MALMESBURY ABBEY

History, Archaeology, and Architecture to Illustrate the Significance of the South Aisle Screen

by

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INTRODUCTION

The abbey church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Aldhelm at Malmesbury in Wiltshire is a building of outstanding national importance (fig. 1). The magnificent twelfth-century Benedictine structure belongs, in fact, to a very distinct 'confederacy' of English medieval monastic churches, all of which escaped total destruction in the wake of the suppression (1536–40) as a result of their conversion to parish use. Malmesbury therefore has a great deal in common with those well-known former monastic churches at, for example, Dorchester, Pershore, Sherborne or Tewkesbury in the south and west; or with those at Binham, Dunstable, Crowland, Waltham and Wymondham in the south-east and east; or again with the fine examples at Bolton, Bridlington, Cartmel, and Selby in Yorkshire and the north of England.[1]

Today, aside from their monastic origin, however, the comparisons to be drawn within this highly significant group of buildings can be taken somewhat further. In particular, such is the quality and importance of their fabric (second only to that of the greater English cathedral churches) it is almost inevitable that any programme of restoration or structural improvement tends to present major challenges in terms of the appropriate conservation response. In addition, at times no less difficult, there are those conflicting views which can arise when pressures for the contemporary use of space clash with surviving medieval liturgical arrangements. At Malmesbury, as elsewhere, all such issues require considerable thought and care, with a thorough understanding of the historic, architectural and archaeological interest of the building always the essential element within the decision making process.[2]

Much of Malmesbury's historical significance rests in it being one of the so-called 'old foundations' of English Benedictines, one of those celebrated houses of the south and west restored during the 'golden age' of pre-Conquest monasticism (fig. 2). Moreover, the abbey's origins can be pushed back much further, with the initial foundation credited in long tradition to an eremetical Irish monk named Mailduib, possibly about the year AD 637. Malmesbury Abbey was to flourish under the support of later Saxon kings, notably Æthelstan (d. 939). Subsequently, in the wake of the reforms initiated at Glastonbury in the 940s by St Dunstan (d. 988), Malmesbury was to share in the fresh momentum given to the regular religious life during the widespread 'monastic revival' of the later tenth century. And, despite subsequent Danish raids, by 1066 it was already one of the well-established Benedictine abbeys with deep economic, social, and religious roots in the south of England.

The first Norman abbot, Turold of Fécamp (d. 1098), was appointed within months of the Conquest. Half a century later Malmesbury was appropriated by Roger, bishop of Sarum (1102–39), who threw up a castle in the town, and *may* have initiated the construction of a

1 At each example, the former medieval monastic church survives in whole, or more often in part, and continues in parish use: Dorchester Abbey (Augustinian), Oxfordshire; Pershore Abbey (Benedictine), Worcestershire; Sherborne Abbey (Benedictine), Dorset; Tewkesbury Abbey (Benedictine), Gloucestershire; Binham Priory (Benedictine), Norfolk; Crowland Abbey (Benedictine), Lincolnshire; Dunstable Priory (Augustinian), Bedfordshire; Waltham Abbey (Augustinian), Essex; Wymondham Abbey (Benedictine), Norfolk; Bolton Priory (Augustinian), West Yorkshire; Bridlington Priory (Augustinian), North Yorkshire; Cartmel Priory (Augustinian), Cumbria; Selby Abbey (Benedictine), West Yorkshire. Basic historical details can be found in Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 59, 63, 73, 76, 77–78, 81, 148, 149, 153, 156, 178; and for useful summaries of the surviving fabric, see Morris 1979, 238–80, *passim*.

2 The *Faculty Jurisdiction Rules* (2000) make specific reference to 'Statements of Significance' and 'Statements of Need'. Rule 3(3)(a) notes that where significant changes to a listed church are proposed, a Statement of Significance (which summarizes the historical development of the church and identifies important features) is to be provided, together with a Statement of Need (which sets out the reasons why the proposals are necessary, and why the needs of the parish cannot be met without making changes to the church). In the case of the major former monastic churches, the historical and architectural significance of the fabric is invariably that much greater. In summary, see Clark 2001, 54–55.

wholly new monastic church. Sadly, virtually all trace of the twelfth-century presbytery is lost, and therefore without fresh archaeological discovery it is impossible to conclude on the likely date at which the building was begun. The difficulties are further compounded by the fact that scholarly opinion is divided over the date of the surviving nave. Stylistically, it is not impossible that that it was the work of Bishop Roger, though a strong case has been made to suggest it was the result of a scheme initiated in the mid-twelfth century by the French Cluniac abbot, Peter Moraunt (1141–*c.* 1158/59). The precise arrangements and sequence of construction of the Anglo-Norman claustral buildings are also difficult to unravel from available evidence, though it is clear that the complex lay north of the church.

It is suggested on historical grounds, coupled with limited archaeological investigation in the early twentieth century, that the presbytery was extended eastwards in the third quarter of the thirteenth century, with the addition of a Lady Chapel, probably under Abbot William of Colerne (1260–96). Abbot William, a prolific builder, was certainly responsible for the refurbishment of the chapter house, the monks' dormitory and infirmary, and the construction of a number of other buildings around the precinct. In the early fourteenth century, the nave and transept clerestories were remodelled, and stone vaults were introduced, possibly under the direction of the well-known west country master mason, Thomas of Witney. Then, in the later fourteenth or perhaps the early fifteenth century, the crossing tower was raised, a vault was introduced, and a tall spire was added. The remodelled church was completed with a new west window and a great square tower erected over the two western bays of the nave. The cloister alleys were completely rebuilt in the mid-fifteenth century, and at some point in same century a low building was added over the six western bays of the south aisle. The spire over the central tower may have collapsed before the suppression.

Following the suppression of the abbey in 1539, the site was acquired from the king by William Stumpe (d. 1552), a rich clothier and leading townsman. He in turn granted, or perhaps sold, the former monastic nave to the parish, with official licence for its use granted in 1541. The presbytery, west tower, north-west corner of the nave, and most of the claustral buildings, were among those major features subsequently lost. The first significant repair works appear to have taken place in 1823–24, and major programmes of restoration were carried out in 1900–05, and during the later 1920s and 1930s.

Currently, among other reordering changes put forward at Malmesbury, notably the scheme set out by the 'West End Reconstruction Action Team',[3] there is a proposal to move the late-medieval stone screen which closes off the eastern bay (St Aldhelm's Chapel) of the south aisle (fig. 3). The screen is in fact matched by one of identical style, and very similar form, situated in the same position within the north aisle. There is a general, but unsubstantiated, claim that these screens do not occupy original monastic positions. Indeed, hearsay evidence is sometimes put forward to suggest they were removed from the former parish church of St Paul, abandoned at the time of the suppression.[4]

In order to better inform decisions, English Heritage has undertaken to produce a full account of the documentary and architectural evidence for the significance of the screen, and to provide an assessment of its historic fabric.[5] In addition — given that a summary account of the development of the monastery complex is of necessity required to provide essential context — an updated architectural history of the abbey has been compiled as an adjunct to the principal exercise.[6] The findings are presented in this report.

The work is divided into six principal sections. We begin with an outline history of Malmesbury Abbey, from which it becomes clear that the material relating to the foundation

3 The background to this scheme, and a survey of the development and significance of the west end of the church will be found in Keystone 2000.

4 The hearsay evidence was presented, for example, in Perkins 1901, 94. It is given fresh, but mistaken, credence in Bowen 2000, 109.

5 For general guidelines on procedures in this regard, see Clark 2001.

6 The most authoritative single account of the architectural development of Malmesbury Abbey is still Brakspear 1912–13; republished as Brakspear 1913–14. Subsequent works of particular note include Galbraith 1965; Pevsner 1975, 321–27; Wilson 1978, *passim*; Morris 1991, *passim*.

and early development of the Anglo-Saxon monastery, in particular, remains poorly understood, the sources very much in need of modern scholarly review. For the Benedictine abbey of the post-Conquest era, the most accessible information comes from the now-dated Victoria County History account of Malmesbury, together with the published (but very limited) edition of the cartulary.[7] Much more work remains to be done on the later history of the site, looking at full range of post-suppression sources for the parish church.

In the next two sections we provide an updated account of the archaeology and architectural history of the abbey. Here, we find it is an almost complete lack of reliable archaeological information which prevents a fuller understanding of the development of the monastic complex, through both the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. Nevertheless, in looking at the magnificent twelfth-century abbey church itself, Malmesbury emerges as a building of key importance. It was among the very last of the great Anglo-Norman churches raised in the Romanesque idiom, yet it was also one in which we see the beginnings of early Gothic influences in the west of England. Its significance is enhanced still further by the outstanding sculpture preserved in the south porch, works of art which truly project the building onto the European stage. Having considered all that is known of the late-medieval and post-suppression modifications to the church, we move on to look at what is known of the cloister and monastic buildings.

We turn next to the subject requiring immediate attention, the south aisle screen. In this section, we begin by examining its architecture and archaeology, progressing to highlight those changes affecting the fabric of the screen in more recent centuries. Then, taking early accounts of its function as a starting point, in the penultimate section of the report we explore the wider liturgical context surrounding the screen. To summarize our views, we offer two *speculative* reconstruction drawings. At the outset, it is essential to appreciate these drawings are in no way offered as statements of fact; they are to be seen as interpretative suggestions, based the surviving evidence and current understanding. They do, nevertheless, provide a vivid demonstration of the architectural and historical significance of the south aisle screen.

Primarily, our work demonstrates that all notion of the south aisle screen having been moved to its current position in the post-monastic period should be rejected. It is not supported by the archaeological or historical evidence.[8] On the contrary, there can be very little doubt that the screen is anything other than related to the late-medieval liturgical arrangements within the Benedictine monastic church, an important element within the overall choir and rood screen pairing.

Malmesbury Abbey is a grade I listed building. The adjacent Old Bell hotel (thought to incorporate the former monastic guest house), and Abbey House to the north (built over a thirteenth-century monastic undercroft) are also listed at grade I.[9]

7 VCH 1956, 210–31; *Registrum Malmesburiense* (edited in 2 volumes, 1879–80).

8 The principal archaeological conclusions reached in this report are — as highlighted in the relevant section below — supported by the findings of the recent survey and investigation of the screen by Mr Jerry Sampson: Caroe & Partners 2001.

