, as I argue below, by the stained glass which was similarly dynastic.⁸¹⁶ Evidence is lacking but, even if their precise relationship to the monument can no longer be recovered, the slabs should probably be considered as part of the genealogically-themed tomb-scape of the chantry chapel as a whole. The twin design of the monument itself suggests the burial of a couple but without identification this should not be assumed. As the example of Northmoor shows, monument design was flexible and twinned recesses might hold more than two memorials. More recently, Jessica Barker's research into double memorials shows how the iconography of married couples could be co-opted for other relationships.⁸¹⁷ The possible identity of those commemorated at Ducklington is discussed in more detail below.

7.7 The Marian sculpture

In the walls at the east end of the aisle there is series of recessed sculpture panels, positioned unusually high, at eaves height. Despite damage they clearly represent scenes from the life of the Virgin and Christ (7.7: 1). Two have trefoil arches and are set very high in the east gable on either side of the window arch, resting on the ballflower frieze. The other six are rectangular, two squarish, the others oblong (7.7: 2–3). They sit directly beneath the ballflower frieze and are continuous with it, the soffit of each recess being formed by the underside of the frieze. This is most obvious in the north-east and south-east corners where two niches are placed at right angles to one another. In the south-east corner, the surface of the stone has sheered off at top right, showing that the lower roll and quirk of the frieze and the soffit of the recess are formed from the same piece of stone (7.7: 4–5). Along with the other windows in the aisle the east window was remodelled in the mid fourteenth century,

⁸¹⁵ See Frederica Law-Turner, 'The Ormesby Psalter and a lost Midlands Jesse Window: Media Cross-Fertilisation in the Early Fourteenth Century', 2011 <<https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-52/feature/>> [accessed 20 June 2019].

⁸¹⁶ See chap. 7.8: Stained glass. Group 2.

⁸¹⁷ Barker (2020), 79–88.

gaining a new arch and the curvilinear tracery and Coronation sculpture already mentioned. The jambs were chopped back to create wide, shallow splays but left unfinished. The two rectangular recesses which flank the window are integral with the new work. The upright mouldings of their frames are carved from the same section of stone as the curve of the fourteenth-century arch which are in turn continuous with a section of the ballflower frieze. The frames do not however marry up with the thirteenth-century jamb stones below (7.7: 6–7). These awkward passages between the old and the new work show that, along with the monument, this part of the project was interrupted before completion.

The Coronation of the Virgin

The east window tracery is embellished with a sculpture of the Coronation of the Virgin which occupies six blank tracery panels towards the top of the window (7.3: 6). The panels are continuous with the tracery, as can be seen from outside (7.3: 5). The figures date to the first half of the fourteenth century judging by the poses and drapery. Compare for example with a Coronation scene in early fourteenth-century stained glass in an upper tracery light at Wing (Bucks) (7.7: 8–9). The sculpture group fits neatly within the tracery lights with the feet of both figures resting on a shallow, two-lobed base. The base protrudes from the window plane, leaving part of its flat underside visible. This has led to speculation that the figures do not belong.⁸¹⁸ However the Coronation sculpture was not designed to be seen from directly below. It is visible from the west end of the aisle and parts of the nave as well as from inside the chapel, from where the underside of the base is less obvious. The sculpture may not have been fully finished, or it may have lost detail added in a different material. A rich effect is achieved in the Prior's chapel at Castle Acre Priory (Norfolk) where two fourteenth-century roof corbels have been given complex, textured bases of moulded gesso overlaid with gold foil designed to glitter in candlelight. There are in any case many examples of sculpture that is only partially integrated into its surroundings. At Kidlington, for example, the hood over the sculpturally-embellished east window in the south aisle has two full-length figure stops carved onto blocks with rectangular bases that stick out some way from the wall (7.7: 10–11). At Ducklington, joins in the tracery immediately around the Coronation

⁸¹⁸ NOAS (1871), 5.

sculpture show that it was carved separately and inserted into the window: a practical solution to a technical difficulty. This process was used in the construction of a window in the north aisle at Barton-on-Humber (Lincs) which has similar tracery to Ducklington (7.7: 12). Sculptures of the crucified Christ flanked by the Virgin and St John have been carved onto short sections of stonework and inserted into the design. The figure of Christ is on a Y-shaped section; his outstretched arms following the ascending bars of the tracery while his body forms the central mullion. The Virgin and St John, integrated into the mullions on either side, stand on shallow discs. These examples support the claim that the Ducklington Coronation is *in situ*. Sherwood and Pevsner propose that it would originally have linked to subjects in stained glass, as in the famous Jesse Tree window at Dorchester Abbey.⁸¹⁹ This is born out by a Head of Christ which until 1803 appeared in the topmost tracery light, just above the Coronation.⁸²⁰ It has since been reset with other fragments in the centre of the window. The Coronation also relates to imagery in the sculpture panels on the walls which, as I now describe, converge on the window.

Recesses 1 and 2

Recesses 1 and 2 are placed high in the east wall to the north and south of the window and are now empty. They have chamfered jambs and arched, trefoil heads. Part of the arch of the south recess has been broken and roughly repaired. A pair of bare feet and the hem of a garment are integrated into the arch at the top. This is part of the traditional iconography of the Ascension, usually completed by a group of Apostles and the Virgin looking up at Christ disappearing into heaven. See for example the mid-fourteenth century Sutton Valence stone altarpiece in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a wall painting of *c.* 1330 in the south aisle at Sarratt (Bucks) (7.7: 13–15).

The other six recesses have rectangular frames formed of thick roll mouldings. Four contain well-known scenes from the life of the Virgin. The final two are empty. The figures are carved in a mid fourteenth-century, courtly style: they have the same

⁸¹⁹ Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 589.

⁸²⁰ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 256, f. 3.

wide bodies, and their gowns are given the same full folds, as weepers on the tomb of John of Eltham of *c.* 1340 at Westminster Abbey (7.7:16–17).⁸²¹

Recess 3. The Annunciation

Recess 3 in the south wall is roughly 0.80 x 0.90 m, and 0.04 m deep. It contains an Annunciation scene (7.7: 18). The panel is recessed into the wall and continuous with the ballflower frieze above, the roll along the bottom edge of the frieze forming the top edge of the recess. The other three edges are formed of a thick roll moulding. The side rolls have slight quirks at the top and are rounded off where they meet the ballflower frieze. At the bottom they are shaped to fit round the roll that forms the lower edge, the join concealed by plaster. This roll has been abruptly cut off at both right and left. Inside the recess, two figures face one another standing on a shallow base representing the ground. Their heads have been mostly destroyed and a ribbon scroll floating in an S shape between them is broken in the middle. The subject is nonetheless readily identifiable as the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel stands on the left, winged and barefoot, all the toes of his left foot showing beneath his voluminous cloak which is draped over his raised right arm. The Virgin stands on the right. She leans slightly back. Her hands are missing but the angle of her arms suggests she held one of them up in front of her in the traditional gesture of alarm or astonishment. Her cloak is looped up under her left arm. The remains of a rounded object at ground level and some worked stone above protruding from the back wall, suggest the pot and lily flower which would have occupied the central space. Slight traces of colour remain. The composition is close to many contemporary Annunciation scenes, almost replicating the version in the Pabraham-Clifford Hours (England, *c.* 1315–20, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 242, f. 2v) (7.7: 19).

Recess 4. The Visitation.

On the north wall directly opposite the Annunciation panel is a recess of similar dimensions with a roll-moulded frame (7.7: 20). In this case, the bottom edge extends some few centimetres to both right and left before ending abruptly. Two headless figures face each other in the centre of the recess, standing on a slightly raised support, embracing each other. Despite damage the subject is recognisable as the Visitation, the meeting between the Virgin and St Elizabeth when both were

⁸²¹ Binski (2014), 333.

pregnant. Compare for example with the same scene in the Queen Mary Psalter (7.7: 21). The Ducklington composition is reversed with the taller, more upright figure of the Virgin on the left and the slightly stooped, heavier figure of St Elizabeth on the right, a placement that allows the Virgin to face east. Both women wear full cloaks falling in well-defined folds and their hands are carved in fine detail where they rest on each other's bodies.

Recesses 5 and 6. The Nativity and Adoration

These two irregularly shaped recesses contain separate scenes but are continuous, placed at right angles to each other in the north-east corner of the aisle (7.7: 22–23). The ballflower frieze forms the top of the recesses and the left, right and lower edges are framed with the same thick roll-moulding as on the other panels. At first glance their frames appear to have been broken and bodged into place. However, close observation shows that in fact the opposite is true: the arrangement is purposeful and in fact adds to both narrative and theological effect.

The Nativity panel on the north wall is in an oblong frame. It does not appear to fit the space, as the arch of the adjacent window breaks into the corner of the frame at bottom left. Yet this must be intentional as the curve of the arch serves to support the raised head of the Virgin's couch which tilts up and rests on it. The same technique of integrating architectural features into pictorial narrative can be seen elsewhere. For example, in the mid fourteenth-century Passion mural at Chalgrove, the curve of a window is used to suggest the hill of Calvary climbed by Christ carrying his cross, led by one of his executioners (7.7: 24–25). In another mural at Cirencester (Glos), devils descend into hell, down the curve of a window.⁸²² Ducklington is the only parish church I have found where the effect is achieved in sculpture.

In the foreground of the Nativity scene the Virgin lies slightly propped up on a couch facing east, her head on a pillow. She wears a long-sleeved gown and a veil, pleated over her ears. The folds of the coverlet tucked round her are differentiated from the sheet on which she lies. Her right arm stretches across her body to rock the manger in the background, drawing the viewer's attention to the swaddled infant Christ lying there, his head also on a pillow. A smiling ox and ass look on, emerging from the

⁸²² Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings* (Woodbridge, 2008), 133.

back wall at either end of the manger. The Virgin's left hand lies on her stomach on top of the coverlet. The figure of St Joseph is seated at the end of the couch. The head and both hands are missing but the arm position suggests he was leaning on a staff. This version of the Nativity, showing the Virgin lying in bed having given birth to Christ, is known as 'Our Lady in Gesyn' (lying-in).⁸²³ There are other examples in both paint and stone, for example a mural at Wissington, Suffolk, and a freestone relief at Bolsover (Derbys), both of around 1280. The Nativity scene in the Neville of Hornby Hours (England, 1340s, BL Egerton MS 2781, f. 13) follows the same tradition (7.7: 26–27). The Virgin has her hand on the crib in which the swaddled infant lies, and Joseph sits at her feet. A donor is included in this scene in the same position as the midwife in the Bolsover relief. The three shepherds are also included, behind the crib. These figures do not appear in the Ducklington relief but may have been painted on the back wall in blank spaces to either side of the ox and ass.

The adjoining recess contains a much-battered Adoration of the Magi. The frame appears damaged with the bottom moulding in two pieces which do not marry up. However, on closer inspection it is clear that, like the Nativity panel, this is not damage but intentional. The frame is deliberately stepped down: a compositional device that raises the throne on which the Virgin and Child are seated and places the king who originally knelt on the ground at their feet on an appropriately lower plane. Such hierarchical compositions are commonly found in manuscript illustrations: in a depiction of the Adoration enclosed within a quatrefoil in the De Lisle Psalter, two kings stand at the back while the third genuflects in front of the Virgin and Child, his knee in the bottom lobe of the quatrefoil. In the same scene in the Neville of Hornby Hours, the king kneels on ground that is slightly lower than the Virgin's throne (7.7: 28–29). The conflation of the Nativity and Adoration is also common at this date. See for example an English ivory triptych of *c.* 1300 in the V&A where the central panel contains a continuous Nativity and Adoration under the same arch (7.7: 30).⁸²⁴

In the Ducklington Adoration, the Virgin sits on the left, facing out, her body turning slightly to the east (7.7: 23). The base of her seat protrudes slightly from the frame

⁸²³ Marks (2004), 143–47.

⁸²⁴ V&A object no. 243:1, 2–1867.

on a rounded disc, somewhat like the Coronation group. She wears a loose gown with a wide scooped neck, girdled at the waist and falling in full folds to cover her feet. A cloak hangs from her shoulders. Her right arm encircles the figure of the infant Christ sitting on her right knee. He holds something round in his left hand. This is likely to be an apple, signifying his role as the Second Adam. Both figures are headless. A large, bearded figure representing one of the Magi stands to the right in the foreground in a shallow section of the recess. He wears a full cloak thrown over his shoulder and a gown with long, buttoned sleeves, beneath which his feet protrude. He stands on a rounded disc. His head is partly missing but there are the remains of curling hair and a crown or headdress. The centre of the panel alongside him is vacant and recessed more deeply. The back wall is rough, suggesting lost sculpture. This middle area therefore presumably held the other two kings, one kneeling, one standing behind. The staggered base of the recess provides a lower step at the Virgin's feet for the kneeling king but also creates more space in the relief for the crowded composition.

The visit of the Magi was celebrated at the feast of the Epiphany on January 6. The Magi brought gifts to the infant Christ whom they recognised as the Incarnation of God. They were thus closely linked to the Mass at which the Incarnation was celebrated with the offering of gifts.⁸²⁵ The location of this panel—on the east wall, above the altar where Mass was offered—shows that the link with liturgy was intended to be made.

Recesses 7 and 8

Mirroring those opposite, recesses 7 and 8 are placed at right angles to one another around the south-east corner. The same framing device is employed with the ballflower frieze making the top edge while a thick roll moulding frames the edges to right and left. The moulding along the bottom has been lost (7.7: 31). Skelton's engraving of 1823 shows the framing still in place (7.7: 32). It also shows a horizontal division in the east recess creating two superimposed registers, suggesting it contained two scenes. The lower register was considerably shallower than the one above, perhaps for a painted scene or text in place of sculpture. Both recesses are

⁸²⁵ Ursula Nilgen and Renate Franciscano, 'The Epiphany and the Eucharist: On the Interpretation of Eucharistic Motifs in Medieval Epiphany Scenes', *The Art Bulletin*, 49, 4 (December 1967), 313–16.

now empty. As they belong to the same series as those on the opposite wall, they were no doubt intended to contain related subjects.

Recess 9

There is one more niche which does not belong to either series. It is not recessed like the others but stands against the east wall south of the window. It has a moulded frame and an arched top (partly missing), and is much taller than all the others, reaching from near ground level to just below the windowsill. The right side of the niche is coursed in with the east respond of the arcade (7.7: 33). The springing of the arch remains while the central section is missing. Holes on the front face suggest missing sculpture. The arch on the left has not been chamfered to match the jamb beneath, suggesting more unfinished work. A rectangular beam runs part way across the inside, a little below the springing, possibly the remains of a shelf. Given the chapel setting, a liturgical purpose is likely for this niche. It may have housed a combination of piscina, credence and aumbry as there is an open bay in the south-east corner and a monument opposite, where these fittings are normally found.⁸²⁶ Piscinae are occasionally found in east walls (at Cogges for example) and there are a number of combined units which bear a passing resemblance. See for example those at Stanford (Berks) and Yatton (Somerset) (7.7: 33–34).⁸²⁷

The sculpture in the wall panels was first recorded in the early eighteenth century by Richard Rawlinson (1690–1755) when it was already badly damaged. He notes several niches containing defaced figures at the top of the wall. He correctly identifies the Annunciation and Visitation panels but describes the Nativity as

a person at full length in his bed (at the bed's feet sits a person whose head is lost) with his hands seeming to support another person lying along [side] in a shroud, on each side of [which] stands out an asses head'.⁸²⁸

He describes the Coronation scene in the east window but interprets it as two of the Three Fates, one holding a spindle, the other cutting the thread. Further incomplete

⁸²⁶ Francis Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches* (London, 1916), 156–58, 211.

⁸²⁷ Bond (1916), 207, 174, 167, 209,

⁸²⁸ Bodl, Rawl. B 400 b, f. 57.

descriptions appear later in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and reports of the Oxford historical societies.⁸²⁹ The sculpture was largely obscured by a thick coat of whitewash until the late nineteenth century when a parishioner scrubbed the Jesse Tree 'as a labour of love', no doubt also removing surface details and any remaining colour.⁸³⁰ More recently, Baggs and Chance have queried the setting of the sculpture, creating uncertainty about its origins that has been repeated by later writers.⁸³¹ They speculated that the Marian carvings did not belong to Ducklington but came instead from the cult shrine of the Virgin at Cokethorpe chapel, dismantled in the 1540s. They put forward Robert Harrison, recusant rector of Ducklington from 1585–1610 as the man responsible.⁸³² This is an ingenious but overly complicated theory, not supported by the physical evidence, as the authors themselves acknowledge.⁸³³ As my description has shown the sculpture panels were specifically designed for the positions they occupy. Apparent anomalies in the setting arise from the adaptation of the thirteenth-century aisle as a chantry chapel in the mid fourteenth century, a project that included re-fenestration and installing the Jesse Tree monument and Marian sculpture, but was left unfinished. Having established the authenticity of the sculpture, its unusual location and significance remains to be explored, and this is tackled below.⁸³⁴

7.8 The patrons

The patron of the north aisle is not named in any extant documentation and no identifying marks remain on the monument or its surrounds. Yet the sculpture is unusual and constitutes a significant and costly intervention, indicative of personal choice, making the identity of the patron worth pursuing. This has plausibly been

⁸²⁹ John Buckler, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 85, 2 (July 1815), 491–92; NOAS (1871)1871, 4–6; OAS (1892), 9–11.

⁸³⁰ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, f. 165.

⁸³¹ Barker (2017a), 113–14; *A Guide to St. Bartholomew's Church, Ducklington Oxfordshire* (anon), 2015.

⁸³² <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p22>> [accessed 8 February, 2020].

⁸³³ Such instances do occur however. At St Edburg's church, Bicester (Oxon) two panels from the side of a fourteenth-century tomb are displayed high in the south nave walls. Sherwood and Pevsner (1974), 453–54.

⁸³⁴ See chap. 7.9: Dynasty and devotion to the Virgin.

assumed by earlier writers to be one of the manorial Dyve family.⁸³⁵ The identification accords with Nigel Saul's view that where ownership of the manor included the advowson, the proprietor is the most likely patron for substantial rebuilding of the church, especially where the lord owned more than one property on which to raise funds.⁸³⁶ Likewise, where a substantial freeholder in the parish can be identified in the parish from archival records, he or she is likely to be connected to a sepulchral monument. 'Burial, commemoration, and chantries all went together. Between them, the three collectively contributed to the emergence of the parish church as the principal site of gentry dynastic memory'.⁸³⁷ This in effect describes the circumstances at Ducklington which the Dyves had held as their principal seat since the end of the twelfth century but the connection has not been fully explored.

The Dyve family

The first Dyve to hold the manor of Ducklington was Guy de Dyve in 1195.⁸³⁸ The family also owned a handful of other manors across the southeast: Deddington in Oxfordshire, Wyke Dyve in Northamptonshire, and Wanneworth in Sussex.⁸³⁹ At Ducklington and at Wyke Dyve they held the advowson as well.⁸⁴⁰ The family appointed relatives to the living at Ducklington on several occasions. In 1233/4, William Dyve appointed his wife's kinsman, Richard of Bassingbourne.⁸⁴¹ Nicholas Dyve was rector until his death in 1294. Thomas Dyve was rector in 1311.⁸⁴² He was followed by another Nicholas Dyve in 1325.⁸⁴³ During the minority of John Dyve (following his father Henry's death in 1327) the advowson lay with the king, Edward III, who in 1332 appointed Ralph de Lenham (d. 1348).⁸⁴⁴ This was perhaps at the family's request, as, in the same year, having received the assent of the king, John's

⁸³⁵ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 256 f. 3; Badham (2008), 16; <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp140-148#p21>> [accessed 26 October, 2020].