9 DNH 1996, 9–10, 169–72, 177–78.

2
AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE ABBEY

'The toune of Malmesbyri', as the Tudor antiquary John Leland (d. 1552) observed in the 1540s, 'ys wonderfully defendid by nature'.[10] It stands prominently on a steep-sided hill, almost surrounded by the swirling waters of the Tetbury and Sherston branches of the Bristol Avon.[11] From at least the middle years of the twelfth century, this ancient Wiltshire borough has been dominated by the magnificent Benedictine conventual church of St Mary and St Aldhelm.[12]

The Pre-Conquest Monastery

The history of early pre-Conquest monastic life at Malmesbury is a subject fraught with uncertainty.[13] The documentary and archaeological sources are just as complex as those for the better-known west country Anglo-Saxon house at Glastonbury, yet they have not be reviewed by modern scholars to anywhere near the same degree.[14] Hitherto, accounts of the foundation and early development of Malmesbury have been bound up with the life of its seventh-century abbot, Aldhelm (d. 709), and with the works of the later Benedictine abbey's most distinguished son, William of Malmesbury (*c.* 1090–*c.* 1143).[15]

Although St Aldhelm produced a substantial body of poetry and prose, this material has all too often been used to support arguments about the saint's own background, and that of his monastery, without critical appraisal.[16] Similarly, attempts to interpret the fragmentary archaeological evidence for the early history of the site, and for the monastery's surrounding estates, have been unduly influenced by the ambiguous accounts of the foundation set out by William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta Pontificum*, and by the anonymous fourteenth-century Malmesbury author of the *Eulogium Historiarum*.[17]

In long tradition, the foundation of the house is credited to an eremetical Irish monk named Mailduib, perhaps about the year AD 637.[18] However, the existence of Mailduib (or indeed any specific Irish holy man), generally inferred from the writings of Aldhelm, cannot

10 *Leland Itinerary*, I, 130. Leland's visit to Malmesbury is dated to 1542.

11 The Tetbury branch is also known as Newnton Water or Brook.

12 On the dedication, see Binns 1989, 79.

13 For the most recent discussion of the sources (on which we have drawn here) and associated difficulties, see Butterworth 1999, chapter 2, 42–46.

14 Rather more might be understood of the early Malmesbury historical sources if they were subjected to a critical review such as that by Abrams (1996) on Glastonbury. For a summary of the pre-Conquest archaeology of Glastonbury, see Rahtz 1993, 66–100.

15 For William's life, works and reputation, see Thomson 1987; also Farmer 1962. The argument for placing William's birth in *c.* 1090 is presented in *Historia Novella*, xviii. Thomson (1987, 1–2) retains the date *c.* 1095.

16 For an important summary of the earliest sources concerning Aldhelm, and an Irish foundation at Malmesbury, see Lapidge and Herren 1979, 6, 181.

17 For William's account of the pre-Conquest history of his abbey, see *Gestis Pontificum*, 332–420. The *Eulogium Historiarum* was also likely to be a work of a Malmesbury monk. For early accounts of the foundation drawing on these sources, see *Monasticon II*, I, 253–55; Jackson 1854, 14–28; Perkins 1901, 33–42; Luce 1979 (1929), 1–15. The more rigorous review of the material presented by VCH (1956, 210–15) is itself now dated. The recent account by Keystone (2000, 3–4) is uncritical.

18 For the fullest foundation account, see *Eulogium Historiarum*, I, 224. The date AD 637 is given in the same source (III, 279), though elsewhere it is AD 635 (III, 328). In passing, one should also be aware that Malmesbury has been claimed as the site of an early house of nuns, despoiled by a heathen British king: *Leland Itinerary*, I, 132; Tanner 1695; *Monasticon II*, I, 253, 257; Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 70. These accounts appear to be derived from *Eulogium Historiarum*. Gilchrist (1994, 28) draws on Bede to suggest the possibility of a mixed community, or double house, at Malmesbury.

be demonstrated with any degree of confidence. In fact, there is the distinct possibility that the name Mailduib represents a conflation of the place-name, the confusion resulting from an early (and imaginative) reading of Bede's eighth-century references to the location.[19] This said, the account of the abbey's origins set out in the fourteenth century, in which the foundation is placed within the setting of an early British political landscape, is one which has been considered increasingly plausible in recent years.[20] This particular account tells us that Mailduib's foundation was located at a defended British stronghold called 'Caer Bladon', itself close to an important British royal palace. It is of particular interest to note, therefore, that the Malmesbury hilltop does seem to have been occupied by an Iron Age hillfort, one which could have been retained as a defended centre on into the Roman and sub-Roman periods. As for the nearby royal palace, this is commonly identified with Brokenborough, north-west of the town.[21] In sum, we should probably be looking beyond that simplistic view first set out by William of Malmesbury, believing that Mailduib was drawn here by no more than 'the solitude of woodland which surrounds the place'.[22] On the contrary, the foundation of a religious house or *monasterium* at Malmesbury is far more likely to have been a carefully planned missionary enterprise. Almost certainly targeted at pastoral care in a relatively populous area, it lay close to a source of royal patronage, and on a site with no small defensive potential.

Interestingly, the discovery of a major early medieval archaeological complex at Foxley, some 2 miles (3km) south-west of Malmesbury, has led to speculation that this was in fact the royal and monastic site representing the earliest foundation. The thesis extends to the suggestion that at some point the monastery migrated to its permanent medieval location on the nearby hilltop.[23] Unfortunately, neither William of Malmesbury, or the author of the fourteenth-century *Eulogium Historiarum*, provide us with sufficiently clear accounts to either support or refute this suggestion. Current understanding is also confounded by a lack of significant archaeological remains from Malmesbury itself.[24]

The documentary sources, in any case, indicate that about AD 675 Aldhelm was appointed abbot of the monastery at Malmesbury.[25] Such were his distinguished connections and reputation for holiness, the house soon began flourish and to attract important benefactors. For what is recorded of the subsequent Anglo-Saxon abbots, and the economic prosperity of their community, we are very largely dependent on the information provided by William of Malmesbury, coupled with that contained in the later cartulary.[26] William tells us that King Æthelwulf (d. 858) made a rich shrine for St Aldhelm's bones, also granting the abbey land and immunities from taxation.[27] At the end of the ninth century, King Alfred (AD 871–99) added to, or at least confirmed, the abbey's endowments.[28] And it was the strategic position occupied by the quasi-urban community which had grown up

19 Butterworth 1999, chapter 2, 42; VCH 1991, 127. For a relevant passage from Bede, see Luce 1979 (1929), 3.

20 For the fourteenth-century account, see *Eulogium Historiarum*, I, 224–25. And for the interpretation, see in particular Haslam 1984, 111–17. For further general context, see Blair 1992. Several interesting observations are also made in Bowen 2000, 11–21.

21 In AD 956, Brokenborough was the centre of a large royal estate of 100 hides, given to Malmesbury Abbey by King Eadwig (d. 959): Haslam 1984, 112.

22 *Gestis Pontificum*, 334.

23 The site is known as Cowage Farm: Hinchliffe 1986, 253.

24 For a recent summary of state of knowledge, see Butterworth 1999, chapter 2, 44–46; together with the four unpublished archaeological reports for North Wiltshire District Council, cited in Keystone 2000, 54. Further excavations in the grounds of St Joseph's school, Holloway, directed by Tim Longman, await full publication: noted in Bowen 2000, 12–13, 19, note 6.

25 This is the date given by William of Malmesbury: *Gestis Pontificum*, 385. See the account of his abbacy given in VCH 1956, 211–12. Aldhelm was appointed the first bishop of Sherborne in AD 705.

26 The details are summarized in VCH 1956, 212–14; Knowles *et al.* 2001, 54–55.

27 *Gestis Pontificum*, 389–92; also Gem 1993, 58–59.

28 *Gestis Pontificum*, 394–96.

around the abbey by this time, coupled with the strong natural defences of the hill, which made Malmesbury a clear choice for inclusion in the king's burh system of defences for Wessex.[29]

Early in the tenth century, King Æthelstan (d. 939) proved a most liberal benefactor to the house. Among his many gifts to the community was a relic of the True Cross, and a shrine for the relics of St Paternus recently arrived from Dol (Ille-et-Vilaine) in Brittany.[30] On his death, Æthelstan's body was buried beneath or before the high altar in the church of St Mary, his memory subsequently honoured by succeeding generations of monks throughout the Middle Ages.[31]

In contrast with Æthelstan's high reputation, William of Malmesbury bemoaned the fact that King Eadwig (AD 955–59) later turned the monastery into a 'bawdy-house for clerks'.[32] In reality, of course, the state of the regular religious life at Malmesbury was probably little different from that at any other monastic house southern England at this time. Though its extent is sometimes exaggerated, there can be no doubt that by the middle years of the tenth century Anglo-Saxon monasticism was in a distinctly moribund state.

A dramatic change in fortunes was close at hand, and followed reforms first introduced by St Dunstan (d. 988) at Glastonbury in the 940s. The so called 'tenth-century monastic revival' was a remarkable product of cooperation between a king and three devout monks. Sponsorship of the revival was led by King Edgar (959–73), supported by Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury and later archbishop of Canterbury, Æthelwold (d. 984), abbot of Abingdon, and Oswald (d. 992), bishop of Worcester. The aim of the reformers was to rekindle the essence of the monastic life, through the strict observance of the Rule of St Benedict, and a new code of law known as the *Regularis Concordia*.[33] Such was the resounding success of the revival, by the time of Edgar's death over thirty monasteries and nunneries had been restored or founded anew.

A reformed Benedictine community was introduced at Malmesbury *c.* 960–74, reputedly by St Dunstan himself, with Ælfric installed as the first abbot.[34] In King Edgar's charter to the new house, henceforth dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, Ælfric was said to be specifically appointed to preside over the replacement of the secular clergy by monks. The king, moreover, let it be known that he was resolved 'to rebuild all the holy monasteries throughout [his] kingdom ... outwardly ruinous with mouldering shingles and worm-eaten boards even to the rafters'.[35] Thereafter, despite subsequent Danish raids, regular Benedictine monastic life at Malmesbury was maintained largely unabated.[36] We are, for

29 Haslam 1984, 115–17. Malmesbury appears in the early tenth-century Burghal Hidage: VCH 1991, 131. See, also, Butterworth 1999, chapter 2, 60.

30 *Gestis Pontificum*, 396–401.

31 The surviving tomb-chest, said to be that of Æthelstan, seems to be of fifteenth-century date (though the head is replaced): Brakspear 1912–13, 424; Pevsner 1975, 326; *Topographical Collections*, 257–58, note 4. We are told that the king also caused the bodies of his two royal cousins, Æthelweard and Ælfwine, to be buried in the church of St Mary: *Gestis Pontificum*, 396; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, I, 223.

32 That is, secular canons: *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, I, 237; *Gestis Pontificum*, 403. See, also, *Eulogium Historiarum*, I, 229. In modern accounts of this episode, we find there is uncertainty concerning the interpretation of William's record: Jackson 1864, 23; Perkins 1901, 40; Luce 1979 (1929), 13. But as Knowles (1963, 34) suggested, 'in default of any other account' we should accept the essence of the reported events, with the modification that the Malmesbury community had almost certainly not be *monastic* for many years before Eadwig. Meanwhile, William did at least credit the clergy with elevating St Aldhelm's relics and placing them in the shrine which Æthelwulf had earlier presented to the house: *Gestis Pontificum*, 403; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, I, 238.