⁸³⁶ Saul (2017a), 254.

⁸³⁷ Saul (2017a), 254, 159.

⁸³⁸ *Eynsham Cartulary*, 1 85.

⁸³⁹ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 81; Baker (1822–44), 2, 254.

⁸⁴⁰ TNA CP 25/1/287/41, 317; Bennett (1989), 2, 141; *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 10.

⁸⁴¹ *Rotuli Hugonis de Wells*, 2, 44.

⁸⁴² Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, ff. 147–48.

⁸⁴³ Bennett (1989), 2, 192.

⁸⁴⁴ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 10; Bennett (1989), 2, 200; Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 78, f. 148.

widowed mother Martha married Thomas de Lenham.⁸⁴⁵ Lenham's death is not recorded but was probably by 1340.⁸⁴⁶ The appointment of Ralph de Lenham was complicated as the Ducklington living was not vacant at the time but occupied by Nicholas Dyve. It was achieved by exchange with the living at Wyck Dyve. Nicholas' service was performed by a proctor, a clerk called William de Wyke, probably a local man.⁸⁴⁷ Nicholas died in 1336.⁸⁴⁸ His appointment was perhaps a sinecure. There seems to have been little to choose between the two livings financially.⁸⁴⁹ However, Ducklington, as the Dyve's principal holding, was the more prestigious location.⁸⁵⁰ A substantial manor house and court described in 1311, and again in 1327 in relation to Martha's dower, suggests the family were in residence.⁸⁵¹ The exchange of benefices was therefore of benefit to both men.

The above appointments show the manorial family over time using the advowson of the church on their chief manor to procure positions of advantage for their kin, and presumably for their own benefit as well. Costly projects—such as rebuilding an entire aisle and establishing a chantry—served the dynastic interests of the manorial family but were dependent on the availability of funds. These would arise at intervals related to life events, for example inheritance or advantageous marriage or widowhood, and could be further boosted by a judicious appointment to the living. Building projects might then be undertaken jointly—as happened at Harlestone where rebuilding in 1325 resulted from a collaboration between the proprietor, his son-in-law and the rector.⁸⁵² The rebuilding of the chancel and nave aisles at

⁸⁴⁵ *Cl. Rolls*, 1330–33, 472.

⁸⁴⁶ He is last documented in 1338 in Ireland with Bishop Burghersh, *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 10. In 1340 Martha relinquished custody of the lands which she and Lenham had held during her son John's minority, except for her dower portion which was confirmed. The entry in the close rolls relating to this event describes her as 'late the wife of Henry Dyne'. Her oath not to remarry without the king's permission, sworn at the time of Henry's death, is noted. Lenham is not named either in relation to the property or as her second husband, suggesting he had died, *Cl. Rolls*, 1339–41, 496.

⁸⁴⁷ Bennett (1989), 2, 158.

⁸⁴⁸ Bennett (1989), 2, 171.

⁸⁴⁹ Personal comment, Nicholas Bennett, 10 October, 2018.

⁸⁵⁰ Baker (1822–44), 2, 245.

⁸⁵¹ *Cl. Rolls*, 1307–13, 312; *Cl. Rolls*, 1327–30, 377–78.

⁸⁵² Saul (2017a), 7, 253–54; see also chap. 6.6: A shared chantry, note 683.

Ducklington which took place in the second half of the thirteenth century coincided with the proprietorship of William de Dyve, his marriage to the heiress Margaret Bassingbourne, and the appointment of Richard de Bassingbourne as rector. The mid fourteenth-century rebuilding of the north aisle and its monument coincided with the proprietorship of Henry Dyve, the appointment of Ralph de Lenham to the living, the marriage of Henry's widow Martha to Thomas de Lenham, and Thomas's death. The main building phases at Ducklington thus correspond with potentially lucrative events in the life of the proprietors. The Dyves were a knightly family but not in the first rank of wealth or status and this suggests collaboration with the family of a spouse or new incumbent, or, in respect of the work in the north aisle dating to the 1340s, the actions of a newly independent widow wishing to honour one or both of her dead husbands.

The circumstances at Ducklington clearly support the traditional identification of the Dyves as patrons of the north aisle. While the reconstruction of the whole aisle was evidently part of the same project, the sculptural interest is concentrated in the memorial chapel at the east end. My investigations leave open the wider question of patronage of the rest of the aisle to concentrate on the likely patron of this space. As the above suggests, this might be Martha, acting either on her own account or on the wishes of a deceased spouse. In order to explore this possibility, I start with reports of lost stained glass which have not so far been fully explored as markers of patronal interest.

Stained glass

There are some scraps of mid fourteenth-century glass reset in the north aisle east window.⁸⁵³ The remains of red roundels bordered in black with quatrefoils in yellow stain recall those at Cogges. They are surrounded by ivy leaves in grisaille. In the centre is a Head of Christ on white glass with a variegated halo in shades of pot-metal yellow. There is a scrap of pinkish glass with diagonal stripes beneath. Other pieces include a lion/leopard mask in pot-metal yellow; a trilobe formed of serrated leaves in pot-metal yellow; four individual leaves in the same style; part of a finialled, crocketed spire in yellow stain and two grisaille birds, finely drawn in

⁸⁵³ Newton (1979), 89–90.

profile. The lion/leopard mask suggests a date in the late 1330s or 1340s when, as Caroline Shenton has shown, it became a fashionable emblem at the court of Edward III. The image was widely disseminated through its use on the great seal in 1338 and on coins such as the half florin first issued in 1344.⁸⁵⁴ These fragments are all that remain from a scheme including ‘candlesticks and coats of arms’ that once filled the whole window, according to an elderly parish clerk reminiscing in 1872.⁸⁵⁵ Parts survived in the upper lights until 1803 but by this time, the heraldry had all gone.

In the great and beautiful east window of this chapel or chantry of the Dives is the Virgin with her arms raised in prayer to a sitting figure representing God Almighty, both carved in stone, pointing to a figure of Our Saviour painted in the compartment in the glass above. The compartments formed by the upper tracery are full of fine glass [...] canopies [...] rich gothic like those at Kidlington. The only area of heraldry left, if it be so, is a bird or border of birds.⁸⁵⁶

In 1595, the herald Nicholas Charles recorded seven coats of arms in the form of tricked shields.⁸⁵⁷ He does not say where they appeared but, if the clerk was right, at least some were in the north aisle east window. Charles draws them in two distinct groups. The first group are in a row of three. The second group are arranged in a square: two superimposed pairs with an inscription between them (7.8: 1).

Group 1

Azure semy of fleurs-de-lis argent a lion rampant gardant argent. Hoylande (Holand).⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁴ Caroline Shenton, ‘Edward III and the Symbol of the Leopard’ in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display* ed. by Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), 69–81.

⁸⁵⁵ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 75, f. 165.

⁸⁵⁶ Bodl, MS Top. Oxon b 256, f. 3.

⁸⁵⁷ BL, Cotton Lansdowne 874, f. 180.

⁸⁵⁸ *The Parliamentary Roll*, no. 128 <http://www.aspilogia.com/N-Parliamentary_Roll/> [accessed 13 February, 2020].

Barry nebuly or and gules. Lovel.⁸⁵⁹

Azure a fess dancetty or between thirteen billets or. Deyncourt.⁸⁶⁰

John, lord Lovel (1408) acquired the manor of Ducklington between 1381 and 1408.⁸⁶¹ The manor passed to his grandson, William, lord Lovel and Holland (d. 1455), who married Alice Deincourt (a descendant of Margaret Oddingseles) in c. 1422.⁸⁶² In 1423 Alice inherited Hardwick through her mother, Joan de Grey (d. 1408), uniting the two manors.⁸⁶³ This first group of three shields relates to a family whose proprietorship of Ducklington began after 1381, post-dating the mid fourteenth-century work in the north aisle.

Group 2

Azure on a bend gules three martlets or. Unidentified.

Gyronny of eight argent and gules. Bassingbourne.⁸⁶⁴

Inscription reading ‘Henry ... et Emma sa feme’.

Sable semy of six fleurs-de-lis or. Le’ham (or Leyham or Lenham).⁸⁶⁵

Or a fess sable. Dyne (or Dyve).⁸⁶⁶

By 1224, William Dyve (d. 1261) had married Margaret Bassingbourne, the daughter of his wealthy guardian, John of Bassingbourne.⁸⁶⁷ The rector in 1234 was Margaret’s kinsman, Richard of Bassingbourne.⁸⁶⁸ Without a patronymic it is impossible to identify the two individuals named in the inscription that follows,

⁸⁵⁹ *The Parliamentary Roll*, no. 59. This coat was also born by Basset. See chap. 5.9. The lost heraldic glass, note 312.

⁸⁶⁰ *The Parliamentary Roll*, no. 105.

⁸⁶¹ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp118-127#p5-6>> [accessed 19 February, 2020].

⁸⁶² Monika Simon, ‘The Lovells of Titchmarsh: An English Baronial Family, 1297–148?’ (PhD, York, 1999), 53, 63, 221.

⁸⁶³ *CP*, 4, 124–27; *CP*, VI, 150.

⁸⁶⁴ Papworth and Morant, 2 (1858–74), 899.

⁸⁶⁵ *The Parliamentary Roll*, no. 317.

⁸⁶⁶ *The Parliamentary Roll*, no. 344.

⁸⁶⁷ *Excerpta e Rotulis Finium in Turri Londinensi Asservatis, Henrico Tertio Rege, A.D. 1216–1272*, 2, ed. by Charles Roberts (London, 1835), 19, 115–16.

⁸⁶⁸ *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles*, 2 (1907), 44.

‘Henryet Emma sa feme’. However, it is likely that Henry was a member of the Dyve family whose first sons were named alternately Henry and John over several generations. No Emma is recorded. She may be the unnamed wife of the Henry Dyve who died in 1277 or an earlier wife of the Henry Dyve who died in 1327.⁸⁶⁹ The position of the inscription, drawn between the two pairs of shields, suggests that the couple came chronologically after Bassingbourne and before Dyve and Lenham. Henry Dyve was lord of Ducklington until his death in 1327 after which his widow Martha (*fl.* 1343) held the manor in dower.⁸⁷⁰ In 1332 she married Thomas de Lenham (d. by 1340).⁸⁷¹ Lenham was lord of the manor in right of his wife until her son John Dyve came of age in 1339. The rector in 1332, Ralph de Lenham (d. 1348), was presumably a relative.⁸⁷²

This second group relates to the Dyves, proprietors of Ducklington and patrons of the church from the end of the twelfth to the mid fourteenth century.⁸⁷³ It identifies two, if not three generations and their spouses, and possibly two of the clerics they appointed, also relatives. The shields acknowledge their longstanding involvement with the church and perhaps the building projects with which they were involved. The unidentified shield in this group (*Azure on a bend gules three martlets or*) could be a damaged version of Grey of Rotherfield, differenced for a younger son (*Barry azure and argent, on a bend gules three martlets or*).⁸⁷⁴ If so, its position alongside Bassingbourne could suggest that a junior member of the de Grey family contributed to the mid thirteenth-century rebuilding, marking the family’s acquisition of Hardwick which did not have a church of its own.

Charles’s description of two groups of heraldic glass identifies two unrelated sets of proprietors, the Lovels and the Dyves. The differentiation between them in his record suggests they were displayed separately, perhaps in different windows. The only

⁸⁶⁹ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 10. A family tree is given by George Baker, *History And Antiquities Of The County Of Northampton*, 2 (London, 1844), 254.

⁸⁷⁰ *Cl. Rolls*, 1327–30, 377–8; TNA CP 25/1/287/41, 317.

⁸⁷¹ *Cl. Rolls*, 1330–33, 472; *Cl. Rolls*, 1339–41, 496.

⁸⁷² Nicholas Bennett, ‘The beneficed clergy in the Diocese of Lincoln during the episcopate of Henry Burghersh, 1320–1340, 2 (PhD thesis, York, 1989), 200; Bodl, MS b 78, f. 148; thesis note 880.

⁸⁷³ See chap. 7.1: Historical background.

⁸⁷⁴ Mitchell (1983) no. 218.

window of a date that coincides with the Lovels' proprietorship is the three light, Perpendicular east chancel window, likely to have been installed to mark their acquisition of the manor. The first group of three shields may therefore have been displayed in this window, with one shield per light. As for the second group, the shield of Lenham provides a *terminus post quem* of 1332, the year in which Thomas de Lenham married Martha. This implies a fourteenth-century context for its display, i.e., the rebuilt north aisle. The genealogical theme of the heraldry suggests it was part of the same commemorative project as the similarly-themed monument of c. 1340s. The coats of arms were probably therefore in the two-light curvilinear window above the monument, or part of the array of glass remembered by the clerk in the grand four-light east window. There may be some support for this in the layout of the shields in Charles's manuscript: a pair of shields, followed by a pair of names, followed by another pair of shields would fit either a two- or a four-light window. Heraldic glass acknowledging several generations in either of these windows would complement the ancestral theme established by the Jesse Tree. A similar expression of dynastic concern is recorded by Peter Newton at Kidlington where there are the remains of a display of fourteenth-century heraldic glass relating to the de Plessis family which was similarly retrospective and dynastic. It seems also to have incorporated an earlier Jesse Tree.⁸⁷⁵

In 1339, on the coming of age of her son John, Martha's dower share of the Dyve estate was confirmed.⁸⁷⁶ Thomas de Lenham's death by 1340 gave her independent control of these assets at a time that coincides with the creation of a family memorial chapel. She is thus a strong contender for patron. However, she is not the only individual with ties to the Dyve estate and other possible candidates should be considered; her son John for example, or Thomas de Lenham himself who may have left instructions before his death. The following information drawn from documentary records suggest that of the three, Martha is the most likely.

⁸⁷⁵ Newton (1979), 126.

⁸⁷⁶ *Cl. Rolls*, 1339–41, 496.

Martha

Martha held Ducklington in dower from the death of Henry de Dyve in 1327 until her own unrecorded death sometime between 1343 and 1350.⁸⁷⁷ Nothing is known of her natal family but she may have brought advancement to the Dyves in some way as her dower share of Ducklington was generous: two-thirds in place of the more usual one.⁸⁷⁸ This included ‘the old hall’, a pantry, kitchen, great chamber, bakehouse, another house, a stable, a barn, a cattle shed, a dovecot and a garden with fishpond extending from the kitchen garden to the banks of the Windrush, along with several acres of arable land and the income from a fishery and a wood. The names are given of eight free tenants and twenty bondsmen who owed her rents and services. The description of the manor house and its outhouses together with the names of the tenants—Cartere, Coupere, Hayward, Mulle, Smyth—evoke the agricultural estate of which Martha had charge. No such particulars are given of her other dower properties in Deddington and Wanneworth. This suggests that Ducklington was Martha’s home and that she was involved in its management. Her son John was aged seven at his father’s death.⁸⁷⁹ During his minority his inheritance was granted to William de Clinton, earl of Huntingdon (nephew of Margaret Oddingseles at Cogges), but was returned to Martha after her marriage to Thomas de Lenham on payment of £200 a year.⁸⁸⁰ The couple therefore retained control over all the Dyve property until John came of age in 1339. Ducklington was thus the centre of Martha’s business affairs as well as her home.⁸⁸¹ After Thomas de Lenham’s death, Martha was again lady of the manor and, as a widow twice over, she had both the means and the motivation to instigate a commemorative project.

⁸⁷⁷ She was alive in 1343, TNA CP 25/1/287/41, 317. She must have been dead by 1350 when her son’s widow and daughter inherited <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp118-127#p6>> [accessed 15 November 2020].

⁸⁷⁸ Martha’s dower portion is given at one third in 1327 but as two thirds in later land transactions, *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 81; *Cl. Rolls*, 1327–30, 377–78; TNA CP 25/1/190/19, 2; TNA CP 25/1/287/41, 317.

⁸⁷⁹ *IPM*, 7, 1327–36, 10.

⁸⁸⁰ *Pat. Rolls*, 1327–30, 165; *Cl. Rolls*, 1330–33, 472.

⁸⁸¹ *Cl. Rolls*, 1339–41, 166.

Thomas de Lenham

Thomas de Lenham may be the same Lenham who first appears in the record in the 1320s as keeper of the castle gate of Pickering (Yorks), a financially advantageous appointment.⁸⁸² His family owned the manor of Buckland, on the border with Berkshire.⁸⁸³ He was perhaps a younger son as he does not appear as a landowner himself. Nor does he seem to have produced an heir. He could therefore have planned a joint monument with Martha, marking his status as proprietor of the Dyve estate during the minority of her son John, and of her dower lands after that. Jessica Barker notes that double monuments could be motivated by the need to strengthen a claim to property acquired through marriage or held jointly.⁸⁸⁴ However, this does not seem to be the case here. There was no joint tenancy and Martha's son John Dyve from her first marriage was the heir. Furthermore, Lenham's death may have been sudden—he is not heard of again after a trip to Ireland with Bishop Burghersh was extended in 1338—reducing the opportunity for planning a grand monument.⁸⁸⁵ If he left instructions, he died before the monument was created, leaving it up to his widow Martha or another executor to commission the work.

John de Dyve

Martha's son John is another potential patron. He came of age in 1339 and is named in that year on a commission of oyer and terminer and to array and keep the peace.⁸⁸⁶ A dutiful son who had just reached his maturity may have wanted to make his mark and found a chantry, perhaps in memory of his father who had died in 1327. However, while John would eventually inherit the whole of the Dyve estate, Martha retained her dower share of two thirds of Ducklington until her death sometime between 1343 and 1350. Perhaps in consequence, John had money troubles during the 1340s, making him an unlikely patron. In 1342 he raised £20 by granting the

⁸⁸² *Pat. Rolls*, 1321–24, 336.

⁸⁸³ <www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/berks/vol4/pp453-460> [accessed 5 March, 2020]. The toponymic may suggest they hailed from Lenham in Kent which had belonged to the monastery of St Augustine since Domesday <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol5/pp415-445>> [accessed 16 November, 2020].

⁸⁸⁴ Barker (2020), 258–60.

⁸⁸⁵ *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 10.

⁸⁸⁶ *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 275.

reversion of Martha's two-thirds to Thomas Bigge, parson of Heythrop, and John of Hardwick.⁸⁸⁷ In the following year he redeemed Ducklington—and Martha's share of Wyke Dyve which he had presumably granted away in the same way—settling them both on his son Henry, Henry's wife Elizabeth Lewknor and her father John de Lewknor, a deal which cost him the considerable sum of £100.⁸⁸⁸ As his son Henry stood to inherit anyway, the joint tenure benefitted Elizabeth and her father. Henry and Elizabeth were still children at this point. Their marriage was presumably brokered for financial advantage and the deal may have been a condition, or perhaps Elizabeth's marriage portion enabled it to take place. However, it did not solve John's money worries. In 1346, a merchant called John Dyne reneged on a ransom deal, causing his goods and chattels to be seized by the Crown.⁸⁸⁹ If this was the same man, he may have turned to his son's father-in-law to bail him out, as, in 1349, John Dyve was in debt to John de Lewknor for no less than £400.⁸⁹⁰ He seems unlikely to have embarked on an expensive building project at this time. If he was involved, despite the circumstances, this level of debt could explain why it was never finished.