33 In general, see Knowles 1963, 31–56; also Lawrence 2001, 100–03; Aston 2000, 67–68.

34 Knowles and Hadcock (1971, 55) gave *c.* 965–74; Knowles (1963, 721) gave *c.* 960. Knowles *et al.* (2001, 54) give *c.* 965. William of Malmesbury placed the event in 974: *Gestis Pontificum*, 403–05. See, also, VCH 1956, 213

35 *Gestis Regum*, I, 173–74; *Eulogium Historiarum*, I, 17; *Registrum*, I, 316–18. The date of this charter is problematical: VCH 1956, 213. For the new dedication, *Gestis Pontificum*, 405.

36 *Gestis Pontificum*, 409–10; VCH 1956, 213–14. It is difficult to judge the impact of the fire which William of Malmesbury claimed destroyed the monastery in 1042: *Gestis Pontificum*, 363.

example, told by William of Malmesbury of several miracles worked at the shrine of St Aldhelm during the first half of the eleventh century.[37] In the 1050s, however, Bishop Herman of Ramsbury sought to take over the abbey and move the seat of his bishopric there, alleging that the endowments of his see were otherwise insufficient.[38] Though he managed to secure the consent of King Edward the Confessor (1042–66), the plan was successfully thwarted by the monks.[39] By the time of the Norman Conquest, Malmesbury Abbey already had long-established and deep economic and social roots in south-west England (fig. 2).[40]

The Medieval Abbey

The last of the Anglo-Saxon abbots of Malmesbury, Brihtric,[41] was removed soon after the Conquest by King William to make way for Turold (d. 1098), hitherto a monk of the Norman Benedictine house at Fécamp (Seine-Maritime).[42] He was succeeded by Abbot Warin (1070–*c.* 1091), previously a monk at Lire (Eure), who secured important new endowments for Malmesbury from the Conqueror and his queen.[43] Generally, Warin seems to have had little time for the Anglo-Saxon traditions of the house, showing scant regard for the monastery's relics, including those attributed to Mailduib. But in 1078 he chose to elevate the remains of St Aldhelm, translating them with great ceremony and placing them in a magnificent shrine beside the high altar.[44]

In 1101, King Henry I (1100–35) renewed the Conqueror's grant to Malmesbury Abbey of a five-day fair in the town.[45] Then, some seventeen years later, the fortunes of the house were to take something of a dramatic new turn. About 1118, Abbot Eadwulf (1106–18) was deposed and the abbey appropriated by Roger, bishop of Sarum (1102–39), who also threw up a castle close to the bounds of the monastic complex.[46] Roger, who had begun his career as a priest in the Norman town of Avranches, was one of the most powerful and influential courtiers surrounding Henry I, serving first as royal chancellor and then justiciar. He continued to hold both the monastery and the borough of Malmesbury for more than two decades. Meanwhile, by 1131, the status of the abbey had effectively been reduced to that of

37 *Gestis Pontificum*, 414–19.

38 Ramsbury lies in the Kennet valley, some 20 miles (29km) south-east of Malmesbury. The see was established in *c.* AD 909, under Edward the Elder (d. 924). In 1058, Herman managed to unite the sees of Ramsbury and Sherborne, thereafter ruling the combined diocese from the monastic cathedral at the Sherborne. After the Conquest, *c.* 1075–78, the see was moved to Sarum, for which see RCHME 1980, 1–24.

39 For the episode, see VCH 1956, 214; Luce 1979 (1929), 14; *Gestis Pontificum*, 419–20. There is further context in Knowles 1963, 131–32. See, also, Knowles *et al.* 2001, 54–55.

40 For the Malmesbury Abbey estates at the time of the Conquest, see Butterworth 1999, chapter 7, *passim*, fig. 7.16. For the state of Benedictine monastic life in general at this time, see Knowles 1963, 57–82, Burton 1994, 7–20; Cownie 1998, 11–33. For the position at Gloucester, see Welander 1991, 11–16.

41 He had been abbot from *c.* 1052/53: Knowles *et al.* 2001, 55; VCH 1956, 214.

42 Knowles *et al.* 2001, 55; *Gestis Pontificum*, 420.

43 Cownie (1998, 144) points to a 'burst of religious benefactions' to the house at this time. See, *Registrum*, I, 325–28. It is also instructive to compare the post-Conquest benefactions at Malmesbury with those of other early foundations in the west country. Cownie (1998, 37–65) provides interesting case studies of Abingdon and Gloucester.

44 Warin was apparently influenced by a miracle performed by St Aldhelm: *Gestis Pontificum*, 423–25; VCH 1956, 215; Luce 1979 (1929), 17–18; Knowles 1963, 119.

45 *Registrum*, I, 333.

46 The exact location of Roger's castle at Malmesbury has been much debated. Many authors have placed it on the north-west side of the town, on the neck of land confined by the two branches of the Avon , between the abbey and Westport. See, for example, *Topographical Collections*, 253; Jackson 1864, 28, 31–32; Luce 1979 (1929), 113. Brakspear (1912–13, 400) argued it was to the east of the abbey church, the position it is also shown on the map of the town in: *AJ* 1930, 458. See, also, Renn 1973, 239.

a cathedral priory. Its position was only revived after Roger's fall from power in 1139.[47] Writing in the early 1140s, William of Malmesbury provided a marvelously vivid portrait of the ambitious prelate, and of his love of magnificent buildings.[48] Specifically, William tells us that:

> 'At Malmesbury he had begun a castle in the churchyard itself, hardly a stone's throw from the abbey ... The most ancient monasteries, those of Malmesbury and Abbotsbury, he attached to the [i.e. his] bishopric as far as lay in his power'.[49]

The downfall of Bishop Roger made way for a fresh abbatial election at Malmesbury over the winter of 1139/40.[50] The new abbot, John, died within the year and in 1141 Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester (1129–71), was influential in the appointment of his own protégé, Peter Moraunt, to the vacancy.[51] A native Bourges (Cher), Peter had at one time been a monk of Burgundian Cluny (Saône-et-Loire), and was later prior of the important Cluniac monastery at La Charité-sur-Loire (Nièvre).[52] He arrived in England in the midst of the hostilities of the Anarchy, at a time when the maintenance of the regular monastic life at Malmesbury cannot have been easy. In 1144–45, for example, the castle built by Bishop Roger was the scene of fierce fighting between the supporters of either faction. The subsequent capture of the stronghold in 1153 by Henry, duke of Anjou, was one of the final incidents in the protracted conflict.[53] Abbot Peter, meanwhile, continued to rule over Malmesbury until his death, *c.* 1158/59.

It was presumably the precedent set by Bishop Roger's appropriation of the abbey which led his successor, Bishop Jocelin (1142–84), to press for some degree of control over the affairs of the community.[54] A dispute was played out through the 1170s, culminating — so it would seem — in the Jocelin's refusal to perform a dedication ceremony. Pope Alexander III eventually took action, probably in 1177, instructing the bishops of London and Worcester to carry out the ceremony should the bishop of Sarum prove obstinate.[55] Though the evidence is far from conclusive, several writers have suggested that the event in question was intended to mark the completion of the abbey church.[56] This may have been so, but in any case some ten years later Abbot Nicholas (1183–87) was almost certainly deposed for his mismanagement of the monastery's financial affairs.[57] Matters appear to have improved under Robert of Melun (1189/90–1205). In his time an important bond of union was drawn

47 Old Sarum was of course the seat of the bishops until the removal of the see to Salisbury in the thirteenth century. On Roger's appropriation, see *Historia Novella*, xxvii–xxviii; Knowles 1963, 180, 275, 586; Luce 1979 (1929), 22–25; Brakspear 1912–13, 400–01. For his life and career in general, see Kealey 1972.

48 This point is looked at in further detail below. For the classic description of Roger, see *Historia Novella*, 64–69; *Gestis Regum*, II, 557–60. For a an excellent account of Bishop Roger's architectural ambitions, see Stalley 1971.

49 *Historia Novella*, 45, 67, 69; *Gestis Regum*, II, 547, 559. This is source drawn upon in Britton 1807–20, I, U8; Jackson 1864, 28; Perkins 1901, 43–44.

50 *Historia Novella*, 71.

51 Henry of Blois had himself been a monk of Cluny before his appointment as abbot of Glastonbury in 1126. An architectural patron of huge importance, Henry continued to hold the abbacy, together with the see of Winchester, until his death in 1171.

52 Knowles *et al.* 2001, 55; Knowles 1963, 284.

53 VCH 1956, 217; Luce 1979 (1929), 26–27; VCH 1991, 136. The duke, of course, succeeded as King Henry II in 1154.

54 For an earlier history behind this claim, see Berry 1990.

55 For Pope Alexander III (1159–81) involvement, see *Registrum*, I, 352–55. Brakspear (1931, 5) suggested this letter dated from *c.* 1163; Luce (1979 (1929), 33) thought *c.* 1170; though Galbraith (1965, 39, 56) makes out a good case for 1177, based on the known movements of Pope Alexander. The abbot at the time was Robert 'de Veneys' (1171/72–*c.* 1180): Knowles *et al.* 2001, 55.

56 See below, p. 24.

57 Knowles *et al.* 2001, 55–56; VCH 1956, 219.

up between the abbeys of Malmesbury and Evesham, giving the monks of either house the right of entry into the choir or chapter of the other.[58] Robert was succeeded by Walter Loring (1208–22),[59] who in 1215 managed to secure from King John (1199–1216) the borough of Malmesbury, together with the three hundreds attached to it.[60] The next year, John also granted the abbot and convent 'the place in which is situated the castle of Malmesbury, with leave to pull down the buildings and erect others at their will'.[61]

Yet by far the most notable of the thirteenth-century abbots of Malmesbury — if not the later Middle Ages as a whole — was William of Colerne (1260–96), a supremely able financier, vigorous agricultural improver, and undoubtedly a prolific builder.[62] Investing wisely, he added considerably to the monastery's estates, including the tithes of further churches, several important manors, and various parcels of land.[63] Apart from his construction work at the abbey itself, he was responsible for many new farm buildings across the community's estates, including fourteen barns. He also rebuilt the churches at Crudwell and Kemble.[64]

The next four abbots of Malmesbury, William of Badminton (1296–1324), Adam de la Hoke (1324–40), John of Tintern (1340–49), and Simon de Aumeney (1349–61), had all served as monks at the house.[65] They were followed by Walter de Camme (1362–96), whose brother William was instrumental in securing an important London property for the abbey.[66] This property, together with certain other revenues, formed the basis of a foundation for the Lady Chapel, amounting to a virtual chantry. Provision was made for a daily sung mass, at which six candles were to burn, and there was to be a daily private mass for the soul of the abbot. A new monk-warden post was created to oversee the administration of the Lady Chapel.