After John's unrecorded death in *c.* 1350 the manor descended in two parts: his widow Joan (*fl.* 1386) inherited one third; their son Henry (d. by 1360) inherited the above-mentioned two thirds.⁸⁹¹ Their part shares in the manor and the date at which they inherited make both Joan and Henry unlikely patrons. Neither left an heir and both Joan, and Henry's widow Elizabeth disposed of their interest in Ducklington during their lifetime, suggesting that for them, the manor was a financial asset rather than a place for personal or family display.⁸⁹² None of these individuals is likely to have been involved in establishing an expensive memorial chapel in the parish church.

⁸⁸⁷ TNA CP 25/1/190/19, 2.

⁸⁸⁸ TNA CP 25/1/287/41, 317.

⁸⁸⁹ *Cl. Rolls*, 1346–49, 175.

⁸⁹⁰ TNA C 241/126/247.

⁸⁹¹ <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol13/pp118-127#p6>> [accessed 15 November 2020];

A. K. B (Babette) Roberts, *St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, 1348–1416: A Study in Early Collegiate Administration* (Windsor, 1948), 171; *IPM*, 13, 1370–73, 161–62.

⁸⁹² *IPM*, 19, 1404–13, 147–70; *IPM*, 13, 1370–73, 161–62; TNA CP 25/1/190/22, 75.

The circumstances remain ambiguous but point towards Martha as the principal agent behind the memorial chapel, perhaps acting jointly with her son or on the wishes of a deceased spouse but exercising the financial independence that came with her widow status. This is supported by the genealogical theme of the chapel itself. The design of the monument makes a statement about family continuity—to which Martha was key, as placeholder for the Dyve estate throughout her son's minority and which she may have wished to re-state after her second marriage to Thomas de Lenham. The tomb-scape probably included the heraldic glass and perhaps the incised slabs as well. As discussed in chapter 5, while ancestry was by no means an exclusively female interest, it was women who were charged with passing on family history from one generation to the next.⁸⁹³ By setting up a dynastically-themed memorial, Martha would be fulfilling these social expectations while expressing a widow's proper concern for the spiritual well-being of her spouses and other deceased family members as well. More than that, the character of the chapel decoration stands out for its originality, not to mention expense, suggestive of direct patronal engagement. As I discuss below, the theme is closely related to liturgy, evoking the devotional imagery in a book of hours, adding to the impression of a personal project and female involvement.⁸⁹⁴

Martha's circle

A number of those close to Martha would have provided models of pious behaviour likely to encourage the founding of a chantry. In 1309, her father-in-law John Dyve (c. 1270–1311) had licence to travel to Jerusalem on pilgrimage, embarking in the company of Robert, lord Fitzwalter, uncle of Margaret Oddingseles at Cogges. The trip was to take four years.⁸⁹⁵ As John was dead by 1311, he presumably died en route. Such a spiritually advantageous death would have been a source of pride to the family and he is likely to have been commemorated in the manorial church in some way, perhaps by one of the slabs discussed above.⁸⁹⁶ Before he embarked on his

⁸⁹³ See chap. 5. 11: The marginal frieze, note 444.

⁸⁹⁴ See chap. 7.9:

⁸⁹⁵ Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2013), 27; *Pat. Rolls*, 1307–13, 121.

⁸⁹⁶ The mortice in the interior slab could conceivably have held a viscera casket, although it seems too small for the purpose.

journey, John made a grant of some kind (perhaps land) to support the rector of Godstow, John de Trillowe, for which the nuns were to pay him and his heirs £80 per annum in return.⁸⁹⁷ They perhaps also undertook to pray for him on his travels. There was evidently a family connection with Godstow. In 1314, Margery Dyve, nun at Godstow, made the same institution a generous gift of the rectory and lands at Great Tew which she had purchased partly to finance post-mortem services at the convent for herself, her family and benefactors.⁸⁹⁸ She served as abbess at Godstow from 1316 until her death in 1335.⁸⁹⁹

Connections with the patrons of other local chantries can be discerned through the activities of Martha's two husbands. Henry Dyve was in Ireland in 1322 with Hugh de Plessis and the two John Croxfords, elder and younger.⁹⁰⁰ In 1326 Henry was supervisor of array for Oxfordshire, standing in for John de Croxford.⁹⁰¹ He was knighted at an unrecorded date.⁹⁰² He may have had legal training as he owned a fine, decorated copy of the *Statuta Anglia* (a book of statutes from Magna Carta), made in the early fourteenth century, written in Gothic cursive script with details in red and blue and decorated initials.⁹⁰³ This important possession suggests an educated man with an awareness of the administrative responsibilities that went with his social position and an understanding of its legal processes. No record survives of Martha's possessions but as discussed in relation to Margaret Oddingseles, a woman of her status is likely to have owned a book too, most likely a book of hours. This is significant in relation to the sculpture surrounding the monument at Ducklington, which, as I discuss in section 7:9 below, closely follows the sequence of devotional images typically found in such prayer books.

⁸⁹⁷ *Pat. Rolls*, 1307–13, 157.

⁸⁹⁸ *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, near Oxford: Written about 1450*, ed. by Andrew Clark (London, 1905), xxix, xxxix, 550.

⁸⁹⁹ <<https://monasticmatrix.osu.edu/monasticon/godstow>> [accessed 6 March, 2020]; *Pat. Rolls*, 1317–21, 223; *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 166.

⁹⁰⁰ *Pat. Rolls* 1321–24, 80.

⁹⁰¹ *Pat. Rolls*, 1324–27, 223.

⁹⁰² *Cl. Rolls*, 1323–27, 657.

⁹⁰³ Paul Binski and Patrick Zutshi (eds), *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge, 2011), 127–28.

Thomas de Lenham was an associate of Martha's first husband, Henry: Thomas and John de Lenham of Buckland, were with Henry and Nicholas Dyve and the rest of the group who assaulted Richard Stanlake in the dispute over market tolls in Witney in 1319.⁹⁰⁴ The suggestion of rivalry raises the possibility that the patrons at Witney and Ducklington were attempting to outdo each other in their funerary commissions. Between 1337 and 1338 Lenham was overseas with Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, on state business, providing a potential connection with Croxford.⁹⁰⁵ Other members of the family were influential churchmen. A certain John de Lenham was a cleric and royal administrator, described as the king's confessor in 1311 and 1313.⁹⁰⁶ Another Lenham, Roger, was a Carmelite friar granted permission to hear confessions throughout the diocese of Lincoln in 1337.⁹⁰⁷ Ralph de Lenham who, as we have heard, became rector of Ducklington, was an educated man, granted three years study leave in 1325.⁹⁰⁸ There is no tangible evidence of Ralph's patronage of the church but as a relative of the manorial family and beneficiary of the living he may have had some involvement, perhaps contributing financially or advising on the iconography of the tomb and surrounding sculpture which, as I now discuss, was closely linked to liturgy.

7.9 Dynasty and devotion to the Virgin

The Jesse Tree monument and sculpture panels which line the walls create an environment designed to invoke the intercession of the Virgin and mercy of Christ on behalf of the deceased. Like the wall paintings at Black Bourton discussed earlier, the sculptural scenes, I will argue, are mapped onto the walls in a way that matches the devotional sequences found in books of hours, thus preparing the beholder for Mass, the most effective suffrage that could be offered. As described above, the panels are positioned so that the Adoration of the Magi appears on the east wall above the altar, emphasising the centrality of the Eucharist in redemption. Writing about the wall paintings in the chancel at Chalgrove, which likewise formed the

⁹⁰⁴ *Pat. Rolls*, 1317–21, 368–69. See chap. 6.5: Richard de Stanlake of Witney.

⁹⁰⁵ *Pat. Rolls*, 1334–38, 532; *Pat. Rolls*, 1338–40, 10.

⁹⁰⁶ *Pat. Rolls*, 1307–13, 388, 556.

⁹⁰⁷ *Registers of Henry Burghersh*, 3, 346.

⁹⁰⁸ *Registers of Henry Burghersh*, 3, 38.

backdrop to the Eucharist, Claire Oakes explains how the different themes depicted in the mural programme reflected the imagery in books of hours, thus aiding the devotions of the laity,

These details provide opportunities for prayerful contemplation as well as being appropriate for the liturgical purpose of the space. There are other features of the arrangement of the images which appear to prompt a devotional response. In its programme which moves from childhood to Passion to *Transitus* imagery and includes standing images of saints as well as the freestanding representations of the Jesse Tree and the General Resurrection, the Chalgrove paintings can also be considered as a single sequence. The increasingly popular books of hours or primers might include all these elements.⁹⁰⁹

A similar principle can be seen behind the sculpture programme at Ducklington where the same subjects of Jesse Tree, childhood and *Transitus* appear. They create an appropriate setting for the Eucharist but they are also systematically arranged to parallel the organisation of a book of hours in a way that is in fact more overt than either Black Bourton or Chalgrove. In order to argue this, it is necessary first to consider the unusual choice of the Jesse Tree for the funerary monument and its integration into the sequence.

The Jesse Tree

The Jesse Tree illustrated a prophecy made by Isaiah and fulfilled by the Incarnation: ‘And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of our Lord shall rest upon him’.⁹¹⁰ Combined with Christ’s ancestry given in the gospels, showing his descent from the house of David, Jesse’s son, the metaphor developed into the image of a tree emerging from the body of a sleeping Jesse.⁹¹¹ The branches of the tree supported prophets and kings, including King David with his harp, the Virgin, and Christ himself.

⁹⁰⁹ Oakes (2009), 32.

⁹¹⁰ Isaiah 11: 1.

⁹¹¹ Matthew 1: 1–18; Luke 3. 23–38.

As Jessica Barker observes, the concept of the family tree itself was not yet developed by the fourteenth century and, while the image of the genealogical tree of Christ was deeply rooted in the religious beliefs of the day, there was a clear metaphorical association for families wishing to make a statement about their own lineage in commemorative circumstances. She notes a number of fourteenth-century examples of Jesse Tree imagery in which donor or patronal figures appear, for example the lavish stained glass in the east window at St Mary's, Shrewsbury (Shropshire).⁹¹² Frederica Law-Turner makes a similar point, observing that the Jesse Tree frequently occurs in chantry foundations dedicated to the Virgin, such as the north aisle at Lowick, where again the donor is prominent.⁹¹³ To these can be added a number of local examples. There is the late-thirteenth-century Jesse Tree in stained glass at Kidlington, mentioned above, which was probably originally in the Lady chapel accompanied by the coats of arms of the de Plessis family.⁹¹⁴ The wall paintings launched by the Jesse Tree at St Mary's church, Chalgrove include an exhortation to pray for the souls of the Barentin family.⁹¹⁵ The wall paintings in the nave of St Mary the Virgin, Black Bourton, include a prominent Jesse Tree opposite the entrance and a donor portrait in the adjacent spandrel, adorning an image of the Coronation of the Virgin (7.9: 1). At Chalfont St Giles (Bucks), a mural sequence of c. 1330 arranged around a funerary recess in the south aisle has an extensive Jesse Tree occupying the whole of the wall at the west end and Marian subjects around the altar at the east end (7.9: 2). The imagery in the Ducklington chapel belongs to this local trend. However, the Jesse Tree very rarely occurs on monuments themselves at this date, if at all, particularly those of the laity.⁹¹⁶ Part of the purpose of a

⁹¹² Barker (2017a), 115–18.

⁹¹³ Law-Turner (2011).

⁹¹⁴ Newton (1979), 126.

⁹¹⁵ Oakes (2009), 33.

⁹¹⁶ The two confirmed examples I know of are both clerical. The late twelfth-century Tournai marble slab at Lincoln Cathedral, traditionally identified as that of the bishop saint Remigius (d. 1192) has a prominent Jesse Tree design in the centre. In Schwerin Cathedral, there is a Tournai brass of c. 1375 made for two bishops of Schwerin, the brothers Gottfried and Friedrich von Bülow, in which family heraldry appears amongst the branches of a Jesse tree in the margins along with the ancestors of Christ, Barker (2017a), 114. Another potential example is an undated coffin and cover excavated in pieces from the site of St Mark's, Lincoln in 1975. It has intersecting circles painted along the sides and roundels on the upper surface. Badham (2002), 23.

monument was to express continuity of line and ancestral heritage, but this was generally achieved through the repetition of generic design rather than innovation.⁹¹⁷ The use of the Jesse Tree for the monument at Ducklington is thus out of the ordinary, indicating patronal choice and inviting further inquiry into its iconography.

The design of the monument—with the genealogical tree at the centre, its branches forming sheltering arches over twinned recesses—suggests that it commemorates members of the same family; perhaps Martha Dyve and one or both of her husbands, although there is no guarantee that it relates to a married couple. The unusual form makes a statement about lineage but expresses spiritual desires as well. The arboreal metaphor, symbolising growth and regeneration extends and deepens the family bonds of the physical family while creating, as Barker puts it, ‘an association between the deceased and the family of Christ, a connection that expressed the family’s hope of a place among the saved’.⁹¹⁸ This is brought to the fore at Ducklington by the way in which the tomb is locked into the surrounding prayer space, in particular its relation to the sequence of Marian scenes above it and its proximity to the altar. In arguing this, I will refer to three other cases where the motif of the Jesse Tree has been integrated with related imagery nearby and its form modified to exploit particular circumstances; Christchurch Priory (Dorset), St Cuthbert’s church, Wells (Somerset) and Dorchester Abbey (Oxon).

Connection with liturgy

In the chancel at Christchurch Priory, the large Jesse Tree reredos of *c.* 1350 features an extensive Nativity scene incorporating elements of Our Lady in Gesyn, the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Adoration of the Magi (7.9: 3). This combined image takes centre stage, directly above the figure of Jesse in place of the more usual Virgin and Child or King David. Its prominence and proximity make clear the connection between the Tree of Jesse (symbolising the ancient prophecies of the coming of Christ) and the Nativity (the realisation of those prophecies in the Incarnation). As the reredos forms the backdrop to the altar, the sacramental

⁹¹⁷ Nigel Saul, ‘Patronage and Design in the Construction of the English Medieval Tomb Monuments’ in *Patrons and Professionals in the Middle Ages* ed. by Paul Binski and Elizabeth New (Donington, 2012), 316–32 at 329.

⁹¹⁸ Barker (2017a), 114.

association with the Eucharist is equally emphasised. We have already noted the careful positioning of the Magi panel on the east wall at Ducklington, making the same association. Other liturgical connections can also be made. During the last Octave of Advent, that is, the week before Christmas Eve, the Liturgy of the Hours included a series of antiphons, known as the ‘“O” Antiphons’ which were recited during Vespers.⁹¹⁹ Coming before the *Magnificat* (‘My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour...’), Mary’s hymn of joy in response to the Incarnation, they constituted a series of invocations to Christ to appear, a request which was answered by his birth on Christmas Day. These invocations included the antiphon, *O Radix Jesse*,

O Root of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people,
at whom kings shall shut their mouths, to whom the
Gentiles shall seek: Come and deliver us, and tarry not.⁹²⁰

The sculpture at Ducklington is organised to evoke this part of the Advent liturgy. The iconography of the monument echoes the antiphon itself, ‘O Root of Jesse’. In the wall above are three of the sculpture panels. To the west is the Visitation scene, the occasion when, according to St Luke, the Virgin sang the *Magnificat*, the prayer which follows the antiphons.⁹²¹ In the corner to the east are two Nativity scenes, Our Lady in Gesyn and the Adoration of the Magi, combined as at Christchurch and answering the antiphons. The position of the sculpture and order of the sequence permits the Adoration scene to be placed on the east wall, making the connection with the Eucharist quite clear. Thus, while the sculpture panels initially appear to be oddly spaced out around the walls, with the Visitation panel somewhat isolated, this reading shows that they are in fact carefully positioned to match the liturgy and to promote meditation on the mystery of the Incarnation and the Virgin’s role within it:

⁹¹⁹ <<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2018/12/a-medieval-liturgical-commentary-on-o.html#.X6Qpu2j7RDs>> [accessed 6 March, 2020].

⁹²⁰ <<http://www.umilta.net/sophia.htm>> [accessed 6 March, 2020]. For the laity following the shorter version in their books of hours, the antiphons were replaced by the prophecy from Isaiah: ‘A rod shall come forth of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of our Lord shall rest upon him’ <<http://medievalist.net/hourstxt/bvm2ves.htm>> [accessed 5 October, 2020].

⁹²¹ Luke 1: 38.

a design that was of great benefit to the deceased whose tomb is integrated into the centre.

In the unique north chancel window at Dorchester, the branches of the Jesse Tree are formed by all-over tracery inhabited by figures in sculpture and stained glass. Barker interprets a kneeling figure sculptured into the mullion at the foot of Jesse as a supplicant asking for prayer.⁹²² However, the figure must be one of the Three Kings. The other two are behind him and on the mullion to the left, wearing crowns and carrying gifts. The kneeling king as is traditional has taken his crown off. The central standing king gestures eastwards, perhaps towards a lost figure of the Virgin and Child in the window but also towards the altar, again stressing the connection between the Magi and the Incarnation/Eucharist (7.9: 4–5). Nonetheless, the contribution of donor(s), whether visually included in this window or not, to the sumptuous setting for the celebration of the Eucharist would certainly ensure that intercessory prayers were said for their souls. The extension of the Jesse Tree into the Nativity story at Dorchester recalls the arrangement at Ducklington where the same development occurs, making visible the liturgical connection between the Nativity and the Incarnation, and where the request for intercession is inherent in the memorial context.

At St Cuthbert's, Wells, a Jesse Tree of 1470 forms a reredos behind the altar in the Lady chapel. It also combines sculpture with a window, if in a less innovative way than at Dorchester. It comprises thirty-three image niches arranged in a grid pattern around a thirteenth-century window, emanating from the large figure of Jesse lying beneath the sill (7.9: 6). The scene provides a dramatic setting for the Eucharist and, while details have been lost, the branches of the tree (envisioned as a vine as at Ducklington) would have appeared to grow around the window, the sculpture no doubt complemented with images in stained glass. These perhaps identified those to be prayed for but are now represented by a mosaic of indecipherable fragments.

These examples help explain how the layout of the Ducklington sculpture evoked the Incarnation and its liturgical expression, in order to benefit the deceased. Its relationship with the window above was part of this. While we cannot recover the

⁹²² Barker (2017a), 115.

subjects displayed in its stained glass, the window was part of an integrated scheme with the monument and wall panels. As noted, the rectangular frame of the monument encroaches on the window while the lost sculpture emerging from the body of Jesse originally culminated at the transition between the two. The vertical form of the window behind would have acted as a conduit, drawing the eye upwards through the imagery in the glass to the nativity panels in the wall above, encouraging meditation on the Incarnation—which was celebrated at the altar alongside. The Jesse Tree iconography on the monument thus resonates beyond the genealogical concerns of those it commemorates, becoming a constitutive part of the prayer space around it.

Connection with lay devotion: the wall panels

The devotional significance of the Jesse Tree was not confined to the Mass and the Christmas liturgy but acted as a prompt to prayer at other times as well. In illustrated psalters it appears as a decorated B, opening Psalm 1, the *Beatus Vir*: ‘Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord’. See for example the Huth Psalter (England, 1275–1300), BL Add. MS 38116, f. 14v) and the Gorleston Psalter, f. 8r (7.9: 7– 8). It was also included in books of hours. In the Salvin Hours (Oxford, 1275), BL Add. MS 48985, f. 1v), a full-page image of the Jesse Tree opens Matins of the Virgin, the first prayer of the day offered to the Virgin before dawn (7.9: 9). Included with the Jesse Tree in the Gorleston Psalter and the Salvin Hours are the Nativity scenes that usually accompany the following Hours as well, thus encompassing the whole of the day’s round of prayers to the Virgin. At Ducklington, the Jesse Tree is surrounded by the same scenes. It thus recalls the Mass and the Advent liturgy but also launches the everyday recitation of the Hours of the Virgin.

So far, I have concentrated on the sculpture surrounding the tomb in the north-east corner, suggesting that it read vertically from the Jesse Tree upwards to the Marian scenes in the rectangular panels above. These panels also read horizontally, as part of the sequence of rectangular panels in the same register that continues on the wall opposite. Of these, only the Annunciation panel now retains its figure sculpture. This much-loved scene appeared in a variety of contexts, as part of longer narratives

showing scenes from the life of the Virgin and Christ, and as a stand-alone devotional image symbolising the Incarnation and the Virgin's humble acceptance of God's will. Along with the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria* was the most widely known of medieval prayers. It was recited at the beginning of each of the hours of the Virgin.⁹²³ It opened with the words of greeting used by the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation, often shown on a scroll fluttering between the two figures. Sight of the image would prompt the beholder to recite at least the opening of the prayer. At Ducklington, the Annunciation scene fulfilled these same roles. Like the Visitation scene opposite, it initially appears somewhat stranded, alone in the middle of empty space and set well above head height in the wall. However, in this position the Annunciation panel faces the north door and is immediately visible to anyone entering the church and turning eastwards, encouraging them to greet the Virgin with an *Ave Maria* before either visiting the chapel itself or continuing into the nave. Its visual relationship with the Visitation opposite and its chronological position preceding the Infancy scenes shows that it also belongs to the Marian sequence which encircles the chapel, culminating in the Coronation in the east window. By broaching the gap between the north and south walls it helps define the limits of the chapel. The empty rectangular niches in the southeast corner must have been meant for related scenes, since lost or perhaps never executed. If they preceded the Annunciation chronologically, they would have contained scenes from Mary's early life (for example, her birth, presentation in the temple, education or marriage). Alternatively, if the narrative began with the Annunciation, the corner panels would have continued with further Infancy scenes after the Adoration of the Magi, such as the Flight into Egypt, Massacre of the Innocents or Presentation in the Temple. See for example murals of c. 1330 at Great Tew and Croughton (Northants) which include these events in much longer narrative sequences, arranged like a strip cartoon.

Working from what survives, I propose that the scenes chosen for the whole sequence were the same as those found in books of hours accompanying the Hours of the Virgin, allowing us to work out the likely subjects for the empty niches. The contents of early books of hours were very varied, English examples especially, but

⁹²³ <<https://www.medievalist.net/hourstxt/avemaria.htm>> [accessed 27 May, 2020].

by the mid fourteenth century a set of core texts had developed. The main component was the Hours of the Virgin, to which were usually added a Calendar, the four gospel readings, the Hours of the Cross, the Penitential Psalms, the Gradual Psalms, litanies, suffrages and the Litany of the Dead. The contents could be further individualised by their owners with the addition of extra prayers and other personally chosen material.⁹²⁴ Over time a standard set of images developed for the sequences, often in the form of full-page miniatures, helping readers recognise their place and providing a focus for the prayers to be said. The Hours of the Virgin were accompanied by a series of Infancy or Passion scenes, or sometimes a mix of the two, with the Coronation appearing at the end of the Infancy sequence; a reward as it were for the Virgin's role in salvation history.⁹²⁵ With individual variations and some crossover between Vespers and Compline, the Infancy scenes that typically opened each of the Hours of the Virgin were as follows:⁹²⁶

Matins (before dawn)	Annunciation
Lauds (at dawn)	Visitation
Prime (around 6 am)	Nativity
Terce (around 9 am)	Annunciation to the Shepherds
Sext (around noon)	Adoration of the Magi
None (around 3 in the afternoon)	Presentation in the Temple
Vespers (around 6 in the evening)	Flight into Egypt/Massacre of the Innocents
Compline (before retiring)	Coronation; Flight into Egypt/Massacre of the Innocents; Assumption or Death of the Virgin

This pattern was not yet firmly established by the 1340s when the work on the aisle at Ducklington took place but, despite the condition of the sculpture panels and areas of loss, the parallels are unmistakable. The Annunciation to the Shepherds is

⁹²⁴ Smith (2003), 3; Charity Scott Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2006), 39; Duffy (2006), 6.

⁹²⁵ Roger Wieck, 'The Book of Hours', in Thomas Heffernan and Ann Matter (eds), *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo, 2001) 473–514, 494.

⁹²⁶ Wieck (2001), 480, 492; Stanton (2001), 68.

missing (but may have been included in a painted backdrop behind Our Lady in Gesyn). The niches in the southeast corner (which would correspond to the hours of None and Vespers) are empty. However, the surviving scenes are the same as those in the table above. They occur in the same order and in the same rectangular format used for miniatures. This suggests that one of the ways in which the sculpture signified was less as a simple narrative than as an aid to praying the Hours of the Virgin. Not only do the images correspond in subject and format to those found in books of hours, but the spaces and angles between the panels mean that they are deliberately separated, an arrangement that provides the beholder with prayer space for the psalms and lessons for each hour—which were of course written out for book readers on the intervening pages. The lost murals may have provided connecting designs for these spaces.

The Coronation of the Virgin

The Coronation of the Virgin carved into the tracery of the grand east window is the culmination of this prayer scheme and given pride of place behind the altar, the devotional focus of the whole chapel. Its continuity with the scenes in the sculpture recesses is made clear by the shared medium. Incorporated into a window, the material itself creates certain viewing conditions that add to meaning. During the day, the Coronation sculpture is strongly backlit, making its details hard to make out. It was no doubt originally painted, perhaps gilded, helping to counteract this. It would have a different effect at night when the window was dark, lit by flickering lamp and candlelight at the hour of Compline, the last of the daily Hours. As noted, the text of Compline in a book of hours was often accompanied by an image of the Coronation. Interpreted in this way, the images in stone ranged around the walls and in the window can be seen as embodying the prayers recited at the canonical hours, creating an atmosphere of perpetual intercession for the deceased, who was made present by the monument. The parallels also permitted the reader of a book of hours containing the same images to imagine her/himself attending the liturgies celebrated in the chapel, when praying at home.

The Coronation links with the subjects displayed in the rectangular recesses, aiding the viewer in reciting the Hours of the Virgin. It also links to the two pointed recesses that flank it, set higher up in the wall at either side of the window arch. The

recess to the south showed the Ascension of Christ, indicated by the feet carved into the top of the frame. Its pair, north of the window is empty but comparison with other similar image sequences suggests it is likely to have been balanced by another post-mortem image, perhaps the Resurrection of Christ or the Assumption of the Virgin. Observing the emphasis on the afterlife on the east wall at Chalgrove where the chancel murals converge, Claire Oakes notes how Christ's Harrowing of Hell, his Resurrection and Ascension, shown to the north of the window, are balanced by *Transitus* images showing the Virgin's Death, Assumption and Coronation to the south.⁹²⁷ The Stapleton chantry at North Moreton pairs Christ's Resurrection with the Virgin's Assumption in stained glass. At Ducklington, the surviving Ascension and Coronation indicate that the east wall was similarly focussed on the afterlife. As the backdrop to the Eucharist (the sacrament which represented Christ's defeat of death), and in the context of a chantry chapel dedicated to assisting the passage of the deceased into paradise, the theme is apposite, encouraging the faithful in their beliefs, prompting their prayers for the deceased and invoking the Virgin's intercessory powers.

The Coronation is positioned at the intersection between the liturgical Hours and the liturgy of the Mass, belonging to both. It could also prompt any number of other, widely-known Marian devotions of the sort that were commonly added to books of hours. Hawisia de Bois's book, the *De Bois Hours*, contained several prayer sequences based on the Joys and the Mysteries of the Virgin, in prose and in verse form.⁹²⁸ The five joys of the Virgin were a flexible set of devotions based on events that had brought the Virgin joy during her life, usually comprising Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection, Ascension and Assumption or Coronation. They appear in books of hours from the mid thirteenth century and are duplicated in the sculpture panels at Ducklington.⁹²⁹ In devotional texts they could be expanded to six, seven or fifteen and were sometimes accompanied by other sequences such as the virtues of the Virgin or Salutations to the Virgin.⁹³⁰ These prayers appear unillustrated in the

⁹²⁷ Oakes (2009), 28–29.

⁹²⁸ Smith (2003), 304.

⁹²⁹ Donovan (1991), Chapter 4 and her Appendix 3.

⁹³⁰ Smith (2003), 185; Lucy Freeman Sandler, 'An Early Fourteenth-Century English Psalter in the Escorial', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 42 (1979), 65–80 at 73–74.

De Bois Hours. Katherine Smith notes that there was no visual tradition for images to accompany them but proposed that they would be brought to mind by picture cycles found in churches, and vice versa.

The book owner viewing imagery of the life of the Virgin could have done so while contemplating or reciting a separate, unillustrated Joys or Salutations text contained in a devotional manuscript or perhaps committed to memory. Or meditation on the imagery may have led the devotee to recall a textual series of Joys or Salutations.⁹³¹

Surrounded by sculpture depicting these joys, the Ducklington Coronation would prompt the viewer to devotional meditation in the way described. The scenario is made explicit in a late fourteenth-century mural sequence in the chancel at Broughton. Now much damaged, it comprises scenes of the Virgin's death and her Coronation and includes a small kneeling figure from whose mouth a prayer scroll unfurls, reading 'leuedy for pi joys five led me the [wey?] of clene live' (7.9: 10).⁹³²

Sculpturally embellished windows that combined images in different media are a feature of the Decorated style, demonstrating the patron's modernity and the mason's skill. It is also possible, as the above demonstrates, to see in the inventive example at Ducklington not just a stylistic flourish but devotional intent, designed to enhance the prayer experience of the viewer and bring spiritual advantage to the deceased whose monument was an integral part of the scheme. One way in which the Ducklington Coronation sculpture does this is by exploiting the symbolism of light inherent in its setting and noted above in relation to Compline, evoking another, long established aspect of Marian devotion. As providers of light, windows had symbolic meaning, particularly east windows situated behind an altar where they acted as a backdrop to the Eucharist. The love of light, physical and mystical, and fear of darkness were central themes in medieval writing. Light was both a metaphor for Christ himself as the light of the world, and the means by which to know him as his words and those of preachers were transformed into spiritual enlightenment.⁹³³ The

⁹³¹ Smith (2003), 185.

⁹³² Tristram (1955), 145.

⁹³³ Kenneth Clarke and Sarah Baccianti (eds), *On Light* (Oxford, 2014), throughout, especially 122.

Virgin too was likened to light. In a sermon on the Assumption, John of Damascus (676–749) wrote,

So art thou the perennial source of true light, the treasury of life itself, the richness of grace, the cause and medium of all our goods [...] Thou art our light, life-giving ambrosia, true happiness, a sea of grace, a fountain of healing and of perpetual blessing.⁹³⁴

In later prayers, the Virgin was addressed as a star, brighter than light itself, and as a powerful intercessor with her son. A mid thirteenth-century macaronic poem combining praise of the Virgin with a penitent's plea for succour opens with the verse,

Of on that is so fayr and briht, Velud maris stella,
Brihter than the dayis liht, Parens and puella,
Ic crie to the, thou se to me,
Leuedy, preye thi sone for me Tam pia,
That ic mote come to the, Maria'.⁹³⁵

An early fourteenth-century translation of the Latin hymn, *Ave Maris Stella*, starts with the greeting, 'Heyl, leuedy, se stoeerre bryht' and pleads with her to 'Gulty monnes bond vnbynd, Bryng lyht tyl hoem that boethe blynd'.⁹³⁶ In other words, the Virgin, like Christ, was both light and the bringer of light, as well as compassionate mediator between her son and sinful mankind. Incorporating images of Christ and the Virgin into the armature of a window harnessed these ineffable aspects of their being, giving them material form.

⁹³⁴ <<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/johndamascus-komesis.asp>> [accessed 8 August, 2019].

⁹³⁵ Theodore Silverstein, *Medieval English Lyrics*, York Medieval Texts (London, 1975), 22 (Of one that is so fair and bright, a true star of the sea, brighter than the day is light, parent and daughter equally, I cry to thee, attend to me, Lady, so tender, plead with your son for me, that I might come to thee, Mary)

⁹³⁶ Silverstein (1975), 44 (Hail, lady, so bright a star, Guilty men's bonds unbind, Bring light to those who are blind).

The role of windows as a site of interaction with light has been discussed in relation to stained glass imagery.⁹³⁷ For those inside, daylight poured in through the larger windows typical of the Decorated style, giving life to images in stained glass and glowing with colour gained from passing through them. For those outside, stained glass images were hard to make out and in fact obscured the view of the interior, providing a tantalising half glimpse of heaven but ‘seen through a glass, darkly’, to borrow St Paul’s phrase.⁹³⁸ Light passing through glass was a long-standing metaphor for the virtues and mysteries of Mary’s perpetual virginity, put most simply by William of Shoreham in *c.* 1320,

As the sun takes his passage through the glass without
breaking it so thy maidenhood was untainted by bearing
thy child. Now, sweet lady of solace, be merciful to us
sinful ones.⁹³⁹

A sculptured Coronation of the Virgin incorporated into the east window at Ducklington gave solid form to these intangible ideas as well as providing the viewer with a visual assurance of the Virgin’s proximity to her son and her undoubted ability to intercede. The design can thus be seen to have devotional implications that are of equal if not greater value than its stylistic novelty.

The use of sculpture panels laid out round the walls and culminating in a Coronation integrated into window tracery is a most unusual arrangement, pointing to close patronal involvement. It has echoes of the sculpture borders lining the walls at Cogges which I argued earlier were part of the means by which the patron personalised the prayer space of the chapel in the same way as owners personalised their books of hours, with material chosen to express their own interests. The sculpture panels at Ducklington do this by directing the viewer towards different modes of prayer. They appear in two sets of differently-shaped frames which

⁹³⁷ Anne Harris, ‘The Reception of Stained Glass’, in *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Materials, Methods, and Expressions* ed. by Elizabeth Curson Pastan and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwartz (Leiden, 2019), 202–14 at 209–10.

⁹³⁸ 1 Corinthians 13:12.

⁹³⁹ William of Shoreham, *The Poems of William of Shoreham, about 1320, Vicar of Chart-Sutton*, 1, ed. by Matthias Konrath (London, 1902), 129.

converge in the east window, implying separate but interrelated themes. Such themes within themes have been discussed by other commentators in relation to books of hours.⁹⁴⁰ They permitted the reader to use the book for different purposes, raising the images from the status of illustration to more active prompts to prayer and meditation on a wide range of subjects. The same function can be attributed to the different sizes and framing of the images painted on the nave walls at Black Bourton, a device that permits them to belong to one overarching penitential sequence but at the same time to reference other supplicatory themes, and to function as stand-alone objects for individual devotional attention. Likewise, the two sculpture series at Ducklington, one relating to the Hours of the Virgin, the other on a *Transitus* theme, come together in the image of the Coronation above the altar, which belongs to both and to the Eucharist. Each individual scene also functions independently, inviting focussed meditation. Although a relationship with the prayer sequences found in books of hours can be discerned behind the murals at Black Bourton and Chalgrove, it is more overt at Ducklington while the use of sculpture puts it in a class of its own. The design does not seem to have been taken up elsewhere, perhaps on account of expense. If Martha were indeed the patron, it would indicate a woman who was not only affluent but theologically aware and committed to the salvation of those commemorated in the chapel including herself.

7.10 Penance

All those attending the chapel, indeed all parishioners entering the church through the north door encountered the charnel crypt under the porch first. As discussed in chapter 6, this was a highly significant place, playing an important role in post-mortem care. Its location under the porch at Ducklington may be related to the popularity of porch burials which as Helen Lunnon has shown, was a long-established tradition and a popular choice made by clerics and laity alike. The deceased benefited from the regular footfall of parishioners coming and going and the round of liturgical and social events that took place there, while parishioners who

⁹⁴⁰ Kathryn Smith notes several. One is the recurrence of crusader imagery in the *De Bois Hours*, referencing the devotional credentials of the owner Hawisia de Bois's forbears. Another is imagery of St Anne teaching the Virgin to read, widely found in books of hours of the time, encouraging mothers to educate their children in religion and literacy. Smith (2003), 95, 260–66.

paid for the construction of the porch itself were discharging their moral obligation to contribute to the church fabric.⁹⁴¹ At Ducklington, the presence of the crypt meant actual burial beneath the porch was not possible. The deposition of ‘dry bones’ as charnel may have been seen as a desirable alternative, offering a suitable resting place for the remains of, for example, John Dyve whose death on pilgrimage in 1311 would have conferred almost relic-like status on to his remains, should they have been repatriated.⁹⁴² The small window into the crypt would offer kneeling penitents a view of the whitened bones of their forebears inside, a sharp reminder of life’s frailty and the physical realities of death but also a consoling symbol of the purifying, redemptive effect of penitential suffering.

The route into the church through the north door taking attendees past sight of the charnel would bring to mind the Office of the Dead and the Penitential Psalms. These were powerful prayer sequences that were part of the book of hours and familiar through frequent recitation. The Office of the Dead was read over a corpse when it was brought into church the night before a Requiem Mass and burial as a way of redeeming the sins of the deceased. It was also recited during the funeral itself and afterwards to commemorate and offer intercession for all the anonymous dead as well as the named deceased.⁹⁴³ The Virgin’s hymn of praise, the *Magnificat*, was included in Vespers of the Office of the Dead, while another prayer, repeated at both Matins and Lauds, called upon her to intercede and bring the deceased ‘into the fellowship of eternal blessedness’, prayers that are echoed in the imagery on the chapel walls.⁹⁴⁴ There were benefits for the living as well in repeating these sequences. The words of the psalms included in the Office—for example, ‘I will please the Lord in the land of the living’—show that they offered redemption for those who recited them as well as those for whom they were said.⁹⁴⁵ The Seven Penitential Psalms were an equally familiar daily prayer sequence, another key

⁹⁴¹ Helen Lunnon, “‘I Will Have One Porch of Stone...over My Grave’”, *CM*, 27 (2012): 53–58.

⁹⁴² Daniell (1997), 88. The heart and viscera of those who died abroad were sometimes sent home to family foundations. See Sally Badham, ‘Divided in Death. The iconography of English medieval heart and entrails monuments’, *CM*, 34 (2019), 17–76.

⁹⁴³ Schell (2011), 65.

⁹⁴⁴ Glenn Gunhouse < <https://www.medievalist.net/hourstxt/home.htm> > [accessed 29 May, 2020].

⁹⁴⁵ Psalm 116 (114): 9.

component of a book of hours where they preceded the Office for the Dead.⁹⁴⁶ They included the *De profundis*, the cry of the penitent sinner, expressing the longing for forgiveness ('Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice!') but also hope in a merciful, loving God ('O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plenteous redemption and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities').⁹⁴⁷ Thus prepared, and in an appropriately penitential frame of mind, those entering the church via the north door would progress from the charnel chamber past the chantry chapel where the sculpture took up the theme. In its original form, the Jesse Tree monument would have included King David playing his harp, embodying his songs of penance, and the figures of the Virgin and Christ, promising redemption. The redemptive theme was extended by the surrounding Marian images, culminating in the vision of heaven above the altar in the form of the Coronation. The prayer-scape created by the sculpture was thus rich in references to modes of devotion familiar to the whole parish community through regular recitation and from books of hours, creating an environment of perpetual prayer and intercession, offering the consoling promise of salvation to living and dead alike.