Little of outstanding note is recorded of the fifteenth-century abbots of Malmesbury,[67] though there are various indications of an increasing degree of mismanagement and disorder. In 1476, for example, in the time of Abbot John Ayly (1469–80), King Edward IV (d. 1483) took the house under his protection on the grounds it had been 'burdened by bad government and heavy expenses'.[68] Matters appear to have been still worse under the penultimate abbot, Richard Camme (1515–33). Indeed, in 1527, the abbot of Gloucester was obliged to carry out a visitation at Malmesbury, his report conveying an impression of sordidness and neglect. Services were sung late because there was no clock, food was poorly cooked, the sick were neglected, the plumbing was inadequate, there was an absence of mass servers, and there general brawling, complaint, and disorder. Six of the thirty-four monks were promptly excommunicated, and the abbot of Gloucester also issued a series of injunctions, which included reform in the infirmary, the provision of a new water supply within three years at most, and instructions to Camme himself to learn self-control.[69]

58 Robert of Melun had previously been the sub prior at Winchester Cathedral Priory: Knowles *et al.* 2001, 56; VCH 1956, 219.

59 Smith and London 2001, 51; VCH 1956, 219–20; *Registrum*, I, 251.

60 *Registrum*, I, 339–40.

61 The grant involved a payment of 600 marks to the king and 37 marks to the queen. The castle was described as being an endless source of trouble to the monks: *Registrum*, I, 340–41; II, 81. Also, Jackson 1864, 31–32.

62 Smith and London 2001, 51; VCH 1956, 220–22; Luce 1979 (1929), 41–46.

63 For his acquisitions, see *Registrum*, II, 358–68.

64 His building works are noted in *Registrum*, II, 368–78. For Crudwell, see Pevsner 1975, 202–03. Kemble, now in Gloucestershire, was almost entirely rebuilt in 1876–77.

65 Smith and London 2001, 51–52; VCH 1956, 222–23.

66 Smith and London 2001, 52; VCH 1956, 223. *Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1367–70*, 233. The London property was acquired in an elaborate transaction of 1367–81. It lay in Holborn, for which see Schofield 1995, 190.

67 VCH 1956, 224–25.

68 Luce 1979 (1929), 50; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476–85*, 12.

69 Knowles 1948–59, III, 84–85; Luce 1979 (1929), 51; VCH 1956, 225.

In July 1533, after a protracted series of events, Thomas Cromwell's favoured candidate, Robert Frampton, became abbot of Malmesbury.[70] Less than two years later, with the storm clouds of the suppression gathering, commissioners were appointed to conduct a thorough survey of ecclesiastical wealth throughout England and Wales. In the results of this enormous undertaking, known as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535), the net annual income of Malmesbury Abbey was assessed at just under £804,[71] a figure which placed it very comfortably in the rank of the greater houses across England.[72]

As in 1086, the abbey's principal land holdings continued to form a compact group in the north-west corner of Wiltshire.[73] However, the many individual assets of the house were now assigned very specifically to the abbot (or abbot's exchequer), and to the various monastic obedientiaries, such as the sacrist, the chamberlain, the cook, and the warden of the Lady Chapel.[74] Malmesbury survived the first round of suppressions in 1536, but was eventually surrendered to the king's visitors on 15 December 1539. Abbot Frampton and twenty-one monks were granted pensions.[75]

Post-Suppression History

The site of the abbey and the various buildings of the precinct complex were committed to the care of Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham, with certain of the structures assigned to remain standing whilst others were 'deemed to be superfluous' and were earmarked to be razed and sold.[76] Custody of the 'superfluous' buildings was acquired by Baynton's deputy, William Stumpe (d. 1552), a rich clothier and sometime Member of Parliament for the town. In the first instance, Stumpe probably leased the property from the Crown, but in 1544 he acquired a formal grant of the abbey site (Annex 1), the church, and other buildings and lands, on payment of a total sum of just over £1,517.[77]

In fact, Stumpe had already given — or possibly sold — the nave of the abbey church to the parish, with official license for its use granted in 1541.[78] Moreover, rather than demolishing all of the other buildings, he appears to have converted many of the former monastic chambers for the use of his own business. When the Tudor antiquary John Leland arrived at Malmesbury in 1542, he described the situation with the church and other structures thus:

> '... The tounes men a late bought this [the abbey] chirch of the king, and hath made it their paroche chirch.
>
> The body of the olde paroch chirch [St Paul's], standing in the west end of the chirch yard, is clene taken doun. The est ende is convertid *in aulam civicam*.
>
> The fair square tour in the west ende is kept for a dwelling house.
>
> There was a litle chirch joining to the south side of the *transeptum* of thabby chirch,

70 Thomas Cromwell (d. 1540), Henry VIII's Vicar-General, had been appointed Secretary of State earlier that year. For the rival candidacy and appointment of Frampton, see Luce 1979 (1929), 52–57; VCH 1956, 225–26.

71 *Valor*, II, 118–23.

72 Among the Benedictines, for example, most houses were rather smaller, including the grand foundations at Leominster (£448), Colchester (£523), Shrewsbury (£532), Cerne (£575), Pershore (£643), and Sherborne (£682). Those with greater wealth included Gloucester (£1,430), Tewkesbury (£1,598), Glastonbury (£3,311), and Westminster (£3,470). For the general background, see Knowles 1948–59, III, 241–54; Youings 1971, 13–55.

73 For the distribution of the estates by this time, see Butterworth 1999, chapter 7, *passim*, fig. 7.24.

74 VCH 1956, 226–27; Jackson 1864, 33–34. For background to the 'obedientiary system' in general, see Knowles 1963, 431–39; Knowles 1948–59, I, 55–63; II, 309–30.

75 VCH 1956, 227.

76 In general, see Luce 1979 (1929), 59–60, 69–77; Brakspear 1912–13, 402–03, 434.

77 Youings 1971, 238–41, derived from PRO, E 318/Box 20/1074. Also, Brakspear 1912–13, 435.

78 Luce 1979 (1929), 74.

wher sum say Joannes Scottus the great clerk was slayne.

... Wevers hath now lomes in this litle chirch, but it stondith and is a very old pece of work.

... The hole logginges of thabbay be now longging to one Stumpe, an exceding riche clothiar that boute them of the king.

... This Stumpe was the chef causer and contributer to have thabbay chirch made a paroch chirch.

At this present tyme every corner of the vaste houses of office that belongid to thabbay be fulle of lumbes to weve clooth yn'.[79]

William Stumpe's heirs and successors in Malmesbury can be traced through to the seventeenth century, though the huge boom in the cloth industry, and the advantages it brought to the town, did not last for very long.[80] An anonymous tourist who visited the town of Malmesbury in 1634 wrote:

> 'I got into that ancient, sometimes famous & flourishing City [Malmesberry]; but ffortune long since turn'd her face from her, so as now there is little left, but the ruines of a rare demolished Church, and of a large fayre & rich Monastery. So much as is standing of this old Abbey Church promiseth no lesse (for it represents a Cathedrall) to have been of that largenes, strength & extent, as most in ye kingdome'.[81]

During the Civil War (1642–48) Malmesbury's geographical position was such that it took on considerable importance. The town changed hands up to six times in the first two years of the conflict, two of these the result of definite assaults.[82] There is no clear record of the direct impact of the events upon the former abbey environs (fig. 4). However, the condition of the parish surrounding the abbey had been a source of trouble and scandal for some time. It seems that, when the monastery was suppressed, the precincts (which contained a number of residences hitherto under the control of the abbot) had never formally been amalgamated into the town.[83] In April 1636 it was reported that:

> '... there are three score dwelling houses within the precinct of the scyte of the Abbey of Malmesbury, which conteyneth not above tenn acres of ground, and that there are fforty and seven aged, impotent, decreped persons, young children and infants who have no lively hood but are ready to starve for that the place not being known of what parish it is...'.

And an investigation in June of that year revealed:

> '... the inhabitants of the Abbey Parish had been taxed for the past 50 years for the reparacon of the church, now and by all the time aforesaid, that they had paid for seat room in the church ...'.

Later in the century, King William III (1689–1702) granted the town a new charter, through which the abbey precincts were henceforth to be firmly incorporated into the borough.[84] At the beginning of the nineteenth century (*c.* 1822–24), the first important restoration of the abbey church was undertaken under the auspices of the then vicar, Mr George Bisset, and a local committee. The direction of the programme was in the hands of Henry Goodridge (1797–1864), a Bath architect.[85] Far more extensive repair and

79 *Leland Itinerary*, I, 131.

80 But see VCH 1991, 146; Moffatt 1805, 159–62; Bowen 2000, 102–05, 115–18.

81 Quoted in Brayley 1834, 411. See, also, Jackson 1864, 35; Luce 1929 (1979), 104.

82 In general, see Luce 1979 (1929), 107–34; Bird 1876; VCH 1991, 136. In 1643, the Parliamentarian general, Sir William Waller (d. 1668), described the town's position as 'the strongest inland scituation that ever I saw': Luce 1929 (1979), 114.

83 For this, and the following reports, see Luce 1979 (1929), 154–55; VCH 1991, 134–36.

84 Luce 1979 (1929), 154.

85 For Goodridge's career in general, see Colvin 1995, 415–16.

conservation works were carried out in the early decades of the twentieth century under the direction of the Corsham-based antiquary and architect, Harold Brakspear (1870–1934).[86] In 1976, celebrations were arranged to mark the thirteenth centenary of the foundation of the abbey.

86 For his career in general, see Roebuck 2001, especially 39–43 on Malmesbury.

3

THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE ABBEY CHURCH

The surviving archaeological and architectural legacy of Malmesbury Abbey may very well span a period of more than 1,300 years. It is without doubt a religious site with a huge spectrum of potential interest. Bearing this in mind, we have to remember that although certain aspects of the upstanding buildings have been studied reasonably well, virtually nothing by way of professional archaeological excavation or survey — conducted to exacting modern standards — has been carried out anywhere within the extensive monastic precinct. Given that so much more work remains to be done, it comes as no surprise to find that it is currently almost impossible to chart a detailed building sequence for the entire complex with any firm degree of confidence (figs. 5–10, 11, 12, 13–15).

Previous Work on Malmesbury

Setting aside a number of antiquarian references, the first notable attempt to interpret the architectural history of the abbey church was published in John Britton's *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain* in 1807.[87] The account included what the author considered to be the only published (and accurate) ground plan of the surviving building (fig. 16). Less than a decade later, a set of handsome measured drawings of the church (including a fresh ground plan) was prepared by Frederick Nash (d. 1856) and published by the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1816 (figs. 17–22).[88] Soon after, in the 1820s and 1830s, it was probably the Malmesbury lawyer, Benjamin Coffin Thomas, who reported on findings of antiquarian interest encountered during the restoration works of this time.[89]

Professor Edward Freeman's 1860s paper on the architecture of the abbey church was rather more scholarly and far less anecdotal than any of the previous accounts. And, with only minor variation, the substance of its content was followed in the later Victorian essays published by Talbot, Bazeley, and Paul (fig. 23), and Waller.[90] In 1901, the Revd T. Perkins, rector of Turnworth in Dorset, published an admirable summary of the general state of knowledge up to that time.[91] The south porch sculpture, meanwhile, had been looked at by Mary Bagnall-Oakeley, and by M. R. James.[92]

The nineteenth-century accounts of Malmesbury and its development sequence were quickly superseded by Harold Brakspear's comprehensive investigation of the site in the early 1900s. Brakspear's professional architectural involvement with the church began in 1899. Inevitably, his antiquarian interests were soon running in parallel with the restoration programme. An interim account of his emerging thinking was published in 1903, and his definitive views (including the results of limited archaeological excavation) appeared some ten years later (figs. 24, 25).[93] In a seminal article of 1931, Brakspear went on to suggest that Malmesbury Abbey was a key building in appreciating the emergence of a distinct

87 Britton 1807–10, I, U1–14 (with five plates).

88 The drawings were made for the 'Vetusta Monumenta' and were engraved by J. Basire: Society of Antiquaries 1816–35, Plates I–IX.