None of this accounts for the high position of the sculpture recesses. There may be two interlinked reasons for their unusual setting, one practical, the other devotional. The sculpture panels date to the raising of the walls in the mid fourteenth century. As a practical expedient, the panels were built in with the new upper section of the wall rather than excavating new openings in the existing wall lower down. Their integration with the ballflower frieze shows that this was intentional. The chapel was probably separated to some degree from the rest of the aisle by a screen of some kind. The chopped-off end of the roll moulding at the bottom of the Visitation panel on the north wall suggests it butted up against something, perhaps the descending wall piece of a frame running north-south across the aisle from the western extremity of the monument to the arcade opposite. A screen would provide a degree of seclusion for those in the chapel while one with an open design would allow parishioners in other parts of the church visual and aural access. The height of the sculpture panels means they would be easily visible, indeed prominent, both over the

⁹⁴⁶ Donovan (1991) 104.

⁹⁴⁷ Psalm 130 (129): 8.

top and framed by the divisions of such a screen. Their position can thus be seen as an advantage rather than an anomaly, as in this way they belonged not only to the chapel but to the rest of the aisle as well, encouraging the wider community in their devotion to the Virgin and prompting their intercessory prayers for the deceased.

7.11 Missing Imagery

Despite its present mutilated condition, it is evident that the sculpture in the north aisle was part of a lavish and ambitious visual programme. Details such as the tilt of the Virgin's couch resting on the curve of the adjacent window, and the integration of the Coronation sculpture into the window tracery, juxtaposed with the Head of Christ in stained glass, show that it was site-specific and combined images in different media. The sculpture was clearly not intended to stand alone but was part of an integrated scheme that relied for its full effect on its relationship with its setting and other imagery, mostly now gone but including stained glass, murals and liturgical furnishings. Mixed-media schemes were not uncommon in Decorated churches. The combined sculpture and stained-glass windows at Dorchester Abbey, Barton-on-Humber and Christchurch Priory have already been mentioned. Sculpture was more frequently combined with wall painting, a cheaper option. At Combe (Oxon) the angel of the Annunciation, painted onto the east end of the south nave wall, greets a now lost carving of the Virgin once contained in a ballflower-enriched niche on the neighbouring east wall (7.9: 11). A piscina below this mural indicates an altar, no doubt dedicated to the Virgin. Another combination of two- and three-dimensional imagery occurred at Brent Eleigh (Suffolk) where a mural of angels painted in a starry sky kneel to cense a lost sculptured figure on a projecting stone corbel (7.9: 12). Sepulchral monuments, too, often combined sculpture with painting. See for example the tomb of Richard de Goldsborough of *c.* 1330–35 at Goldsborough (Yorks). It has sculptured niches on the side framing painted images of St Peter and the Coronation of the Virgin (7.9: 13). In some cases, such as Combe, missing elements in ensembles combining different media can be identified with confidence. At Ducklington, less of the jigsaw survives but comparison with other contemporary examples can provide missing pieces. For example, the Jesse Tree sculpture would have included images of King David, the Virgin, and Christ but whether in sculpture, painting or glass cannot now be recovered.

The space left below and between the sculpture panels provides ample room for the wall paintings that we know covered the walls of the aisle. These would have connected the separate panels visually, enhancing the continuity between them and integrating them into the devotional programme of the whole chapel. As the examples of Chalgrove and Black Bourton suggest, the designs are likely to have included the depiction of favourite saints and patronal portraits. Indeed, in the south aisle at Ducklington itself a donor is painted alongside the Trinity in the east window splay (7.2: 17). Books of hours frequently introduce patronal portraits into devotional subjects including the same Marian subjects as appear at Ducklington. In the Neville of Hornby Hours, a young couple identified by Kathryn Smith as Isabel de Byron and Robert I de Nevill appear throughout, including three times in illustrations accompanying the Salutations of the Virgin.⁹⁴⁸ As noted earlier, the sculpture depicting the Annunciation at Ducklington is very close to the same scene painted in the Pabenhams-Cliffards Hours where it appears as a full-page miniature, opening Matins of the Hours of the Virgin. In the painting, the Annunciation scene is enclosed within a rectangular frame with sprays of flowers sprouting from the corners. The book owners, John de Pabenhams and Joan Clifford, are shown below the frame, kneeling in prayer beneath separate trefoil canopies, Joan on the right beneath the image of the Virgin, John in armour on the left beneath the angel. The pair are connected by a hatched green line suggestive of the ground on which they kneel. The image provides a potential model for donor portraits at Ducklington in the blank spaces round the sculpture panels. As we have seen, donor portraits were regularly inserted into schemes involving the Jesse Tree. Monuments were likewise provided with likenesses in paint and sculpture. At Northmoor, for example, as well as the two effigies, images of the patronal family praying for intercession were painted on the back of the recesses.⁹⁴⁹ The area around the Ducklington monument is thus another likely location for family imagery, making up for the apparent lack of effigies or other sculptural identification such as heraldry or inscription (7.9: 14–15).

⁹⁴⁸ Smith (2003), 35–36.

⁹⁴⁹ Badham (2008), 24–25.

7.12 Summary

Close examination of the north aisle sculpture demonstrates that anomalies in its setting are superficial and result from the work being interrupted. The end-to-end monument belongs to a trend for similar designs evident in the local area. The Jesse Tree theme and the Marian sculpture panels reveal a close integration, previously unexplored, with liturgy and intercessory prayer; the subjects and placement being carefully planned to interact with, even direct, the devotional activity taking place in and around the chapel, sharpened by proximity to the charnel crypt. The sculpture was experienced not as a succession of isolated fragments as it appears today but as part of a holistic mixed-media environment. It gained significance from its interplay with other artefacts in the space and from the intercessory devotions that took place there, of which it was an important constitutive element.

Even more than at Margaret Oddingseles's chapel at Cogges, the image programme draws on the conventions of a book of hours, in this case demonstrating familiarity with the canonical hours and other prayers by which Marian devotion was expressed, recited throughout the day and at particular seasons in the church year. They evoke the actual offering of these prayers by the living. They also set them perpetually in stone for the benefit of the dead. The disposition of the sculpture recesses around the monument at the east end of the aisle creates an intimate prayer space for the family chantry which was simultaneously made available to the rest of the parish through sightlines. These connected parishioners outside the space of the chantry with the devotional images placed high on the walls inside, in particular the Annunciation which greeted those entering the church through the north door, and the Coronation in the top of the east window behind the altar, visible from the rest of the aisle and part of the nave.

The theme of the Jesse Tree for the monument, which is closely integrated into the Marian scheme on the walls, reveals a concern with dynastic continuity as well as devotion to the Virgin—perhaps a family and certainly a local enthusiasm, fostered by the Cokethorpe cult. Evidence for the identity of the patron is circumstantial but cumulative, pointing towards Martha Dyve. While her role remains unconfirmed, her influence if not her direct patronage may be discernible through the image choices made for the chapel which reflect concerns traditionally associated with women and

social conventions governing their behaviour. More broadly, these findings add to our understanding of gentry patronage of the rural parish church and perhaps also of the role of women in commemoration.

CONCLUSION

Using the focus provided by an exploration of gentry commemoration in dedicated chantry chapels, this investigation has sought to meet the challenge implicit in studying the art and architecture of the medieval parish church. The topic provides an alternative to the traditional ‘kings, conquerors and clerics’ perspective still prevalent in medieval art history which has traditionally concentrated on the court, great churches and cathedrals as environments for artistic expression. It has demonstrated that invention and imagination could flourish in parochial settings too, sponsored not by noble or aristocratic patrons but by members of the local gentry. Decorated designs familiar from grander settings are much in evidence, in the form of elaborate window tracery, complex tomb installations and the plentiful use of figure sculpture. These features demonstrate the influence of courtly styles but are carefully tailored to suit the more modest, intimate conditions of a parish church while still serving the social and devotional needs of the patrons.

The conclusions are not that gentry chantries were all the same. The array of patronal models represented at the study sites is wide, ranging from individual to family to corporate, with a corresponding variation in appearance, audience and reception. While there is no way to gauge contemporary reaction, responses to the borough chancel house in the market town of Witney would be different to those evoked by the private chapel at Cogges and the almost saint-like presentation of Margaret Oddingseles sequestered within. Furthermore, while the spiritual imperatives behind each of the study chapels are the familiar ones of ensuring the salvation of the deceased and edifying the living, the image programmes are highly individualised, suggesting close patronal involvement and personal expression. This is most evident in the innovatory way in which imagery associated with books of hours is systematically mapped onto the walls at Cogges and Ducklington, and in the association between the exterior sculpture on the Witney chancel house and the memorials inside; conceits which are not found elsewhere in quite the same form. The image programmes are multi-layered, communicating a range of meanings and addressing their different audiences. They require from the beholder an agile approach to looking, making connections across space, between inside and outside, between the material context of this world and the spiritual context of the next. Such

sophisticated designs were of clear spiritual benefit to the patrons in navigating Purgatory but were directed towards to the wider community as well, improving the spiritual experience of the whole parish and eliciting *pro anima* prayers in return. This was particularly important in the context of a parish church where patron and parishioners had interacted, at least at some level, in life. Footfall was less than in a great church but prayers offered for the souls of the deceased were more personal. Indeed, while it is true that each of the chantry chapels was the most impressive area of the church, with a much greater degree of embellishment even than the chancel itself, the two that survive impart a sense of intimacy and belonging. At Cogges and Ducklington, where the patrons may have had the right to be buried in the chancel, they did not choose this prestigious option, installing their monuments in more visually accessible parts of the church instead; still set apart as befitted their social status but closer to the communities amongst whom they had lived. Furthermore, while there is no doubt that the patrons in both instances had grand connections, these were not exhibited in their heraldic displays. They honour family and place instead—in contrast to more aspirational schemes elsewhere which include the arms of military companions and those of royal and magnate associates.⁹⁵⁰ It might have been different at Witney where the patrons stood in a different relationship to the parish. They were neither armigerous nor tenorial and may have needed to display illustrious contacts to establish their identity and status. In other words, within the category of parish chantry foundation, even those of the rural gentry, variation can be found permitting personal expression, and it is this which brings historical significance to the study of individual examples.

In terms of conducting research in the extensive but somewhat nebulous field of medieval parish church studies, a close focus was required. This was provided by the choice of three neighbouring chantry chapels with founders' tombs, setting clear parameters for the research, establishing the date and location of the material to be studied and providing some fixed points from which to start, i.e., a recognisable setting within the church, an identifiable art-historical style and an ostensive purpose for the imagery together with a likely pool of patrons in the local gentry with

⁹⁵⁰ See for example Robert Kinsey, 'The Brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne at Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire', *TMBS*, 21 (2020), 39–68.

demonstrable links to each other and to local society. A holistic, multi-disciplinary approach was adopted for the inquiry as the most appropriate means of interpreting these sacred spaces, acknowledging each one as an individualised, integrated image complex in a localised parish setting while exploring the themes they share with each other and, ultimately, with the concept of *memoria* more broadly. The challenge has been to interpret what survives of the fabric without much documentary support and little to identify the patrons who may have been responsible for different phases. This gap has been made up by mining the archival record for traces of individuals with threads strong enough to tie them to the church at appropriate moments. As for the imagery, parts are no longer recoverable but throwing the comparative net widely and borrowing from medieval disciplines outside art history has allowed the inquiry to go beyond the visual and venture into the imaginative world inhabited by its viewers. The approach invites the charge of speculative interpretation but is justified: it acknowledges the unusual character of the sculpture and has led to connections with related imagery encountered elsewhere—in other devotional settings, oral culture and the world of secular entertainment as well. It has also prompted a reading of the imagery at each site as more than generically devotional, and certainly more than illustrative or decorative, as has previously been supposed. Instead, it has been shown to be constitutive of meaning; closely related to, even directing the beholder towards specific modes of devotion and behaviour, and evoking the active use of chantry space for lay prayer, patronal and parochial. Other findings include the hitherto unrecognised but significant trend towards burial and remembrance near chancel, and strong suggestions of the input of women into commemorative projects. Nor are these findings limited to the study sites, as has been shown through the many references in the text to similar set-ups in other parish churches.

In fact, the holistic method of analysis adopted for this thesis could be profitably applied wherever there are substantial remains of a tomb-scape in a parish church with documented gentry proprietors. There are several of these in the region. In the painted south aisle at Swalcliffe where the Wykeham family were proprietors there is an intriguing set of medieval memorials: an early thirteenth-century recess decorated with dogtooth on the outside of the wall, and paired end-to-end recesses of *c.* 1300

on the inside, one of which still contains a stone coffin.⁹⁵¹ At Northborough, the Delamare family chantry in the south transept, founded *c.* 1327–40, has twinned recesses under a grand end window, and a crypt which remains substantially intact beneath. These memorial spaces resonate with the study sites in the thesis and are likely to reward similar inquiry. A desirable side effect of such research would be to bring overlooked, neglected features to public attention, ensuring they are better understood and better preserved for future generations.

Other directions for future study emerged during the research. One potentially fruitful topic is further investigation of sculpture production in the locality, already initiated by John Goodall's analysis of grotesque sculpture in the north of the county and Nigel Saul's identification of an influential workshop in the region creating distinctive designs such as the end-to-end tomb. The study sites all display innovatory sculptural forms typical of the flowering of the Decorated style in the early fourteenth century. However, they were not all taken up as the Head of Christ had been a few decades earlier. There is no repeat of a Tree of Jesse monument, for example. Rows of grotesques do not reappear lining the inside of sacred spaces, nor do devotional panels arranged at intervals around the walls. These conventions, the last two borrowed from a book of hours, may have been personal expressions that did not meet the requirements of patrons elsewhere. However, some motifs do recur, if not in quite the same form. The horse-headed monster with knotted tail at Merton church repeated as part of the amphisbaena in the frieze at Cogges is one example. The Merton figure is one of a set of grotesque roof corbels in the chancel. They are arranged as pairs with carvings suggesting sin on one side and salvation on the other. The same conceit of paired subjects speaking to each other across a sacred space may have been part of the original arrangement in the chapel at Cogges where, I believe, the animal musician corbels now in the north nave aisle started off, before re-ordering took place to shore up the roof.⁹⁵² In the chancel at Duston, another of

⁹⁵¹ < <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol10/pp225-260#p130> > [accessed 22 November, 2020].

⁹⁵² See chap. 5.8 note 279. Four of the eight corbels in the north aisle depict musicians, one human and three animal, like those in the chapel although slightly smaller. They play loud instruments, the horn, bagpipes and nakers, complementing the quieter, stringed instruments played by the chapel figures. They are evidently not *in situ* as they are wrongly set and out of order. A huntsman in the

Margaret Oddingseles's dowry properties, a more conventional version appears, with pairs of human rather than beast musicians. Inquiry into the process by which such ideas were developed, and their adoption or otherwise into local sculptural tradition would shed further light on the collaboration between artist and patron during a short but fruitful window.

It would also be worthwhile looking in greater depth at the choice of location for chantry chapels within the landscape of the parish church. Was proximity to the charnel house a major factor, or one of many? Christian Steer has written on the topography of burial at London Greyfriars and notes a preference for burial on ceremonial and processional routes.⁹⁵³ Helen Lunnon discusses the significance of porch burials.⁹⁵⁴ Nigel Saul and Andrew Budge both note an early-fourteenth-century trend for episcopal burials in transepts in preference to the chancel, possibly influencing aspirational layfolk.⁹⁵⁵ In Oxfordshire this was perhaps boosted by the shrine of the Anglo-Saxon saint Beornwald in the north transept of the former minster church at Bampton, just south of Witney.⁹⁵⁶ At Asthall, Joan Fitzalan may have had this association in mind when she chose the north transept for her chantry chapel. Her monument is at least superficially similar to the shrine of the saint. It has a similarly tall, cusped and crocketed gable with a trefoil at the apex and flanking pinnacles. At Witney, association with a revered local saint would have made the north transept a particularly desirable location for the charnel house complex.

Another topic inviting further inquiry is the level to which women were involved in commemoration. The design and decoration of all three study chapels strongly suggests women's influence, if not their direct patronage. Furthermore, the chapels

south-east corner is back to front, displaying a flat, unmoulded surface while his face is turned into the wall. A cow opposite is squashed against the east wall and does not coincide with the wall post above. Other non-figurative corbels, required to make up the number, interrupt the sequence. The musician figures perhaps originated in the chapel, forming a set along the south wall, matching their opposite numbers on the north wall.

⁹⁵³ Transactions of the 2017 conference, 'Loci Sepulcrales' held at Batalha, Portugal, publication forthcoming.

⁹⁵⁴ Helen Lunnon, *East Anglian Porches and their Medieval Context* (Woodbridge, 2020).

⁹⁵⁵ Saul (2002), 273; Budge (2017), 203.

⁹⁵⁶ Blair (1984), 221–56.

are all constructed in such a way as to engage the parish community, a feature that was also noted in chantries elsewhere in the county known to be female commissions: Joan Fitzalan's at Asthall and Elizabeth de Montfort's at St Frideswide's Priory. Felicity Riddy has already established that washing and laying out the dead was women's work, as was sewing their shrouds.⁹⁵⁷ More research is needed but it may be that commemoration, and perhaps the whole field of chantry provision, were also areas in which women were expected to be active, caring for the dead as they cared for the living.

While leaving these and other questions open, the findings presented here make a significant contribution to our understanding of the emotionally-charged subject of *memoria*, in mid fourteenth-century Oxfordshire in particular and, by extension, to the field of medieval commemoration more generally. No inquiry can properly recover the perceptions or emotions of an earlier age. However, exploring the art left behind in these three chantry chapels has offered some insights into the experience of a forgotten group of gentry patrons and their parish communities as they established their 'waiting rooms for the soul'; allowing them to achieve at least in part their aim of perpetuating memory as they prepared for life after death.

⁹⁵⁷ Felicity Riddy, 'Looking Closely: Authority and Intimacy in the Late Medieval Urban Home', in Erler and Kowaleski (2003), 212–28, 218; Book of Hours, France, c. 1440s, BL, Egerton 2019, f. 142r.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Mass licence granted to John de Grey in May, 1304, for the house at Cogges

<Concessio cantarie Domino Johannis de Grey.> Id. Maii, anno quinto apud Lud'. concessit episcopus licentiam, quantum in ipso fuit, domino Iohanni de Grey militi, quod posset facere celebrari diuina in oratorio infra mansum suum de Coges constructo, dummodo decens fuerit et honestum, sibi et uxori sue ac libere familie eorumdem, per sacerdotem propriis sumptibus exhibendum, absque preiudicio matricis ecclesie de Coges, usque ad ipsius episcopi beneplacitum uoluntatis, et hoc fecit de consensu prioris de Coges. etc."

Register of John Dalderby, Bishop of Lincoln, Lincs Archives, Dioc/Reg/3 f. 82v.

<Grant of a chantry to Lord John de Grey.> Id. May, year five [of the episcopate], at Louth, the bishop granted a licence, as far as was in his power, to Lord John de Grey knight, that he may cause divine office to be celebrated in an oratory built within his house of Cogges, so long as it shall be decent and honourable, for himself, his wife and his free household, by a priest to be maintained at his own costs, without prejudice to the mother church of Cogges, to continue at the bishop's pleasure; and he did this with permission of the Prior of Cogges. etc.

Transcription and translation, John Blair, 15 July, 2020.

APPENDIX 2

Documents relating to the chantry at Witney c. 1331

a) Patent Rolls, 1331

Licence for the alienation in mortmain by Richard de Stanlake of Whitteneye, and John de Croxford, the younger, of six messuages, 100 acres of land, the passage over the river at Sandford by Oxford, and 20s of rent in Whitteneye, Sandford, Yiftele, Littelmor and Couele, to three chaplains to celebrate divine service daily in Whitteneye church for the souls of John de Stanlake of Whitteneye, Hugh, his brother, and their ancestors. By fine of 10*l*.