89 T[homas] 1824; T[homas] 1837.

90 See Freeman 1864, followed by Talbot 1884; Bazeley 1891–92; [Paul] 1895; Waller 1895–98.

91 Perkins 1901, 33–101.

92 Bagnall-Oakeley 1891–92; James 1898–1903.

93 Brakspear's professional interest in Malmesbury began in the last years of the nineteenth century. For the account of his emerging thinking, see Brakspear *et al.* 1903, 7–12. His definitive account appeared first as: Brakspear 1912–13; reprinted with minor addition as: Brakspear 1913–14.

school of masons, active in the west country from the 1170s through into the early years of the thirteenth century.[94]

Brakspear's work was destined to become the corner-stone for future investigations of the surviving medieval fabric at Malmesbury.[95] Early on, his views went largely unchallenged in the important synthesis of English Romanesque architecture produced by Alfred Clapham (1934), and again in the major survey of British medieval architecture by Geoffrey Webb (1956). It is also Brakspear's chronology which underpins the brief overview of the abbey buildings published in the relevant Victoria County History volume (1956).[96] Nothing vastly contradictory emerged in a review of the iconography and dating of the south porch sculpture carried out by K. J. Galbraith (1965).[97] In turn, her findings were broadly accepted in a new edition of Lawrence Stone's seminal work on medieval sculpture in Britain (1972),[98] and were again absorbed into Pevsner's updated volume on county (1975).[99] Stimulating new ideas on the possible design sources for the nave, coupled to a view on its closer dating, were put forward by Christopher Wilson (1978). At much the same time, however, Stuart Rigold (1977) sought to throw the question open once again by denouncing Brakspear's 'shaky pile of inference', arguing instead for a rather earlier start date for the twelfth-century church as a whole.[100] Subsequently, a refinement in the chronology of Malmesbury's fourteenth-century Decorated work (with confirmation of the likely master mason) has been provided by Richard Morris (1991); the iconography of the inner south porch sculpture has been examined afresh by Lech Kalinowski (1992); and there have also been further summaries of the overall building sequence (1988 and 1991).[101]

Churches Before the Conquest

Nothing in the way of solid architectural or archaeological evidence for the pre-Conquest monastery at Malmesbury has so far been identified.[102] The only indication of what appears to have been a 'family' sequence of Anglo-Saxon churches, therefore, comes from the literary sources, principally the works of William of Malmesbury.

William informs us that when St Aldhelm came to Malmesbury in the later seventh century he supposedly found a small church (*parva basilica*), 'which ancient report doubtfully alleged had been built by Mailduib'. But its remains had in any case disappeared by William's time.[103] Aldhelm replaced, or perhaps enlarged, this initial church and built a dwelling for the monks somewhere adjacent. The new building was dedicated to Our Saviour, St Peter, and St Paul.[104] Close by ('*in ambitu ... cenobii*'), he built a further church dedicated to St Mary, with another directly alongside it dedicated to St Michael. The last of

94 Brakspear 1931, especially 4–6. For a more recent account of the period, see Malone 1973.

95 This is far from to suggest that his views have held entirely good. Brakspear's work does, nevertheless, provide the platform for the chronological sequence of the buildings, and — in so far as the archaeology is concerned — remains our only source of evidence.

96 Clapham 1934, 86–87; Webb 1956, 51–52, 87; VCH 1956, 227–28 .

97 Galbraith 1965 (based on the author's MA thesis of 1962). The iconography of the scenes on the outer arch of the porch had earlier been set out in Saxl 1954, 57–64, plates 54–83.

98 Stone 1972, 83–84. Stone seems to have followed Zarnecki (1953, 40–43) in attributing some influence to distant design sources in south-west and western France.

99 Pevsner 1975, 321–27. The authors (Pevsner and Bridget Cherry) again cite possible design sources in south-west France, though they also hint that the style of the figures inside the porch draws on Burgundian examples of about 1130.

100 Wilson 1978, 81–82; Rigold 1977, 102.

101 Morris 1991, 73–74; Kalinowski 1992; Brodie 1988; VCH 1991, 157–58.

102 For a still important summary of Malmesbury's place amid the early appearance of churches and monasteries in the English kingdoms in the seventh century, see Morris 1983, 35–38.

103 *Gestis Pontificum*, 345; VCH 1956, 227.

104 *Gestis Pontificum*, 345; Brakspear 1912–13, 399.

these was the church in which Aldhelm himself was buried in AD 709.[105] In spite of this, it can be argued that until the mid-tenth century it was Our Saviour which was regarded as the chief church of the monastery.[106] And, if this were indeed the case, other factors must explain why — according to William of Malmesbury — Æthelstan (d. AD 939) chose to be buried beneath the high altar of St Mary's, 'in the tower'.[107] Interpretation is further complicated by the fact that William also claims that a fire had earlier burnt the monastery, in the time of King Alfred (AD 871–99), and that Æthelstan had rebuilt it from the foundations.[108]

As noted earlier, following St Dunstan's reforms, a new Benedictine community was introduced to Malmesbury *c.* 960–74 under the patronage of King Edgar, with Ælfric appointed as the first abbot. At least in part, the church of St Mary was probably rebuilt at this time, with the *opus Dei* then transferred there so that the monks might be closer to the mausoleum of their saint and founder.[109] Ælfric also built domestic quarters for the community, quite possibly arranged around a cloister.[110]

Apart from the principal buildings documented by William of Malmesbury, he also mentions a church of St Laurence. This, William says, was the first burial place of John the Wise (John Scotus) in the late ninth century.[111] In addition, William is again the source for a church dedicated to St Andrew, where Abbot Brihtwold II was buried in the mid-eleventh century, with other heads of the house. This particular building was later pulled down to make way for new structures, and — from the phrase used by the historian — it had clearly disappeared by his time.[112] One last reference to pre-Conquest building occurs in 1056, when Bishop Herman is said to have built a bell tower.[113]

In summary then, even without the benefit of large scale modern archaeological excavation, there are distinct indications that the overall layout of the Saxon *monasterium* at Malmesbury included a multiple grouping, or 'family', of churches, echoing that pattern now known from many sites across England. One of the best-known examples is St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, where a line of three churches was constructed alongside a Roman road leading eastwards out of the city. Much closer to Malmesbury, and equally suitable for comparative purposes, is Glastonbury Abbey, where once again a linear group of churches has been identified from excavation. Nor was the pattern restricted to monastic sites. Similar 'family' groupings seem to have occurred with no less frequency at secular

105 *Gestis Pontificum*, 361–62. For a thought-provoking account of the subsequent fate of Aldhelm's relics, and the nature of the shrine made for them by King Æthelwulf in the ninth century, see Gem 1993, 58–61. The relics seem to have remained in St Michael's for more than 250 years.

106 *Gestis Pontificum*, 345, 385–86; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, I, 225. In VCH (1956, 227) it is claimed that the church of the Holy Saviour was that which remained until William's time, and which he praised as being second to none for its workmanship (*Lata majoris ecclesiae fabrica celebris et illibata nostro quoque perstitit aevo*). For Freeman (1864, 83), Bazeley (1891–92, 7) and Brakspear (1912–13, 399–401) this referred to St Mary's. Yet if one accepts this, it leads to greater contradiction in the reading of William of Malmesbury's account. Jackson (1854, 25) had earlier claimed that it was Holy Saviour, St Peter, and St Paul which was considered the chief church (*caput loci*) down to the tenth century.

107 *Gestis Pontificum*, 397.

108 *Gestis Pontificum*, 364.

109 *Gestis Pontificum*, 386, 403–05. William of Malmesbury argued that the tower (which still existed in his day) was earlier, because of the record of Æthelstan's burial beneath or within it. As noted in VCH (1956, 227), it is difficult to reconcile the various statements. In *Gestis Regum* (I, 154) William says the church was rebuilt by Ælfric, but in *Gestis Pontificum* (397) he seems to modify his statement, further pointing out (362–63) that St Mary's survived the fire of the time of King Alfred and a later one in the reign of Edward the Confessor. For further views on these contradictions, and on the relative status of St Mary's in the monastic complex, see also Jackson 1864, 24–25.

110 *Gestis Pontificum*, 405. For a summary of the scant evidence on pre-Conquest claustral layouts, see Cramp 1976, *passim*.

111 *Gestis Pontificum*, 394. For the identification of this John, see VCH 1956, 212–13. An alternative view on the location of his burial is given in Jackson 1864, 20–21.

112 *Gestis Pontificum*, 414, 416.

113 *Eulogium Historiarum*, III, 294. Noted in Jackson 1864, 27.

minsters, with Wells the most prominent local example.[114]

Alas, the literary sources are virtually silent when it comes to questions concerning the specific character in the superstructure of the abbey buildings at the time of the Conquest. With no indication that any of the early Norman abbots embarked on a major scheme of reconstruction, one is led to assume that the community continued to occupy the late Saxon monastic complex for several decades. As one clue to possible developments, however, William of Malmesbury tells us that in 1078 Abbot Warrin was responsible for elevating St Aldhelm's relics, translating them and placing them in the shrine which had been donated by King Æthewulf in the mid-ninth century.[115] It was possibly an episode of rather greater significance than a cursory reading of William may imply. At the very least, it seems likely that the ninth-century shrine would have required remodelling and enlargement to receive the relics. Moreover, the translation presumably involved the placing of the reliquary in a more fitting architectural setting within the abbey church of St Mary.[116]

To summarize on the Anglo-Saxon buildings, then, if we take William of Malmesbury's testimony at face value we are to believe that by the first quarter of the twelfth century several structures had already been lost. Aldhelm's church of the Our Saviour, St Peter, and St Paul, on the other hand, may have continued to stand and to impress with the quality of its workmanship. Some parts of St Mary's, long-since the principal abbey church, may have survived from Aldhelm's time, though the whole had been largely rebuilt by Abbot Ælfric, and may have required new works after the fire which damaged the monastery in 1042.[117] Elsewhere in the precinct, remains (or ruins) of Aldhelm's church of St Michael were apparently there to be seen.[118]

Finally, it is worth noting that, as late as the sixteenth century, John Leland wrote of a little church 'joining the south side of the transept of the abbey church' where it was claimed John Scotus (John the Wise) had been killed in the ninth century. He was in no doubt that it stood as 'a very old piece of work'.[119] For Canon Jackson, the Tudor antiquary's account had to refer to St Aldhelm's church of Our Saviour, whereas Brakspear felt it was more likely to be St Michael's (fig. 25).[120] An equally strong case can be made to suggest it was the church of St Laurence, though once again it is impossible to be certain.[121]

Prelude to the Construction of the Twelfth Century Church

Regardless of definitive conclusions on the Anglo-Saxon buildings, we may be confident that by the third quarter of the twelfth century the Malmesbury community had transferred to a wholly new monastic church. And of course it is the nave of this outstanding Romanesque building, together with fragments of the crossing and the transepts, which survives today. As long ago as 1864, Jackson felt sure that the medieval Benedictine church covered the site of Ælfric's St Mary's.[122] Brakspear was of a similar opinion, and claimed that the pre-Conquest church of St Mary 'was somewhere on the site of its successor',

114 For general comparative purposes, see Blair 1992, 246–58; Cramp 1976; Rodwell 1984. For Canterbury, see Gem 1997, 90–121; for Glastonbury, Radford 1981, Rahtz 1993, 66–82, and Thurlby 1995, 109–12; for Wells, Rodwell 2001, 115–22. The documentary sources for Evesham are also of interest in this regard: Cox 1990, 123–25.

115 See above, p. 11. *Gestis Pontificum*, 423–24; Gem 1993, 59–60; Luce 1979 (1929), 17–18.

116 The shrine was said to be beside the high altar. On the question of the architectural setting of the relics of saints in general see, in particular, Crook 2000, especially 161–281; Nilson 1998, 63–81.

117 *Gestis Pontificum*, 363.

118 *Gestis Pontificum*, 361.

119 See above, p. 17; *Leland Itinerary*, I, 131.

120 Jackson 1864, 25; Brakspear 1912–13, 407.

121 The case for St Laurence is made in VCH 1956, 228. Freeman (1864, 85) wondered if it were an Anglo-Saxon building at all, preferring the idea of something akin to the Lady Chapel at Ely.

122 Jackson 1864, 25. Of course, as we know, the medieval church was also dedicated to St Mary.

though he did not think it had 'influenced the setting out of the later church in any way'. He further suggested that Aldhelm's church of Our Saviour, St Peter, and St Paul had stood on the site of the later parish church of St Paul, located close to the south-west corner of the medieval monastic precinct (fig. 25).[123]

In other words, both Jackson and Brakspear sought to place the documented buildings of the pre-Conquest monastery within the bounds of the medieval abbey. We must remember, though, that they were writing without the discovery of fabric evidence to support such views. In the years since, there have been extensive archaeological excavations at a number of comparable sites. These have done much to demonstrate the range of potential relationships between major Norman churches and their Anglo-Saxon predecessors. It has become ever clearer that there were frequent exceptions to the solution of rebuilding directly over and around an existing building.[124] Indeed, the new Norman church might be located to one side or other of its predecessor, sometimes on a different alignment, as was the case with Bishop Walkelin's monastic cathedral at Winchester, laid out in 1079. Another option was to marginally shift the site altogether, so as to leave the existing buildings undisturbed during the long years of construction. This is precisely what Abbot Paul of Caen (1077–93) seems to have done at Benedictine St Albans.[125]

The precise pattern of replacement at Malmesbury cannot at this stage be determined, though the builders of the twelfth-century church were clearly intent upon ensuring that its alignment ran close to a true east–west axis (fig. 24).[126] The sequence in their construction programme, meanwhile, presumably followed the 'standard' Norman pattern. Hence, there are likely to have been two principal phases: first the eastern arm, the transepts, the crossing up to the level of the lantern, and enough (perhaps one or two bays) of the nave to buttress the crossing; then, in a second phase, the rest of the nave and the crossing tower.[127]

As for the absolute date of the church, taking into account the broadest range for the historical, architectural, and sculptural evidence, the timing of its construction can be fixed on the one hand by the fact it is unlikely to have been erected before Bishop Roger's seizure of the abbey *c.* 1118, and on the other by some certainty it was complete by the time of the dedication dispute with Bishop Jocelin in the later 1170s. Nowhere, however, is either the start of the programme, or the completion of any part of the building, specifically noted.[128] Most scholars who have sought to refine these date brackets have made much of the fact that William of Malmesbury, who died about 1143, left no unequivocal record of recent building works at his home monastery. To underline the case, it is further pointed out that William wrote quite definitely about the 'greater [or larger] church' of the Anglo-Saxon monastery, claiming that it 'lasted to our times', and also that it exceeded 'in glory and size any of the churches of antiquity built in England'.[129] In sum, William's silence on any new Norman building through to 1143 has tended to be accepted by many as negative evidence of fact.

In the nineteenth century, for example, Canon Jackson (1864) was aware that some authorities were of the opinion that Bishop Roger had begun the church, though in his view this was impossible to reconcile with its lack of documentation by the abbey's great

123 Brakspear 1912–13, 407; Brakspear 1913–14, 467. On St Paul's, see Bowen 2000, 40, 58.

124 Sherborne, however, provides a west country example of just this: Gibb 1975, RCHME 1974, li–lvi, 200–06.

125 For Winchester, see Cramp 1976, 246–47; Fernie 2000, 117 (and references there cited). For St Albans, see most recently Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001. Another intriguing site, also bearing comparison with Malmesbury, is Abingdon: Biddle et al. 1968, 44–47. For further general background, see Rodwell 2001, 115–16, 128–29.

126 In itself, this may well suggest a change from the Anglo-Saxon arrangements. Pre-Norman ecclesiastical alignments were much less ridged, and tended to be far more influenced by topographical considerations. A similar realignment occurred, for example, at the pre-Conquest foundation of Eynsham: Keevill 1995.

127 Fernie 2000, 294–95.

128 For Bishop Roger and Bishop Jocelin, see above pp. 13–14.

129 *Gestis Pontificum*, 361. We have already raised the matter of the discussion over just which of the pre-Conquest churches William was referring to: above, p. 21.

historian.[130] Later Victorian authors, including Hills(1869), Bird (1876), Talbot (1884), Bazeley (1891–92), Paul (1895), Bilson (1898–99), and Perkins (1901) all reached similar conclusions.[131] Moreover, this same line of reasoning was given new and even greater (and lasting) authority in Brakspear's work on Malmesbury. For him, taking all the evidence into account, it seemed likely 'that the church would not have been begun much before 1145'.[132]

Clapham was evidently content to follow Brakspear's reasoning, and to accept that the building campaign must have been initiated about *c.* 1145, though he suggested that the surviving nave dates from *c.* 1160.[133] Likewise, in Webb's summary of the church, and in Pevsner's somewhat fuller account, there is a tacit acceptance of William of Malmesbury's evidence, though in the latter source we are also reminded that all that is really know is a dedication was being discussed *c.* 1177.[134] Again, in Christopher Wilson's very cleverly constructed contextual argument for the stylistic borrowings seen in the church, the author is obliged to begin his chronology after William's death.[135] And the very same arguments are presented in the most recent summary of the building by Brodie.[136]

Not everyone has agreed unreservedly with this particular line of argument. Several authors have pointed, in particular, to the undoubted architectural ambition displayed by Bishop Roger of Sarum elsewhere, in buildings described by William of Malmesbury as 'unsurpassed within the recollection of our age'.[137] All in all, there is a strong case to be made for Roger having been just the kind of innovative patron one would expect to have initiated work on a brand new abbey church at Malmesbury.[138] Indeed, in one source, William of Malmesbury says of Roger:

> 'He was a prelate of great mind and spared no expense towards completing his designs, especially in buildings, which may be seen in other places, but most particularly at Sarum [*and at Malmesbury*]. For there he erected extensive edifices at vast cost and with surpassing beauty; the courses of stone being so correctly laid that the joint deceives the eye and leads it to imagine that the whole wall is composed of a single block'.[139]

Of course, any comment William may have made on Bishop Roger's work '*at Malmesbury*' could have referred to the castle.[140] But this was not the way the sum of evidence, including the pointed arches of the nave arcades, was assessed by Professor Freeman in 1864. For him, Roger of Salisbury was precisely the sort of prelate one might expect 'to find at the head of the artistic developments of his age'. Freeman was therefore

130 Jackson 1864, 28.

131 [Hills] 1869, 289; Bird 1876, 67; Talbot 1884, 27; Bazeley 1891–92, 7; [Paul] 1895, 164; Perkins 1901, 44–49. The Revd Perkins, in particular, weighed up the evidence very carefully before arriving at his conclusion. Several of the authors also claimed that stylistically (chiefly in the pointed arches of the nave arcades) the church could not be this early. Notably, Bilson (1898–99, 308–09) thought Malmesbury could not date from before Roger's death in 1139, both in terms of the historical and the architectural evidence; yet it must, he felt, 'have closely followed that event'.

132 The quote is from Brakspear 1931, 5. See, also, [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 7–8; Brakspear 1912–13, 400–01; Brakspear 1913–14, 460.

133 Clapham 1934, 86.

134 Webb 1956, 51–52; Pevsner 1975, 321.

135 Wilson 1978, 81–82.

136 Brodie 1988, 31, 32.

137 *Historia Novella*, 67.

138 For Roger's architectural patronage in general, see Stalley 1971; for his life and career in general, Kealey 1972.

139 *Gestis Regum*, II, 484. The Malmesbury reference is apparently absent in some versions of the manuscript: see discussion in Perkins 1901, 47–48; noted, also, in Bilson 1898–99, 309. We are not able to explore this textual matter further; it clearly requires the detailed consideration of an appropriate scholar.