Oxon. 4 November 1331 at Newbury (Berkshire). *Pat. Rolls*, 1330–1334, 194.

b) Inquisition ad Quod Damnum, 1331–32

Richard de Stanlake of Witney and John de Croxford the younger to grant messuages and land, the ferry at Sandford by Oxford, and rent in Witney, Iffley, Sandford, Littlemore, and Cowley, to three chaplains in Witney church, the said Richard retaining a messuage and land in Minster [Lovel], and the said John retaining messuages and land in Hook-Norton and Kirtlington.

Oxford. TNA C 143/213/18.

APPENDIX 3

Documents relating to the chantry at Witney c. 1347–61

a) *Register of Bishop Edington, 1347*

Appointment of an attorney, John Elys of Thame, to receive seisin of all lands and tenements for which John de Newebury, chaplain, was enfeoffed in Witney, Sandford, Cowley, Littlemore and Iffley.

20 April 1347, London. *The Register of William Edington Bishop of Winchester 1346-1366*, 1, ed. Dom S. F. Hockey (Hampshire, 1987), 75.

b) *Feet of Fines, 1347–48*

Parties: William, bishop of Winchester, querent, and John de Croxford' the elder, Richard Stanlak' of Wytteneye, John de Neubury, chaplain, William de Burcestre, chaplain, and Robert de Caumpeden', chaplain, deforcians.

Property: 12 messuages, 100 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow, 4 pounds and 3 pence of rent and a rent of 1 pound of cumin and 1 capon in Wytteneye, Churchcouele, Litlemor and Yiftele* and a ferry beyond the water of Saunford' by Oxon'.

Action: Plea of covenant.

Agreement: John, Richard, John, William de Burcestre and Robert have acknowledged the tenements and ferry to be the right of the bishop, of which he has 6 messuages, 76 acres of land, 5 acres of meadow, the rent and the ferry of their gift, to hold to the bishop and his heirs, of the chief lords for ever. And besides John, Richard, John, William de Burcestre and Robert granted for themselves and the heirs of Richard that 1 messuage, 21 acres of land and 1 acre of meadow - which John de Bereford' and Agnes, his wife, held for their lives - and that 1 messuage and 3 acres of land - which John le Medhurde and Roger, his son, held for their lives - and that 1 messuage - which John Jolyf' of Saunford' and Reginalda, his wife, held for their lives - and that 1 messuage - which William le Taillour held for life - and that 1 messuage - which Maud de Shaldewell' and John, her son, and Maud, the wife of the same John, held for their lives - and also that 1 messuage - which William Symeon of Crowmersh' and Emma, his wife, and Agnes, daughter of the same William and Emma, held for their lives - of the inheritance of Richard in the aforesaid villis on the day the agreement was made, and which after the decease of John de Bereford' and Agnes, John le Medhurde,

Roger, John Jolif and Reginalda, William le Taillour, Maud de Shaldewelle and John, her son, and Maud, the wife of John, William Symeon, Emma and Agnes ought to revert to John de Croxford', Richard, John de Neubury, William de Burcestre and Robert and the heirs of Richard - after the decease of [the same persons] shall remain to the bishop and his heirs, to hold together with the aforesaid tenements and the ferry of the chief lords for ever.

Warranty: Warranty.

For this: The bishop has given them 100 pounds sterling.

Note: This agreement was made in the presence of John de Bereford' and Agnes, John le Medhurde, Roger, John Jolyf and Reginalda, William le Taillour, Maud de Shaldewelle and John, her son, and Maud, the wife of John, William Symeon, Emma and Agnes, and they did fealty to the bishop in the court.

3 November 1347; 4 May 1348. CP 25/1/190/20, no. 2, 1347–48.

c) Patent Rolls, 1348

Whereas the king by letters patent lately granted licence for the alienation in mortmain by Richard de Stanlake of Whitteneye and John de Croxford the younger, of six messuages, 100 acres of land, the passage over the water of Sandford by Oxford and 20s. of rent in Whitteneye, Sandford, Yiftele, Littlemore and Couele to three chaplains to celebrate service in Whitteneye church, and afterwards William de Edyngdon, bishop of Winchester, the said lands being not yet given in mortmain, acquired in fee twelve messuages, 100 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow, 4l. 3d. of rent and a rent of 1lb. of cummin and one capon, in Whitteneye, Churchcouele, Littelmor and Yiftele and the passage over the water of Saunford by Oxford, which are, as the king has truly been informed, the same land for which the said Richard and John obtained their licence, although now, having been augmented on account of divers arrentations, approvements and buildings put in void plots in the meantime, they are specified by the number and quantity, wishing to carry out the original intention and making petition to the king that, whereas he has ordained to create a perpetual chantry of one priest warden and two other chaplains in the said church and endow it with the tenements aforesaid, he may have licence for this ; the king for a fine made by the bishop has granted licence for the alienation of the said messuages, lands, rents and passage to the warden and his successors for the sustenance of them and two chaplains to be found by them to celebrate divine service daily in the said church for the good estate of the king and the bishop, for their souls after they are dead, and for the souls of the king's progenitors and

heirs and of the father, mother, brothers, sisters and benefactors of the bishop. By fine of 1 mark, because a fine was made at another time for the first licence.

15 March, 1348, Westminster. *Pat. Rolls*, 1348–50, 43.

d) Patent Rolls, 1361

Licence for the alienation in mortmain by William de Edyndon, Westminster, bishop of Winchester, of a messuage with a garden, a dovecote and 2½ acres of land in Whitteneye, late of Richard brother and heir of John de Stanlak, and a messuage, 3 acres of land and acre of meadow in Saunford, parcel of tenements in Whitteneye, Chirchecombe, Littelmere and Yiftele, which the king by letters patent surrendered unexecuted, lately granted licence for him to assign to a warden and two chaplains to celebrate divine service in Whitteneye church, and the ferry (passagium) over the water of Saunford by Oxford, not held in chief, to a chaplain to celebrate divine service in the said church for the good estate of the king and the bishop, for their souls when they shall be taken from this life and for the souls of the progenitors and heirs of the king and the father, mother, brothers, sisters and benefactors of the bishop. By K. 7 June, 1361, Westminster. *Pat. Rolls* 1361–1364, 27.

e) Close rolls, 1361

Charter of William de Edyndon bishop of Winchester, giving to John Bussh chaplain one messuage, garden and dovecote and 2½ acres of land in Wyttneye which were of Richard brother and heir of John de Stanlake, and one messuage, 3 acres of land and the moiety of one acre of meadow in Saunford and the ferry over the water of Saunford by Oxford, to have and hold according to the king's licence to him and his successors, chaplains celebrating divine service every day at the altar of St Mary in the parish church of Witteneye for the health of the said bishop and the king and for their souls after death, the souls of the bishop's parents, benefactors and successors and of the faithful departed, saving to the bishop and his successors the presentation to the chantry of the said chapel so often as there shall be a vacancy, with warranty by the bishop and his successors.

30 July, 1361, Clere. *Cl. Rolls* 1360–1364, 281.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

0.1. Outline map of Oxfordshire.....	340
0.2. Cogges (Oxon). North-east chapel. Fourteenth-century chest monument with female effigy.....	341
0.3. Cogges chapel. East window.....	341
0.4. Cogges chapel. Head of Christ sculpture.....	341
0.5. Cogges chapel. Interior, north wall. Grotesque frieze.....	341
0.6. The parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Witney (Oxon). North transept. Exterior, from north west.....	342
0.7. Witney north transept. Interior, looking north. Monument in end wall.....	342
0.8. The parish church of St Bartholomew, Ducklington (Oxon). North aisle interior looking east, showing high level sculpture panels.....	343
0.9. Ducklington north aisle. Monument in north wall.....	343
2.1: 1. Heckington (Lincs). Chancel east window.....	344
2.1: 2. Heckington. Chancel east wall. Detail of marginalia.....	344
2.1: 3. Heckington. North porch showing Christ in Majesty.....	344
2.1: 4. Heckington. Chancel north wall. Sacrament shrine.....	344
2.2: 1. North Moreton (Oxon). The Stapleton Chantry. South aisle east window	
2.2: 2. Cogges. North-east chapel east window.....	345
2.2: 3. Northmoor (Oxon). North transept end wall. Monument to the de la More family, <i>c.</i> 1350s.....	346
3.3: 1. Cogges chapel, east window.....	347
3.3: 2. Witney. North transept, end window.....	347
3.3: 3–5. Ducklington. North aisle, north windows.....	347
3.3: 6. Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Latin chapel, north wall.....	348
3.3: 7. St Edmund Hall Library, Oxford. North aisle, north wall.....	348
3.3: 8. Shottesbrooke (Berks). Chancel east window.....	349

3.3: 9. Shottesbrooke. North transept end wall. Monument, <i>c.</i> 1340s.....	349
3.3: 10. Northborough (Cambs). Exterior from the south west.....	350
3.3: 11. Northborough. Interior, south transept end wall.....	350
3.3: 12. Adderbury (Oxon). External cornice. Dragon.....	351
3.3: 13. Cogges chapel. Internal frieze. Amphisbaena.....	351
3.3: 14. Adderbury. External cornice. Male and female heads.....	351
3.3: 15. Cogges chapel. Internal frieze. Male and female heads.....	351
3.3: 16. Bloxham (Oxon). North aisle, west end, ‘Head of Christ’ window.....	352
3.3: 17. Ducklington. North aisle east window.....	352
3.3: 18. Witney. North transept end window.....	352
3.3: 19. The effigy of Aveline de Forz (d. 1274), Alexander of Abingdon (<i>fl.</i> 1290– 1325). Westminster Abbey.....	353
3.3: 20. ‘Virgin and Child’, <i>c.</i> 1295–1325, Alexander of Abingdon (attrib.). The Metropolitan Museum of New York.....	353
3.3: 21. The effigy of Joan de la Beche (d. <i>c.</i> 1310), Alexander of Abingdon (attrib.). Aldworth (Berks).....	353
3.3: 22. Cogges chapel. The tomb chest and effigy.....	354
4.2: 1. ‘Office of the Dead’, (the Coëtivy Master, France, 1460s) Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, Walters MS W. 274, f. 118r.....	355
4.2: 2. Holy Trinity church, Rothwell (Northants). Exterior, from the south east....	356
4.2: 3. Rothwell. Interior. North-east corner of crypt.....	356
4.2: 4. Rothwell. Crypt interior in 1911.....	357
4.2: 5. The charnel house at St Peter’s, Leicester during excavation in 2006.....	357
4.2: 6. St Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Crypt interior looking east.....	358
4.2: 7. St John the Baptist, Burford (Oxon). Crypt interior looking north.....	358
4.2: 8. The charnel house. Carew Cheriton (Pemb).....	359
4.2: 9. The Sailors Chapel. Angle (Pemb).....	359

4.2: 10. Black Bourton (Oxon). Nave, west end. Late thirteenth-century Mural depicting penance.....	360
4.2: 11. The De Brailes Hours (William de Brailes, Oxford, <i>c.</i> 1240) BL, Add. MS 4999, f. 74r.	360
4.2: 12. Black Bourton. Nave, north wall. Late thirteenth-century mural, Coronation of the Virgin, and donor.....	361
4.2: 13. Great Tew (Oxon). Nave south wall. Mural sequence, <i>c.</i> 1330.....	362
4.2: 14. Christ Church Cathedral, Lucy chapel. Stained glass, <i>c.</i> 1330.....	362
4.2: 15. Preston Bisset (Bucks). Chancel arch capital, <i>c.</i> 1350.....	362
4.2: 16. Adderbury. North aisle. Western window and grotesque cornice.....	363
4.2: 17. Adderbury. North aisle cornice. Coronation detail.....	363
4.2: 18 and 19. Adderbury. North aisle and cornice. ‘St Giles and the Hind’	363
4.2: 20. Adderbury. North aisle, west end. Gabled tomb recess.....	364
5.1: 1. The parish church of St Mary, Cogges, from the east.....	365
5.1: 2. The church, priory and manor house.....	365
5.2: 1. Plan of Cogges church showing building chronology.....	366
5.2: 2. Cogges, seen from the south.....	366
5.2: 3. Cogges. Nave interior looking east.....	367
5.2: 4. South nave arcade pier.....	367
5.2: 5. North nave arcade pier.....	367
5.2: 6. Cogges. North nave arcade plinth.....	368
5.2: 7. Tadmarton (Oxon). Chancel north arcade (blocked).....	368
5.2: 8. Langford (Oxon). South doorway and left plinth (detail).....	368
5.2: 9. Cogges. Chapel exterior, from the north east.....	369
5.2: 10. Cogges. Chapel and adjoining aisle, from the north west.....	369
5.2: 11. Cogges. North aisle, eastern-most window.....	370
5.2: 12. Cogges. Chapel, western-most window.....	370

5.2: 13. Cogges. Diagonal buttress between chapel and aisle.....	371
5.2: 14. Cogges. String course on a) chapel and b) aisle.....	371
5.2: 15. Cogges. North nave aisle looking east.....	372
5.2: 16. Cogges. Chapel looking west.....	372
5.2: 17. Detail of window showing sloping sill.....	372
5.2: 18. Cogges. Enclosed window between chapel and aisle, from the west.....	373
5.2: 19. Cogges. South aisle. Thirteenth-century window.....	373
5.3: 1. Cogges. Chancel looking east.....	374
5.3: 2. Cogges. Chancel roof timbers.....	374
5.3: 3. Cogges. Chancel roof. Scissor-brace design.....	374
5.3: 4. Cogges. Chancel east window with reticulated tracery in EE surround.....	375
5.3: 5. Detail of figure on south jamb capital.....	375
5.3: 6. Cogges. Chancel north wall at corner with chapel.....	376
5.3: 7. Cogges. Chancel east wall with string enclosing diagonal buttresses.....	376
5.3: 8. Cogges. Interior. Base of chancel east wall. Blocked crypt window.....	377
5.3: 9. Cogges. Exterior. Chancel east wall. Blocked crypt window.....	377
5.3: 10. Cogges. Exterior. Chancel north wall east of north-east chapel. Location of blocked crypt window.....	377
5.3: 11. Cogges chancel. Rebuilt south wall.....	378
5.3: 12. Cogges chancel. South-west window head-stops.....	378
5.3: 13. Cogges chancel. South-west window. Female head-stop with fifteenth-century-style divided head-dress.....	378
5.3: 14. Cogges chapel. Interior, from the south.....	379
5.3: 15. Cogges chapel. Central pier, north face showing Decorated shaft on Romanesque plinth.....	380
5.3: 16. Detail of Romanesque plinth, south face.....	380
5.3: 17. Plan of Cogges church (detail). James Long, 1835.....	381

5.3: 18. Cogges chapel. Central pier and plinth, from north.....	382
5.3: 19. Plinth from east.....	382
5.3: 20. Nether Worton (Oxon). South arcade. Romanesque plinth.....	383
5.3: 21. Charlton-on-Otmoor (Oxon). Nave arcade. Romanesque plinth.....	383
5.3: 22. Tadmarton. Chancel, looking east.....	384
5.3: 23. Tadmarton. Chancel. North arcade pier.....	384
5.3: 24. Tadmarton. North chancel wall showing blocked Roman..esque arcad.....	385
5.3: 25. Tadmarton. South chancel wall showing early lancet window.....	385
5.3: 26. Cookham (Berks). Transitional north–east chapel, from chancel.....	386
5.3: 27. Cookham. Later thirteenth-century south-east chapel arcade, from south..	386
5.4: 1. Cogges chapel. North wall.....	387
5.4: 2. Cogges chapel. East end.....	387
5.4: 3. Cogges chapel. North-east and north-west buttresses.....	388
5.4: 4. Cogges chancel. East end, showing diagonal buttresses.....	388
5.4: 5. Cogges chapel. North wall from west.....	389
5.4: 6. Cogges chapel. North wall. Central buttresses (details).....	389
5.4: 7. Cogges chapel. North wall. Roll and fillet moulding at eaves height.....	390
5.4: 8. Cogges chapel. West gable. Moulding showing former roof line.....	390
5.4: 9. Cogges chapel. East wall. Roll moulding following line of window arch....	391
5.4: 10. Cogges chapel. East wall. Detail of upper moulding.....	391
5.4: 11. Cogges chapel. East wall. Panel above window.....	392
5.4: 12 and detail. Cogges chapel. East wall. Shaft behind head.....	392
5.4: 13. Sectional drawing of Cogges chapel roof structure.....	393
5.4: 14. Cogges chapel. Roof void, looking north.....	393
5.4: 15. Cogges chapel. Roof/ceiling, looking west.....	394

5.4: 16. Cogges chapel. Roof void, looking east.....	394
5.4: 17. Witney. North nave chapel, from the west.....	395
5.4: 18. Kiddington. Nave and north transept, from the south.....	395
5.4: 19. Gaddesby (Leics). South nave aisle, from the west.....	395
5.4: 20. Warmington (Northants). Nave interior, looking east.....	396
5.4: 21. Warmington. Exterior, from the south east.....	396
5.4: 22. Cogges chapel. Roof void, looking east.....	397
5.4: 23. Cogges chapel. North wall. Monument to William Blake (d. 1695).....	397
5.4: 24. Collegiate church of Cotterstock (Northants). Interior, looking east.....	398
5.4: 25. Cotterstock. Exterior, from the south west.....	398
5.4: 26. Penshurst Place (Kent). Great Hall, c. 1340s.....	399
5.4: 27. Cogges chapel ceiling. Detail of moulded timbers.....	399
5.4: 28. Cogges chapel. East window. Low arch over curvilinear tracery.....	400
5.4: 29. Cogges chapel. East window. Central head carved to match surrounding mouldings.....	400
5.4: 30. Cogges chapel. East window. Top left corner and integral head.....	401
5.4: 31. Cogges chapel. East window. Top right corner and integral head.....	401
5.4: 32. Cogges chapel. East window tracery.....	402
5.4: 33. Cogges chapel. East window. Central head with halo.....	403
5.4: 34. Cogges chapel. East window. Right-hand head.....	403
5.4: 35. Cogges chapel. East window. Left-hand head.....	403
5.4: 36. Westminster Abbey. Bronze tomb effigy of Henry III (1293) (detail).....	404
5.4: 37. Gloucester Cathedral. Tomb effigy of Edward II (early 1340s) (detail).....	404
5.4: 38. Broughton (Oxon). East window. Headstop, early fourteenth-century.....	404
5.4: 39. Leckhampton (Gloucs). Carved stone roof boss, fourteenth-century.....	405