140 As noted in [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 7; Perkins 1901, 47.

perfectly happy to accept a start date for the church of about 1135, allowing that the nave may have been completed up to twenty or thirty years afterwards, though to one 'original design'.[141] Far more recently, in extending the same line of reasoning a good deal further, Rigold insisted that William's reference to the principal Saxon church implies that the building had clearly *gone* by the early 1120s. He also points out that in William's comments on the quality of Bishop Roger's building at Sarum [*and Malmesbury*], there is no suggestion they are restricted merely to secular work. However, Rigold's most important contribution to the debate is his demonstration that certain generic forms of base moulding, used throughout the abbey church at Malmesbury, compare very well with examples found in other buildings which can be linked to Roger's pool of masons.[142]

Fully aware of these various arguements, Richard Gem chooses to leave the question open. There is at least a possibility, he suggests, that Roger may have started the rebuilding of the abbey, even if we cannot be sure.[143] Finally, in his comprehensive new survey of architecture in Norman England, Professor Eric Fernie notes that the beginning of work at Malmesbury has been dated to the 1130s, 1140s, and 1150s. Interestingly, he also points to the fact that most English cathedrals, abbeys and priories had been or were being rebuilt by the 1120s. In short, were Malmesbury a significantly later building, it would have been a notable exception to the general pattern. Moreover, since various decorative features found in the nave are very similar to fragments from Old Sarum (of which more is said below), Fernie concludes that it is not impossible that Malmesbury Abbey was the work of Bishop Roger, and that it was built before 1139.[144]

Description of the Twelfth-Century Church

In describing the twelfth-century church, it is unfortunate that we must begin with more in the way of ambiguous evidence. Little is in fact known about the plan of the eastern arm, with Brakspear supplying the only known record. He reported finding a foundation of a curved wall, about 12 feet (3.7m) wide, located some 80 feet (24.4m) to the east of the crossing (figs. 5, 24). Set down on plan, Brakspear claimed, 'it proves itself to have been the outer wall of an ambulatory end'.[145] From this, he reconstructed an aisled presbytery with a rounded apse, three straight western bays (of equal width to those in the nave), and an ambulatory with three radiating chapels.[146]

141 Freeman 1864, 83–84. Freeman went so far as to suggest that Malmesbury should be seen as the first English example of the pointed arch, aside from 'incidental use'. The pointed arches in the Durham nave vaults are dated to before 1133: Fernie 2000, 268. Prior to Freeman, both Thomas Rickman and J. H. Parker gave the date of Malmesbury as 1115–39: quoted in Perkins 1901, 44. Britton (1807–20, I, U8–9) was also inclined to attribute the church to Bishop Roger.

142 Rigold 1977, 102, 122, 123.

143 Gem 1984, 37.

144 Fernie 2000, 178. Another church with a much debated building history is that of the Augustinian priory of St Frideswide in Oxford, in which Bishop Roger seems to have played some part in the foundation (*c.* 1120). The existing building is no earlier than *c.* 1140–50: see Halsey 1990.

145 Brakspear 1912–13, 407; Brakspear 1913–14, 467. Alas, the position of this wall is not indicated on Brakspear's published plan. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, John Aubrey noted that 'Where the Choir was, now grass grows, where anciently were buried Kings and great men': *Topographical Collections*, 255. Meanwhile, Brakspear made no mention of the earlier excavations on the site of the presbytery, recorded by Canon Jackson in 1862: 'The site of King Athelston's grave is now an asparagus bed. The foundations of the North and South walls of the Choir were partly excavated in January 1853 in the garden of Abbey House. They were enormously thick, and well put together with gravel and grout. The substratum of the garden appeared to be a complete floor of stone foundation which had been laid down first over the whole area so as to allow the builders to lay walls upon it any direction. Some stone coffins were found ... The foundations showed that a wall, as of some other edifice, had abutted against the North wall of the Choir': *Topographical Collections*, 255–56, note 3.

146 The radiating chapels are shown on his early plans, but not for example on that published at the time of the Royal Archaeological Institute visit to Malmesbury in 1930: *AJ* 1930, facing 456. Further work on the likely geometric principles used in the laying out of the original church might possibly lead to fresh ideas on the likely proportions of the buried remains. On the methodology in general, see Fernie 2000, 288–90.

In arriving at this plan, Brakspear was clearly much influenced by the pattern seen in the presbyteries at the important west country Romanesque churches of Worcester, Gloucester, and Tewkesbury.[147] At both Worcester Cathedral and the Benedictine abbey of Gloucester, the plan of the eastern arm also featured three straight bays before the apse, whereas at Tewkesbury Abbey there were two. At the neighbouring monastic cathedral of Bath, partially excavated since Brakspear's time, the presbytery again appears to have terminated in an ambulatory with three radiating chapels, though here it is suggested there was just one straight bay east of the crossing.[148] Drawing immediate parallels with any of these west of England churches, however, is to overlook the fact that they were all significantly earlier than the Malmesbury programme. The first three were under way by the mid-1090s, and Bath was begun no later than *c.* 1106. In other words, it would be surprising if their influence had not waned somewhat by the 1120s, and certainly by the 1140s. Consequently, if the presbytery at Malmesbury really were planned along such lines, it would have looked distinctly old-fashioned beside, say, Bishop Roger's work at Old Sarum, or when compared to the eastern arm of the nunnery church at Romsey, built after *c.* 1120.[149]

Fortunately, we can say something of the elevation in the eastern arm at Malmesbury from the fragments of the westernmost bay attached to the north-east crossing pier (fig. 26). It is clear that although the general disposition was akin to that in the nave, the detailing was different.[150] Here, the main arcade sprang from a respond with a pair of demi-shafts to the centre and a nook shaft to either side, and with the shafts all featuring scalloped capitals. There is too little remaining to say whether the arcade arches were round or pointed. Nor can we be sure of the nature of the freestanding piers, though it would be surprising if they were markedly different from those in the nave. Above the level of the main arcade, there are traces of a decorative 'frieze' bearing a row of semicircular arches.[151] Next, there was a conventional triforium gallery with rounded arches of two orders, the outer order decorated with a band simple zigzag chevron. As in the nave, these main triforium openings appear to have enclosed a set of sub-arches, springing here from a single half-octagonal column. Virtually all trace of the clerestory level at the top of the elevation has been lost, though it evidently included a wall-passage. Back at the triforium level, in the angle next to the crossing pier, the coupled shafts which are set on a recessed plinth may have been designed to take a diagonal rib (fig. 26), indicating that the whole of the presbytery was vaulted from the first.[152]

147 For which, see Fernie 2000, 153–65; Clapham 1934, 31, 32–34; also Halsey 1985; Wilson 1985; Welander 1991, 22–51; Barker 1994. The Gloucester and Tewkesbury ambulatories differ in that they are polygonal in plan. For the apse and ambulatory form in general, see Fernie 2000, 250–51.

148 Fernie 2000, 165–66; and Rodwell 1981, 24–25 for the suggested plan.

149 Of course, this observation relates to an English context, and might not hold so good if the design were inspired, say, by Burgundian prototypes. The same point is made in Wilson 1978, 88, note 25. Hearn (1971, 202) makes the general observation that after *c.* 1110 'English architecture began to abandon the two standard designs for the chevet, and to replace them with a variety of rectangular plans. For Old Sarum, see Fernie 2000, 152–53, 172; RCHME 1980, 1–24; Hearn 1971, *passim*; Stalley 1971, 71–74. For Romsey, Fernie 2000, 172–76; Hearn 1971, *passim*. Interestingly, Freeman (1864, 90) suggested that in general terms the Malmesbury presbytery may have borne some similarities to those at Peterborough and Romsey; Bazeley (1891–92, 12) echoed his view. Yet we should not entirely overlook King Henry I's 1121 foundation at Reading, which had a three-bay eastern arm, with ambulatory and radiating chapels, nor for that matter the well-connected St Bartholomew's Priory at Smithfield in London (founded 1123), with four bays plus ambulatory to the presbytery. For Reading, see Thurlby and Baxter 2002; Fernie 2000, 170–72 (with general comment at 250, note 7). For a table of apse and ambulatory plans, see Huggins 1989, 506–11.

150 In general, see Brakspear 1912–13, 407–08; Pevsner 1975, 324–25. The current condition of the fabric here gives some cause for concern. The cover of ivy and shrubbery makes recognition of the architectural features difficult, and we are partially reliant upon earlier observation.

151 This feature is not found anywhere else in the surviving church.

152 The point is noted in Wilson 1985, 82, note 96; Brakspear 1912–13, 408. Recovering further information on the form of the vault (such as the discovery of vault rib fragments) would be of great importance to the debate on the date of the work. High vaults with ribs *may* have been built at Reading (by 1136), and by Bishop Roger at Sarum (before 1139). For notes on Romanesque vaults in the west country, see Thurlby 1996, 150, 156, 161, 163–64; Thurlby and Baxter 2002, 297.

The northern and western arches of the crossing survive in their entirety, along with the springing (to one side) of the arches to the south and east (fig. 27).[153] The crossing piers were elongated on the main axis, a fact emphasized by the prominent responds towards the transepts, featuring (as in the presbytery) a pair of central half columns flanked by nook shafts.[154] As a consequence, the span of the openings into the cross-arms was narrower than that of the arches through to the nave and presbytery. Indeed, there were no true responds to the eastern and western arches, simply a pair of relatively large demi-columns recessed into the walls of the piers (fig. 28), thereby stressing the continuity of the surfaces between the principal arms of the church, and doubtless allowing for the placing of the monks' choir stalls against a flat surface.[155] On this same axis, the arches themselves were semicircular, springing from slightly projecting moulded corbels. Being much narrower, the rounded arches on the north–south axis were notably stilted above the springing point.[156] A comparatively low lantern rose over the crossing, with some of the decorative detail which fronted an internal wall-passage (featuring beaded lozenges still to be seen (fig. 29).[157]

The transepts were comparatively long, of three bays, without aisles. Much of the west wall on the south side survives (fig. 30), together with a smaller fragment of the north transept.[158] Brakspear's plan shows each transept with a single apsidal eastern chapel in the outermost bay (fig. 24).[159] From the standing remains, we see that the internal bay divisions were formed by mast-like half-round shafts rising from floor to ceiling. The horizontal stages in the elevation were highlighted by plain string-courses. The ground stage of the innermost bay in both transepts was occupied by a pointed archway of two orders, leading through to the nave aisle. Above, at gallery level, a round arch springing from jamb shafts with scalloped capitals enclosed a further three small rounded arches, themselves carried on detached columns. Nothing remains of the twelfth-century clerestory at this point.

The general arrangements in the two remaining bays of the transepts were similar to one another. The main distinction was the greater width of the outer bay, a fact interpreted by Brakspear as a reflection of his posited apsidal chapel opening from the east side. In both bays, the lowest stage in the west elevation began with a wall arcade of rounded arches on detached columns. Above this was a round-headed window with deep splays and small columns at the internal angles. Next came the triforium, with its wall-passage fronted in each bay by a triple-arched 'screen' (figs. 31, 32). The central arch lined up with the outer window, whereas the narrow side arches in the screen merely opened to the wall-passage. One other feature worth noting is the way the side arches enclose a recessed, lower arch of the same width.[160] Again, all trace of the original clerestory level has been lost, though there

153 Freeman 1864, 88–89; Talbot 1884, 27; Brakspear 1912–13, 410–11.

154 The Elongation of crossing piers seems to have been a characteristic of Romanesque work in the west country, and occurs at Gloucester, Great Malvern, Pershore and Sherborne. Tewkesbury and Reading provide good comparisons for Malmesbury, since the east and west arches were again wider than those to the north and south: Thurlby and Baxter 2002, 283.

155 Similar responds of this unusual type, featuring recessed paired shafts, are found on all four sides of the crossing at the Augustinian/Benedictine priory of Leonard Stanely (Gloucestershire), and in the Cistercian chapter houses at Bindon and Forde (both in Dorset): for Leonard Stanley, see Swynnerton 1920–21, and Verey and Brooks 1999, 444–45; for Bindon and Forde, RCHME 1974, 240–46; Robinson 1998, 70–71, 109–10.