5.4: 40. Stained glass at a) Christ Church, b) Cassington, c) Ducklington.....	405
5.4: 41. The De Lisle Psalter, S. E. England, <i>c.</i> 1308–39. BL, Arundel MS 83 II, f. 130r (detail is <i>c.</i> 1330s).....	405
5.4: 42. Adderbury. South aisle. Western window (restored).....	406
5.4: 43. Kidlington (Oxon). South aisle. East window.....	406
5.4: 44 and detail. Bloxham. North aisle. West window.....	407
5.4: 45. Cogges chapel. East wall. Blocked drain exit, south-east corner.....	408
5.4: 46. Blocked drain exit, north side.....	408
5.4: 47. Blocked drain exit, north side (from above).....	408
5.4: 48. Adderbury. Watercarrier gargoyle.....	409
5.4: 49. Adderbury. Tower gargoyles.....	409
5.4: 50. Witney. Defecating gargoyle.....	409
5.4: 51. Cogges chapel. Blocked eastern window (exterior).....	410
5.4: 52. Cogges chapel. Blocked eastern window (interior).....	410
5.4: 53. Cogges chapel. North wall central window (exterior).....	411
5.4: 54. Cogges chapel. North wall central window (interior).....	411
5.4: 55. Cogges chapel. North wall western window (exterior).....	412
5.4: 56. Cogges chapel. North wall western window (interior).....	412
5.5: 1. Hook Norton (Oxon). Chancel north wall. Romanesque buttresses.....	413
5.5: 2. Tackley (Oxon). Chancel south wall. Romanesque central buttress.....	413
5.5: 3. Tadmarton. North nave aisle. North wall. Early buttresses.....	414
5.5: 4. Ducklington. North nave aisle. West end. Early thirteenth-century buttress.	414
5.5: 5. Blewbury (Berks). Chancel north wall with early flat buttresses.....	415
5.5: 6. Blewbury. Rebuilt chancel south wall with later deep buttresses.....	415
5.5: 7. Cogges chapel. North wall. Modified central buttresses.....	416

5.5: 8. Cogges chapel. North wall. Modified central buttresses, from the east.....	416
5.5: 9. Swalcliffe (Oxon). South nave aisle. Diagonal buttress at east end.....	417
5.5: 10. Dorchester Abbey. Dorchester-on-Thames (Oxon). South nave aisle. Diagonal buttress at west end.....	417
5.5: 11. Cogges chancel. North-east buttress.....	418
5.5: 12. Cogges chapel. North-west buttress.....	418
5.5: 13. Cogges chapel. Masonry changes in the north wall.....	419
5.5: 14. Asthall (Oxon). North transept east wall. Decorated window.....	420
5.5: 15. Dorchester Abbey. North nave wall. Decorated windows.....	420
5.5: 16. Cogges chapel. The unusually low-arched east window.....	421
5.5: 17. Black Bourton (Oxon). Chancel east wall. Lancets with low rear arches..	421
5.5: 18. Swalcliffe. South aisle. Thirteenth-century grouped lancets under a shallow rear arch.....	422
5.5: 19. Ducklington. South aisle. Thirteenth-century triple lancet window under a shallow rear arch.....	422
5.5: 20. Worksop Priory Gatehouse (Notts), 1330s. South facade, upper storey. Windows with low arches.....	423
5.5: 21. Duxford Chapel (Suffolk). Chancel south window with low arch, early fourteenth century.....	423
5.5: 22. Twyford (Bucks). South aisle replacement east window with dropped sill.....	424
5.5: 23. Raunds (Northants). North aisle replacement east window with squashed ogee arch.....	424
5.5: 24. Plan of Cogges church (revised).....	425
5.6: 1. Crick (Northants). Chancel and north aisle windows with flowing tracery..	426
5.6: 2. Ducklington. North aisle windows with flowing tracery.....	427
5.6: 3. Ducklington. North aisle central window (tracery detail).....	427
5.6: 4. Cogges chapel. East window (tracery detail).....	427
5.6: 5. Witney. North transept. East window with flowing tracery.....	428

5.6: 6. Witney. North nave aisle. West window with matching tracery.....	428
5.6: 7. Sudborough (Northants). Thirteenth-century straight-arched window.....	429
5.6: 8. Stanion (Northants). Thirteenth-century straight-arched window.....	429
5.6: 9. Asthall. North transept east window, c. 1320.....	430
5.6: 10. Cogges chapel. Centre north window.....	430
5.6: 11. Kiddington (Oxon). South transept end window.....	431
5.6: 12. Kiddington. Detail of grotesque headstop (right side).....	431
5.6: 13. Kiddington. Nave north-west window, tracery detail.....	432
5.6: 14. Cogges chapel. East window, tracery detail.....	432
5.6: 15. Peterborough Cathedral. Apse windows.....	433
5.6: 16. Collegiate church of Michaelhouse, Cambridge.....	433
5.6: 17. Northborough (Cambs). South transept end window.....	433
5.8: 1. Cogges chapel. Interior. Arcade from the north east.....	434
5.8: 2. Cogges chapel arcade. East bay, seen from the chancel.....	435
5.8: 3. Cogges chapel arcade. West bay, seen from the chancel.....	435
5.8: 4. Cogges chapel arcade (detail). East face of central pier showing unmoulded section of soffit.....	436
5.8: 5. Cogges chapel arcade (detail). Piscina in east respond.....	436
5.8: 6. Cogges chapel arcade (detail). Unmoulded base of east respond.....	436
5.8: 7. Cogges chapel arcade. Male head stop. East respond, chancel side.....	437
5.8: 8. Cogges chapel arcade. Male head stop. East respond, chapel side.....	437
5.8: 9. Cogges chapel arcade. Female head stop. Central pier, chancel side.....	438
5.8: 10. Cogges chapel arcade. Female head stop. Central pier, chapel side.....	438
5.8: 11. Cogges chapel interior looking east.....	439
5.8: 12. Cogges chapel. Detail of north wall sculpture.....	439
5.8: 13. Cogges chapel. South wall from the north east.....	440

5.8: 14. Cogges chapel. South wall from the west.....	440
5.8: 15. Cogges chapel corbel. North-east corner. Lion playing citole.....	441
5.8: 16. Cogges chapel corbel. Centre-east. Monkey playing harp.....	441
5.8: 17. Cogges chapel corbel. Centre-west. Bear (?) playing zither.....	442
5.8: 18. Cogges chapel corbel. North-west corner. Man playing double pipes and bells.....	442
5.8: 19. Cogges chapel frieze. North wall. Amphisbaena.....	443
5.8: 20. St Swithun's church, Merton (Oxon) Chancel roof corbel, north side. Dragon.....	443
5.8: 21. Merton (St Swithun). Chancel. Lion roof corbel.....	444
5.8: 22. Cogges Chapel. Citole-strumming lion roof corbel.....	444
5.8: 23. Cogges chapel frieze, north side. Male, human-headed hybrid with long waving hair and full beard.....	445
5.8: 24. Bampton (Oxon). North transept, Male crowned head on early fourteenth-century shrine of St Beornwald.....	445
5.8: 25. Cogges chapel frieze, south wall.....	446
5.8: 26. The Luttrell Psalter, England, c. 1325–50. BL, Add. MS 42130, f. 34r (detail).....	446
5.8: 27. Cogges chapel frieze, south wall. Cowled hybrid.....	446
5.8: 28. The Gorleston Psalter, East Anglia, c 1310–1324. BL, Add. 49622, f. 10r (detail).....	446
5.8: 29. Cogges chapel roof/ceiling, looking west.....	447
5.8: 30. Gaddesby south aisle, looking west.....	447
5.8: 31. Cogges chapel north wall. Relation of corbel and principal rafter.....	448
5.8: 32. Cogges chapel north wall. Position of the four principal rafters.....	448
5.8: 33. Cogges chapel roof/ceiling. Roll-moulded ridge piece with principal and intermediate rafters framed in.....	449
5.8: 34. Cogges chapel north wall. Frieze figures designed to accommodate rafter.....	449

5.8: 35. Cogges chapel. North-west corbel.....	450
5.8: 36. Cogges chapel. Centre-west corbel.....	450
5.8: 37. Cogges chapel. Centre-east corbel.....	450
5.8: 38. Cogges chapel. North-east corbel with no timber insert.....	450
5.8: 39. Cogges chapel. South east corner showing inserted scroll-shaped timbers and replacement corbels.....	451
5.8: 40. Cogges chapel. South wall, showing damage caused by inserted timber..	451
5.8: 41. Witney. North transept, west wall. Grotesques.....	452
5.8: 42. North Moreton. South chancel aisle, south wall. Grotesques.....	452
5.8: 43. Adderbury. South frieze, west end. Grotesques.....	452
5.8: 44. Bloxham. North aisle frieze, east end. Grotesques.....	452
5.8: 45. Hanwell. Chancel north wall. Grotesques.....	452
5.8: 46. Gaddesby, south aisle, south wall. Grotesques.....	453
5.8: 47. St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. North porch. Grotesques.....	453
5.8: 48–52. Cogges chapel. North wall frieze details.....	454
5.8: 53. Cogges chapel monument. Carved chest tomb with female effigy.....	455
5.8: 54. Cogges chapel monument . Detail of head of effigy.....	455
5.8: 55. Cogges chapel monument. Detail of channel carved in folds of gown.....	456
5.8: 56. Cogges chapel monument. Lion footrest.....	456
5.8: 57. Cogges chapel monument. Angels at head of effigy.....	457
5.8: 58. Cogges chapel monument. Detail of angels' wings and traces of colour....	457
5.8: 59. Cogges chapel monument. North side.....	458
5.8: 60. Detail of the angel of St Mark.....	458
5.8: 61. Detail of the ox of St Luke.....	458
5.8: 62. Tomb of Blanche Grandisson (d. 1347), Much Marcle (Heref).....	459
5.8: 63. Cogges chapel monument. South side.....	460

5.8: 64. Detail of the eagle of St John.....	460
5.8: 65. Cogges chapel monument. Misplaced heraldic panel.....	461
5.8: 66. Cogges chapel monument. Misplaced Evangelist panel.....	461
5.8: 67. Cogges chapel monument. Remains of shelf behind head.....	462
5.8: 68. Cogges chapel monument. Cleft in pillows and back of head.....	462
5.8: 69. Canterbury Cathedral. Tomb of Edward the Black Prince (d. 1376).....	463
5.8: 70 and details. Cogges chapel. Timber ends in north face of arcade pier.....	464
5.8: 71. Cogges chapel. Metal rings in steps under arch to chapel.....	465
5.8: 72–73. Cogges chapel. Timber pegs in arch above steps, left and right.....	465
5.9: 1. Cogges chapel. East window. Stained glass in tracery.....	466
5.9: 2. Cogges chapel. East window, centre (detail).....	466
5.9: 3. Cogges chapel. The east window before 1963.....	467
5.9: 4. Restoration diagram, Peter Newton.....	467
5.9: 5. Cogges chapel east window. Foliage detail.....	468
5.9: 6. Ground ivy.....	468
5.9: 7. Ducklington. North aisle east window. Stained glass fragments.....	469
5.9: 8. Beckley (Oxon). Stained glass. St Edmund.....	469
5.7: 9. Latin Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral. Stained glass. Head of Christ and Dove.....	469
5.9: 10. Latin Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral. Stained glass. St Frideswide.....	470
5.9: 11. Latin Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral. Stained glass. Trilobe foliage and angel in tracery.....	470
5.9: 12. Lucy Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral. Stained glass. Daisy wheels behind Christ in Majesty.....	471
5.9: 13. Lucy Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral. Stained glass Starburst behind St Martin of Tours.....	471
5.9: 14. North Moreton. Stapleton chapel, east window. Celestial shapes.....	472

5.9: 15. St Alphège, Solihull (Warks). Oddingseles upper chapel. Stained glass. Roundel with radiating pattern.....	472
5.9: 16. Canopy over the monument of the Black Prince. Tin star.....	472
5.9: 17. The Rothschild Canticles, Flanders, c. 1300. New Haven, Beinecke Library, Beinecke MS 404, f. 98r.....	473
5.9: 18. Cogges chapel. East window. Stained glass detail. Crown.....	474
5.9: 19. Cogges chapel. East window. Stained glass inscription: DREAS.....	474
5.9: 20. Bodl, MS Wood D. 14. ff 36v–37r.....	475
5.10: 1. Solihull. The Oddinseles chantry chapel (founded 1277).....	476
5.10: 2. St Etheldreda’s church, Holborn, c. 1290.....	476
5.10: 3. Oddingseles chantry. Upper chamber south wall, looking east.....	477
5.10: 4. Oddingseles chantry. Lower chamber with medieval altar.....	477
5.10: 5. Oddingseles chantry. Lower chamber. Recess inside altar.....	477
5.10: 6. Christ Church Cathedral. Tomb chest monument and effigy of Elizabeth de Montfort (d. 1354).....	478
5.10: 7. Asthall. Canopied effigial monument of Joan Fitzalan (<i>fl.</i> 1337).....	478
5.10: 8. Asthall. Sightline into north transept from adjoining north aisle.....	479
5.10: 9. Asthall. Stone ‘altar’(top missing) with built-in piscina.....	479
5.10: 10. Sightline into the chapel at Cogges.....	480
5.10: 11. The Taymouth Hours, S.E. England, c 1325–50. BL, MS Yates Thompson 13, f. 7r (detail). ‘Ocular communion’.....	481
5.11: 1–4. Cogges chapel frieze. Details of figures in physical contact.....	482
5.11: 5. The Queen Mary Psalter, England, c. 1310–20. BL, Royal MS 2 B. VII, f. 229r.....	483
5.11: 6. The Queen Mary Psalter, f.189r.....	483
5.11: 7. <i>The Romance of Alexander</i> , Tournai, c. 1338–1344. Bodl, MS 264, f. 51v.....	483
5.11: 8. Peterborough Cathedral. Nave. Painted ceiling, thirteenth century.....	484

5.11: 9. Peterborough Cathedral. Painted ceiling detail.....	484
5.11: 10. The De Bois Hours, S.E. England, probably Oxford, c. 1320–35. New York, PML, MS M 700, f. 37v.....	485
5.11: 11. The De Lisle Hours. England, possibly York, c. 1320–25. New York, PML, MS G 50, f. 19r.....	486
5.11: 12. Book of Hours. England, c. 1300. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS W 102, f. 81.....	487
5.11: 13. Walters, MS W 102, f. 75r (detail).....	487
5.11: 14. The Macclesfield Psalter. East Anglia, c. 1330–40. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 1–2005, f. 69v (detail).....	488
5.11: 15. The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 141r (detail).....	488
5.11: 16. The Marciana Psalter, England, c. 1270. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS Latina 1.77, f.	489
5.11: 17. Breviary, Chertsey Abbey, c. 1307. Bodl, MS Lat. Liturg. D. 42, 25r.....	489
5.11: 18. Walters, MS W 102, f. 22r. Singing clerics.....	490
5.11: 19. The De Brailes Hours. Oxford, c. 1240. BL, Add. MS 49999, f. 44v.....	491
5.11: 20. The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 89v. Mouthpuller.....	492
5.11: 21. Cogges chapel frieze. North-west corner. Mouthpuller.....	492
5.11: 22. St Omer Psalter, England, c. 1330–40. BL, Yates Thomson MS 14, f. 44r. King David gesturing to his mouth.....	492
5.11: 23. Cogges chapel frieze, north wall. Dog and rat bird scarers.....	493
5.11: 24. Cogges chapel frieze, north wall. Winged hybrid bird scarer.....	493
5.11: 25. Stanton St John (Oxon), chancel. Stained glass roundel, early fourteenth century. Human bird scarer.....	493
5.11: 26. <i>Le Roman de Fauvel</i> , Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 146, f. 345.....	494
5.11: 27. <i>The Romance of Alexander</i> f. 73r (detail). Training a performing horse..	495
5.11: 28. Cogges chapel frieze. Acrobatic dancers.....	495

5.11: 29. Wooden misericord, Christ Church Priory (Dorset).....	495
5.11: 30. The Rothschild Canticles, f. 13r. Dancing as praise.....	496
5.11: 31. Exeter Cathedral nave. A tumbler and violinist perform opposite a statue of the Virgin.....	496
5.11: 32. The Macclesfield Psalter, ff 187-188r. Dancing as Temptation.....	497
5.12: 1. Welwick (East Riding, Yorks). Tomb of Walter de la Mare (d. 1360).....	498
5.12: 2. Holy Trinity, Hull. Female effigy with matrix for attached element.....	499
5.12: 3. Canterbury Cathedral. Detail of effigy of Margaret Holland, Duchess of Clarence (d. 1439), showing attachment points for collar of eses.....	499
5.12: 4–5. Les Très Riches Heures de Metz. France, c. 1300. Metz, Bibliothèques-Médiathèques de Metz, MS 1588, ff. 112r and 125r (details of women with prayer beads).....	500
5.12: 6. The Luttrell Psalter, f. 53r (detail of woman with prayer beads).....	500
5.12: 7. Hornsea (Yorkshire). Detail of late thirteenth-century female effigy with prayer beads.....	501
5.12: 8. Much Marcle. Detail of effigy of Blanche Grandisson with prayer beads.....	501
5.12: 9. Cogges chapel. Sightlines to Margaret's tomb.....	502
5.12: 10. Great Tew (Oxon). Hood moulding with integrated head stops.....	503
5.12: 11. Thenford (Oxon). Hood moulding with separate head-stops.....	503
5.12:12. Cogges, chapel east window. Detail of haloed Head of Christ and two subordinate flanking heads.....	504
5.12: 13. The Welles Apocalypse. Eng. c. 1310. BL, MS Royal 15 D II, f. 122. Christ adored by Evangelists and the Saved.....	504
5.12: 14. The De Bois Hours, f. 104v. Christ adored by the Saved.....	505
5.12: 15. The Queen Mary Psalter, f. 40 (detail). Christ adored by the Saved.....	505
5.12: 16. Adderbury. Star of David window with Coronation of the Virgin in frieze above.....	506
5.12: 17. Bloxham. Doom sculpture over the west door.....	506
5.12: 18. Bloxham, west front. Christ in Majesty flanked by angels holding	

instruments of the passion.....	507
5.12: 19. Bloxham west front. Relief panel below Christ to left. The Saved emerging from coffins.....	507
5.12: 20. Seated Apostles arranged around the door arch.....	507
5.12: 21. Relief panel below Christ to right. The Damned in the Hellmouth.....	507
5.12: 22. Heckington. South porch.....	508
5.12: 23. Higham Ferrers (Northants). Tower, west face.....	509
5.12: 24. Dorrington (Lincs), from the south east.....	510
5.12: 25. Dorrington. East gable. Details.....	510
5.12: 26. Wellingborough (Northants). East window exterior.....	511
5.12: 27. Shottesbrooke. North transept end wall exterior.....	512
6.0. The parish church of St Mary, Witney.....	513
6.0:1. Witney, north transept interior.....	514
6.1: 1. Witney, north transept. North-east buttress. Bracket, upper niche.....	515
6.1: 2. Witney, north transept. North-west buttress. Bracket, upper niche.....	515
6.1: 3. Witney's borough seal. BL, Harl. MS 1412, f. 5r.....	516
6.1: 4. North transept altar mural. Bodl, MS Top. d 217, f. 25r.....	516
6.2: 1. Plan of Witney church.....	517
6.2: 2. Witney north transept. Paired windows and altar recesses.....	518
6.2: 3. Witney south transept. Paired windows and altar recesses.....	518
6.2: 4. Witney. North-west nave aisle. Aumbry in north wall.....	519
6.2: 5. Witney. North-west aisle. Fourteenth-century tomb chest and effigy.....	519
6.2: 6. Witney. North-west aisle. West window.....	520
6.2: 7. Witney. North-west aisle. Two-tier buttress, west end.....	520
6.2: 8. Plan of Witney church showing side altars.....	521
6.2: 9. Witney. North transept east wall, restored stone reredos.....	522

6.2: 10. Witney. North transept west aisle, restored stone reredos.....	522
6.3: 1. Witney. North transept exterior, from the north west.....	523
6.3: 2. Witney. North transept east wall, showing join with old work.....	523
6.3: 3. Witney. North transept east window.....	524
6.3: 4. Witney. North transept east window, head-stops.....	524
6.3: 5. Witney. North transept end wall. Blocked crypt windows.....	525
6.3: 6. Burford (Oxon). St Thomas's Chapel, south wall. Crypt windows.....	525
6.3: 7. Witney. North transept, west wall. Blocked crypt door.....	526
6.3: 8. Detail of crypt door.....	526
6.3: 9. Witney. North transept. North-east and north-west buttress.....	527
6.3: 10. Witney. North transept. North-east buttress, lower niche details.....	528
6.3: 11. Witney. North transept. North-west buttress, lower niche details.....	529
6.3: 12. Witney. North transept. North-east buttress, upper niche details.....	530
6.3: 13. Witney. North transept. North-east buttress, upper niche. Female figure and detail.....	531
6.3: 14. 'Peraldus', Engl. mid thirteenth-century. BL, Harley MS 3244, f. 62r.....	532
6.3: 15. St Pierre, Moissac. South portal, <i>femme-aux-serpents</i>	533
6.3: 16. Sainte-Croix, Bordeaux. West front South portal, <i>femme-aux-serpents</i>	534
6.3: 17. St Lazare, Autun. West front. Last Judgement (detail).....	534
6.3: 18. Santa Maria Cathedral, Tudela (Navarra). West front. Judgement Portal (detail), c. 1215.....	535
6.3: 19. Church of El Salvador, Rebanal de las Llantas (Palencia). Romanesque font (detail).....	535
6.3: 20. Witney. North transept. North-west buttress, upper niche canopy details.....	536
6.3: 21. Witney. North transept. North-west buttress, upper niche male figure.....	537

6.3: 22. Book of Hours, England (London), c. 1310-1330. BL, Harley MS 6563, ff 62v–663r.....	538
6.3: 23. Great Bromley, Essex. South aisle, capital, c. 1300s.....	538
6.3: 24. Witney. North transept, lost upper chapel.....	539
6.3: 25. Witney. North transept. Image niche, etails.....	540
6.3: 26. Dorchester Abbey. South aisle. Upper chapel image niche.....	541
6.3: 27. Solihull. The Oddingseles chantry.....	542
6.3: 28. Compton (Surrey). Upper chancel chapel.....	542
6.3: 29. Joseph Skelton, engraving, 1820s. <i>The North Transept of Witney Church, Oxon</i>	543
6.3: 30. Witney. North transept. Western arch in end wall.....	544
6.3: 31. Witney. North transept. Eastern arch in end wall.....	544
6.3: 32. Witney. North transept. Detail of light shaft and blocked window within relieving arch.....	545
6.3: 33. Irthlingborough (Northants). Crypt. Light shaft and window.....	545
6.3: 34. St Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-tyne. Crypt looking east.....	546
6.3: 35. St Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-tyne. Crypt. Light shafts in north wall.....	546
6.3: 36. Witney. North transept. Trench showing remains of vaulting.....	547
6.3: 37. William Langford, Sketch plan of the crypt at Witney (186667).....	548
6.3: 38. Burford. Crypt interior looking north.....	549
6.3: 39. Ducklington. Crypt interior looking east.....	549
6.3: 40. Witney. North transept east wall. Piscina and detail.....	550
6.3: 41. Winchester Cathedral. Painted wooden mortuary chest, c. 1500.....	551
6.4: 1. Witney. North transept monument	551
6.4: 2. Witney. N. transept monument showing joins in the stonework.....	552
6.4: 3. Witney. N. transept monument. East recess. Female corbel figure	553
6.4: 4. Witney. North transept monument. West recess. Male corbel figure.....	553

6.4: 5. Winterbourne Bassett (Wilts). Sepulchral recess with image niche.....	554
6.4: 6. St Athan's church (Glam). Tomb monument to Roger Berkerolles (d. 1351) and his wife.....	554
6.4: 7. Witney. North transept monument. Female effigy (upper part).....	555
6.4: 8. Witney. North transept monument. Female effigy (lower part).....	556
6.4: 9. Witney. North transept monument. Male effigy.....	557
6.4: 10. Witney. North transept monument. Male effigy (upper part).....	558
6.4: 11. Witney. North transept monument. Male effigy (lower part).....	558
6.4: 12. Northleach (Glos.). Brass of Thomas Adynet (d. 1409).....	559
6.4: 13. Great Bredon (Worcs.). Early fourteenth-century semi-effigial slab.....	560
6.4: 14. Careby (Lincs). Semi-effigial slab of William de Bayous (d. c. 1327) and his wife.....	560
6.4: 15. Witney. North transept monument in late afternoon summer sun.....	561
6.4: 16. Minchinhampton (Glos). Side-by-side monument in chancel south wall, c. 1330s.....	562
6.4: 17. Shottesbrooke (Berks). Side-by-side monument in north transept end wall, c. 1340s.....	562
6.4: 18. Pembridge (Heref). Monument to Nicholas Gour (d. c. 1370) and wife.....	563
6.4: 19. Flamstead (Herts). Monument to serjeant-at-law Thomas Frisby (d. c. 1408) and wife.....	563
6.5: 1. Deddington (Oxon). Effigy of justice ?Ralph de Bereford (d. 1329).....	564
6.5: 2. Dorchester Abbey. Effigy of John Stonore (d. 1354), chief justice of the common pleas.....	564
6.6: 1. J. C. Buckler (1793–1830), engraving and detail. <i>South-west view of Witney Church</i>	565
6.7: 1. St Illtud's church, Llantwit Major (S. Glam). Niche, c. 1200–50.....	566
6.7: 2. Welwick. Detail from tomb of William de la Mare.....	566
6.7: 3. a) – d). Image corbels at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol.....	567

6.7: 4. Stanton Fitzwarren (Glos.). Romanesque font. Virtues and Vices.....	568
6.7: 6. Edington (Wilts). Chancel east window, north. Sculpture of penance.....	569
6.7: 5. Edington. Chancel east window, south. Sculpture of sin.....	569
6.7: 7 a–c. Donnington (Lincs). West tower, embellished sculpture niches.....	570
6.7: 8 a–c. Donnington tower, west front corbel figures.....	571
6.7: 9. The Taymouth Hours, England, c. 1325–50. BL MS Yates Thomson 13, f. 16v.....	572
6.7: 10. Lincoln Cathedral. West front. Restored frieze (original c. 1170s). Last Judgement and details.....	573
6.7: 11. Malmesbury Abbey (Gloucs). South porch outer arch (1170s).....	574
6.7: 12. Moissac. South porch. Relief of the Visitation.....	575
6.7: 13. Ste Croix, Bordeaux. West front, south arch (detail).....	575
6.7: 14. Broughton-in-Craven (North Yorks). <i>Maria lactans</i> . Alabaster, mid fourteenth-century.....	576
6.7: 15. Chalgrove (Oxon). Chancel north wall mural, c. 1340s. Last Judgement (detail).....	576
6.7: 16. Beckley, south aisle. Detail of damaged mural, c. 1330s.....	577
6.7: 17. Worms Cathedral, southern Germany. South portal. Allegorical . sculpture, ‘Frau Welt’, early fourteenth-century.....	578
6.7: 18. Amiens Cathedral, France. Judgement portal. Relief sculpture of ‘Cowardice’, mid thirteenth-century.....	579
6.7: 19. Chartres Cathedral. Choir screen. Thirteenth-century. . Relief of snail and knight.....	580
6.7: 20. The Gorleston Psalter, f. 162v.....	580
6.7: 21. The Smithfield Decretals, England and France, 1300–40. BL, Royal MS 10E IV, f. 107r	580
6.7: 21. The Macclesfield Psalter, f. 68r (detail).....	581
6.7: 22. Skate or thornback ray.....	581
7.0. The church of St Bartholomew, Ducklington.....	582

7.1: 1. W. Langford. Pencil sketch of the Romanesque Cokethorpe font.....	583
7.1: 2. Ducklington. Romanesque font.....	583
7.2.1. Plan of Ducklington church.....	584
7.2: 2. Ducklington. The Romanesque south aisle, seen from the north west.....	585
7.2: 3 & 4. Ducklington. South aisle. Spurred plinths and ringed pier bases.....	585
7.2: 5. Ducklington, south aisle. Centre-east capital.....	586
7.2: 6. Ducklington, south aisle. Centre-west capital.....	586
7.2: 7. Ducklington, south aisle. East respond.....	586
7.2: 8. Ducklington. North aisle west end. Early buttress.....	587
7.2: 9. Ducklington. South aisle, west end. Early buttress	587
7.2: 10. Ducklington. The tower arch, looking west.....	588
7.2: 11. Ducklington tower arch capitals, a) south and b) north.....	588
7.2: 12. Ducklington. Chancel looking east.....	589
7.2: 13. Ducklington. Chancel north wall. EE aumbry.....	589
7.2: 14. Ducklington. Chancel south wall. EE piscina and credence.....	589
7.2: 15. Ducklington. Decorated chancel arch, south side.....	590
7.2: 16. Ducklington. Chancel. Perpendicular east window.....	590
7.2: 17. Ducklington. South aisle. EE triple lancet east window.....	591
7.2: 18. Ducklington. South aisle east window. Trinity mural, c. 1330	591
7.3: 1. Ducklington. The north aisle exterior.....	592
7.3: 2. Ducklington. North aisle, east end showing curvilinear windows, buttresses and surrounding string courses.....	592
7.3: 3. Ducklington. North aisle. The eastern and central two-light windows.....	593
7.3: 4. Ducklington. North aisle. The three light west window.....	593
7.3: 5. Ducklington. North aisle. The four-light east window.....	594
7.3: 6. Ducklington. North aisle. East window, interior. Coronation sculpture.....	595

7.3: 7. Ducklington. North porch. EE outer arch.....	596
7.3: 8. Ducklington. North porch. Decorated inner arch.....	596
7.3: 9. Ducklington. Interior entrance to the crypt, west of the north door.....	597
7.3: 10. Ducklington. Steps to the crypt.....	597
7.3: 11. Ducklington crypt interior, looking north.....	598
7.3: 12. The crypt looking west, showing the blocked two-light window.....	598
7.3: 13. Ducklington crypt, east end.....	599
7.3: 14. Ducklington crypt. The post-medieval chamber looking south.....	599
7.4: 1. Heckington. North chancel wall, Curvilinear windows.....	600
7.4: 2. Prior Crauden's chapel, Ely (Cambs). North wall, Curvilinear windows....	600
7.4: 3. Ducklington. North aisle centre window. Masonry changes	601
7.5: 1. Ducklington. North aisle interior looking east.....	602
7.5: 2–3. Ducklington. North aisle. King and queen head-stops, central bay, aisle side.....	602
7.5: 4. Ducklington north aisle. Central bay, nave side. Serpent.....	603
7.5: 5. Ducklington north aisle. West respond, nave side. Imp.....	603
7.5: 6. Ducklington north aisle. Central bay. Figural image bracket.....	603
7.5: 7. Ducklington north aisle. West end showing ballflower frieze.....	604
7.5: 8. Ducklington north aisle, north wall. Frieze detail.....	604
7.5: 9. Ducklington north aisle. North wall windows with widened splays.....	605
7.5: 10. Ducklington north aisle. West window (detail).....	605
7.5: 11. Ducklington north aisle. North west window (detail).....	605
7.5: 12. Chalgrove. North wall, west window. Mural, <i>c.</i> 1340s The Virgin Annunciate.....	606
7.5: 13. South Newington (Oxon). North aisle east window. St Margaret. Wall painting, <i>c.</i> 1340s.....	606
7.5: 14. Ampney Crucis (Glos). East window.....	607

7.5: 15. Thenford (Oxon). Nave window.....	607
7.5: 16. North Marston (Bucks). North aisle east window.....	607
7.6: 1. Ducklington. North aisle monument with twinned recesses.....	608
7.6: 2. Witney. North aisle monument with twinned recesses.....	608
7.6: 3. Ducklington monument. Cross slab showing notch at head end.....	609
7.6: 4. Ducklington monument. Cross slab detail showing mortice at foot end.....	609
7.6: 5. Ducklington monument. East recess. Canopy detail. Snapped tendrils of Jesse Tree vine.....	610
7.6: 6. Ducklington monument. West recess. Canopy detail showing location of lost sculpture.....	610
7.6: 7. Ducklington monument. Detail of Jesse figure.....	611
7.6: 8. Ducklington monument. Joins in the crosspiece	612
7.6: 9. Ducklington monument. Discolouration in the underside of the cross piece.....	612
7.6: 10 & 11. Ducklington monument. East recess, cusp details.....	613
7.6: 12 & 13. Ducklington monument. West recess, cusp details.....	613
7.6: 14. Ducklington monument. West recess, west jamb, from the south east.....	614
7.6: 15. Ducklington monument. West recess, west jamb, from the west	614
7.6: 16. Ducklington monument. Central mullion.....	614
7.6: 17. Charlton-on-Otmoor (Oxon). Chancel south wall. Piscina/sedilia ensemble Showing join between canopy and uprights.....	615
7.6: 18. Shottesbrooke. North transept tomb (central niche detail) showing join between canopy and uprights.....	615
7.6: 19. Little Baddow (Essex). Side-by-side monument in the south wall.....	616
7.6: 20. Ducklington monument showing relationship with window.....	617
7.6: 21. Ducklington. Window (exterior view) showing blocked lower part.....	617
7.6: 22. Blakeney (Norfolk). Chancel sedilia.....	618

7.6: 23. Compton Dundon (Somerset). Chancel sedilia.....	618
7.6: 24. Stanton St John (Oxon). Chancel monument.....	619
7.6: 25. Winchelsea (East Sussex). South wall, centre. Monument to a member of the Alard family.....	619
7.6: 26. Welwick. Tomb of William de la Mare (d. 1360).....	620
7.6: 27. Aldworth (Berks). South aisle monuments to the de la Beche family.....	621
7.6: 28. Aldworth. North aisle, east end.....	621
7.6: 29. Swalcliffe (Oxon). South aisle, end-to end monument, c. 1300.....	622
7.6: 30–31. Swalcliffe monument (details).....	622
7.6: 32. Great Haseley (Oxon). Chancel south wall. Canopied tomb with inscribed slab, c. 1300.....	623
7.6: 33. Kingham (Oxon). Chancel south wall, exterior. Canopied tomb with .inscribed slab, c. 1300–1330.....	623
7.6: 34. Ducklington monument. Interior grave slab showing notch and mortice..	624
7.6: 35. Ducklington. Exterior grave slab outside the north aisle wall showing notch at foot end.....	624
7.6: 36. Joseph Skelton, engraving, c. 1823. <i>East end of the north aisle in Ducklington church</i>	625
7.6: 37. Northmoor. Monument to the de la More family, c. 1350s.....	626
7.6: 38. Lowick (Northants). North aisle, eastern window.....	626
7.7: 1. Plan of Ducklington north aisle showing location of relief panels.....	627
7.6: 2. Ducklington north aisle showing placement of panels.....	628
7.6: 3. Ducklington north aisle. North and east wall panels.....	628
7.7: 4. Ducklington north aisle. The north-east corner recesses.....	629
7.7: 5. Ducklington north aisle. The south-east corner recesses.....	629
7.7: 6. Ducklington north aisle. East window and integrated recess, right side.....	630
7.7: 7. Ducklington north aisle. East window and integrated recess, left side.....	631

7.7: 8. Ducklington east window. Coronation sculpture (close up).....	632
7.7: 9. Wing (Bucks). Stained glass, 1330s–40s. The Coronation of the Virgin....	632
7.7: 10. Castle Acre Priory (Norf). Corbel with embellished base.....	633
7.7: 11a–b. Kidlington (Oxon). Hood stops on projecting bases.....	633
7.7: 12. Barton-on Humber (Lincs). North nave aisle, east window.....	634
7.7: 13. Ducklington. East wall. Panel 2, The Ascension.....	635
7.7: 14. The Sutton Valence Altarpiece, Ascension detail. Limestone, <i>c.</i> 1350–70. V & A, A.58:1-1921.....	635
7.7: 15. Sarratt (Bucks). South aisle mural, <i>c.</i> 1330. Ascension (detail).....	635
7.7: 16. Westminster Abbey. Weeper from the tomb of John of Eltham, 1340s....	636
7.7: 17. Ducklington. Panel 6 (detail). Magus figure from the Adoration scen.....	636
7.7: 18. Ducklington. North aisle, panel 3, The Annunciation.....	637
7.7: 19. The Pabenharn Clifford Hours, England, <i>c.</i> 1315–20. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 242, f 2v. Annunciation (detail).....	637
7.7: 20. Ducklington. Panel 4. The Visitation.....	638
7.7: 21. The Queen Mary Psalter, f. 84v. Visitation (detail).....	638
7.7: 22. Ducklington. Panel 5. The Nativity.....	639
7.7: 23. Ducklington. Panel 6. The Adoration of the Magi.....	639
7.7: 24. Ducklington. Nativity and Adoration scenes: relation to architecture.....	640
7.7: 25. Chalgrove. South wall mural. Christ led ‘up the hill’ of Calvary.....	640
7.7: 26. Bolsover (Derbys). St Mary’s church. Our Lady in Gesyn, stone relief, late thirteenth-century.....	641
7.7: 27. The Neville of Hornby Hours, England, 1340s. BL, MS Egerton 2781, f. 13.....	641
7.7: 28. The De Lisle Psalter, f. 124 (detail). The Adoration.....	642
7.7: 29. The Neville of Hornby Hours, f. 13v (detail). The Adoration, detail.....	642

7.7: 30. Ivory triptych, England, <i>c.</i> 1300. V&A object no. 243:1, 2–1867.....	643
7.7: 31. Ducklington. Recesses 7 and 8. The south-east corner.....	644
7.7: 32. Skelton's engraving (detail).....	644
7.7: 33. Recess 9 and detail.....	645
7.7: 33. Stanford (Berks). Chancel. Decorated piscina, credence and aumbry unit.....	646
7.7: 34. Yatton (Somerset). Chancel. Decorated piscina and credence unit.....	646
7.8: 1. BL, Cotton Lansdowne MS 874 f. 180. Heraldic glass at Ducklington.....	647
7.9: 1. Black Bourton. North wall murals, late thirteenth-century (Jesse Tree and Coronation with donor).....	648
7.9: 2. Chalfont St Giles (Bucks). South aisle murals, <i>c.</i> 1330s. Marian miracles and Jesse Tree.....	649
7.9: 3. Christchurch Priory (Dorset). Chancel. Jesse Tree reredos, <i>c.</i> 1350.....	650
7.9: 4. Dorchester Abbey. Chancel north wall. Jesse Tree window. Magi detail....	651
7.9: 5. J. Britton, drawing (1835). Detail of the Three Magi.....	651
7.9: 6. St Cuthbert's church, Wells (Somerset). Jesse Tree reredos, 1470s.....	652
7.9: 7. The Huth Psalter, England, <i>c.</i> 1275–1300, BL, Add. 38116, f. 14v.....	653
7.9: 8. The Gorleston Psalter, f. 8r 7.9: 9.....	654
7.9: 9. The Salvin Hours (Oxford, <i>c.</i> 1275), BL, Add. 48985, f. 1v.....	655
7.9: 10. Broughton (Oxon). Chancel north wall mural, late fourteenth-century. The Coronation of the Virgin with supplicant.....	656
7.9: 11. Combe (Oxon). Nave, south east corner. Decorated image niche and adjacent mural.....	657
7.9: 12. Brent Eleigh (Suffolk). Wall paintings of angels to either side of a (lost) sculpture and bracket.....	658
7.9: 13. Goldsborough (Yorkshire). Detail of panelled tomb chest showing the Virgin painted inside a sculptured niche.....	658

7.9: 14. The Annunciation in the Pabraham-Clifford Hours, f. 2v.....	659
7.9: 15. The Ducklington Annunciation panel.....	659

VOLUME TWO (Illustrations)