156 Clapham (1934, 59–60) suggested this was a deliberate device which emerged in Anglo-Norman tower building, aimed at reducing the risk of collapse. For comment on crossing forms, Fernie 2000, 257–58.

157 Brakspear 1912–13, 411.

158 Brakspear 1912–13, 409–10. See, also, Freeman 1864, 80; Perkins 1901, 75; Pevsner 1975, 325.

159 There does not appear to have been any archaeological evidence to confirm this point, though the suggested pattern is again not uncommon in the west of England. This said, at Reading (and earlier at St Albans) in such long transepts there were two chapels, arranged *en echelon*: Thurlby and Baxter 2002, 285 (Reading); RCHME 1952, 20–22; VCH 1908, 499–501; Fernie 2000, 111–15 (St Albans).

160 Brakspear (1931, 5–6) cited this particular form of small-scale arch enclosing a lower arch as one of the characteristics of his west country school of masons. Wilson (1978, 81) sees it as no more than a miniature version of a 'giant order' arcade, a feature with a pedigree already extending back several decades in the west of England.

is no indication that stone vaults were part of the original design in the transepts. Finally, at the south-west angle of the south transept, a prominent square turret accommodated a spiral stair, beginning at the triforium level. Apparently, another turret located at the middle of the south wall again housed a spiral stair, in this case beginning at ground level.[161]

Leaving the ruins of the presbytery and transepts, we may now turn to look at the nave, by far the best-preserved part of the Romanesque church (figs. 33–36). Originally of nine bays, it reached an overall length of around 122 feet (37.2m). The total width, including the aisles, is about 69 feet (21m).[162] Structurally at least, the six eastern bays survive very much as they would have appeared prior to the suppression. In addition, the remaining three bays of the south aisle can also be seen, as restored by Brakspear in 1900–03 (fig. 37). Each bay was arranged in the now familiar three-stage pattern seen in the presbytery and transepts, namely a main arcade, a deep triforium gallery, and a clerestory above (figs. 20, 21).

The main arcade sits on stout columnar piers, which are about 5 feet (1.5m) in diameter and set around 11 feet (3.4m) apart. The piers have moulded bases and multi-scalloped capitals with circular abaci (fig. 38). One of the capitals (that on the fourth pier at the south side) has small upright palmettes carved on the abacus, a distinction which may reflect some twelfth-century liturgical significance. At the eastern end of the nave, the responds are similar to those we have observed in the west bay of the presbytery,[163] whereas those at the opposite end of the nave took the form of full half-columnar piers.

Although the arcades are indeed pointed, the angle it must be said is barely more than obtuse. It is enough, nevertheless, to have made this particular aspect of Malmesbury a subject of considerable debate, particularly when compared to the otherwise predominantly late-Romanesque repertoire of architectural forms seen in the church. The arcade arches themselves are essentially of three plain orders, though in the two eastern bays — to both sides of the central vessel — the outer-order roll is adorned with geometric billet moulding (fig. 39). In the second bay the pattern changes to small triangles (or stars), but from the third bay the soffit rolls are entirely plain. Above the arcade in each bay, and mirroring the form of the arch, there is a billeted label or hood mould, terminating with distinctive animal head-stops,[164] and further featuring a grotesque mask biting the point of the apex (fig. 38). At the sill of the triforium gallery there is a splayed string-course, also carried around the bay dividing shafts. For the most part, this prominent feature has no ornament, though in the three bays at the east end of the south side, and the easternmost bay on the north side, the splay is carved with a Greek key pattern.[165]

In all bays, the principal triforium arch has a rounded head of three orders, the middle order being adorned with frontal zigzag chevron. The arch is supported on moulded jambs, each with a single detached column and continuous scalloped capitals.[166] The principal arch frames moulded sub-arches springing from monolithic columns with square, cushion-like capitals (fig. 21).[167] In the easternmost bay there are three of these sub-arches, whereas in all the other bays there are four.

As in the eastern arm of the church, very little survives of the twelfth-century nave clerestory, at least internally, since it was to be heavily transformed in the early fourteenth

161 This area is now covered with extensive rubble and is overgrown. Brakspear (1912–13, 410) observed the remains and included outline on his plan (fig. 24).

162 For accounts of the nave in general, see, in particular, Brakspear 1912–13, 412–24; Brakspear 1913–14, 474–87; Pevsner 1975, 325–26; Perkins 1901, 83–94. Also, Freeman 1864, 85–86; Talbot 1884, 27–29.

163 Also in the north and south arches of the crossing.

164 The head-stops are variously described as dragons, wolfs, and dogs.

165 Brakspear (1912–13, 413, note 1) claimed that in the western bays the ornament was cut off in the monastic period, and the string-course then given a plain chamfer. His reasoning is not at all clear today. The surviving trace of the string in this position in the presbytery is also ornamented (fig. 26).

166 Brakspear (1912–13, 413) notes that the jambs of the triforium are in many cases 'set crookedly by carelessness, not intentionally'.

167 The chancel at St John's, Elkstone (Gloucestershire) seems to evoke something of the overall form seen in the Malmesbury triforium: Verey and Brooks 1999, 356–58, plate 14.

century. There are, nonetheless, indications that in its initial form the arrangements were similar to those already observed in the south transept, namely a screen frontage having a central window, flanked by narrow arches.[168] It would also have included the wall-passage (fig. 22), which for the most part survived the fourteenth-century transformation.

The wall shafts which not only articulate, but also give such prominence, to the bay divisions within the nave have already been mentioned. Comprised of three half-rolls with dividing fillets, the shafts rise from the top of the pier capitals, progressing unbroken through the triforium and clerestory strings, and continuing up — at least in the three eastern bays — behind the later vaulting to reach the wall tops.[169] Yet it seems these shafts were never intended to carry vault ribs. Authorities are agreed that the Romanesque nave is likely to have had a flat wooden ceiling.[170]

In marked contrast with the main vessel of the twelfth-century church, the nave aisles were covered with four-part stone rib vaults. To the one side, these are supported by the great columnar piers of the main arcades, and to the other by responds of compound type, with a comparatively large half column and dosseret, flanked by smaller nook shafts (fig. 40, 41), all with cushion capitals.[171] The larger transverse ribs of the vault are pointed, and of square unmoulded section. The diagonal ribs are rounded, their profile consisting of three large rolls with two smaller rolls set between them.[172] The lower walls in the aisles carried a round-headed blind arcade, with three arches to each bay springing from capitals with square abaci set on detached columns. Above was a chevron string-course, and then the sills and deep splays of the round-headed aisle windows.[173] The windows in the north aisle have longer, raking sills, so that the lights themselves cleared the cloister roof outside (fig. 20). In the first bay of the north aisle there was a twelfth-century doorway leading to the east cloister walk. Modified in the fifteenth century, the entire opening has since been blocked, though externally it retains the original rounded head, adorned with a frieze of standing palmettes (fig. 42).

Among the more prominent twelfth-century features surviving on the outside of the nave is a continuous interlacing dado arcade, seen along the south aisle and the south transept (figs. 18, 19, 43). Also on this southern side, we see that the external bay divisions in the aisle are marked by broad nook-shafted pilasters, the shafts disappearing at the top into the mouth of a beast. At clerestory level, the original wall survives in the first three bays from the crossing (fig. 44). The bays at this point were marked by narrower pilasters, again having nook-shafted angles. The twelfth-century windows have all been removed by later work, but on the wallface surrounding their position in these bays there is a striking display of round beaded medallions, or paterae, some 1 foot 7½ inches (0.5m) in diameter, originally arranged with four to each jamb and seven around the arch.[174] Over on the north side of the church (fig. 45), the buttresses to the aisle are all of later construction, though the high sills, jambs, and rounded heads of five twelfth-century windows remain. Above, in the clerestory, the pattern in the three eastern bays mirrors that seen on the south side.

At the west end of the church, the three remaining twelfth-century nave bays survived the suppression without damage, only to be lost at a later date. A catastrophic collapse removed everything but for fragments of the south aisle, and marginally less than half of the southern

168 Pevsner 1975, 326.

169 Brakspear 1912–13, 413.

170 See, for example, Bazeley 1891–92, 13; [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 10; Brakspear 1912–13, 415; Brodie 1988, 33. For a dissenting view, see Smith 1975, 5.

171 As Brakspear (1912–13, 410) observed, judging from the north-east crossing pier this was also the form of the wall responds in the presbytery aisles.

172 Interesting, and still valuable, observations on the aisle vaults are made in Bilson 1898–99, 308–10. As he noted, the keys of the diagonal ribs were placed higher than both the apex of the transverse ribs and the arcade arches (fig. 41). A Cistercian influence has been claimed: Bony 1949, 3; also Bilson 1909.

173 The twelfth-century arrangements have be much altered by later work, especially in the south aisle.

174 On the original arrangements, see Brakspear 1912–13, 413–14. The paterae are illustrated in detail in Britton 1807–20, I, U13, plate VI.

side of the façade (figs. 19, 46, 47). Even so, sufficient fabric remains to demonstrate that the west front was designed as an impressive 'screen', featuring a single central portal and flanked by prominent stair towers at the corners. In general terms, this form of great screen façade can be found at a number of major Anglo-Norman churches of the second half of the twelfth century, widely scattered across the country.[175]

In the Malmesbury façade, the width of the nave proper was indicated by shallow pilaster buttresses, rising unbroken to the full height of the building. Between the tops of these buttresses, the central section of the elevation would have been completed with the gable of the twelfth-century nave roof. The corner stair towers projected slightly beyond the width of the aisles, and were finished at the same level as the buttresses. The intervening walls were no more than narrow screens, masking and rising well above the level of the aisle roofs. The whole façade was then arranged in perhaps five stages or registers, of varying height, filled with a mixture of designs of blind arcading, or left bare in certain sections. The arcading includes continuous orders, and is particularly elaborate in the third stage of the screen area where there is chevron decoration. There is more chevron and spiral angle columns to top stage of the surviving south tower (fig. 47).

Although the details of the west portal have long-since been heavily worn, the arch and jambs were of five orders (fig. 48). The first, third and fifth orders were continuous, and decorated with symmetrical foliage. The second and fourth orders had jamb shafts and carved capitals, one of the arches decorated with iconographical scenes set in medallions, similar in form to those on the south porch. Now almost illegible, the scheme has been interpreted in the past as one of the Labours of the Months and Signs of the Zodiac.[176]

The last feature of the twelfth-century church which should be examined is the south porch, described by Pevsner as 'the *chef d'œuvre* of Malmesbury'.[177] The porch opens from the seventh bay of the south aisle, with now no perceptible indication of an archaeological break in the fabric. The doorway from the aisle into the porch has three continuous orders, carved with rich symmetrical foliage. The arch head encloses a comparatively small tympanum, carved with a representation of the seated Christ enclosed in a mandorla, itself held by two flying angels (fig. 49). Then, on the east and west walls of the porch, connecting the inner and outer doorways, there are two great lunettes facing one another, each with six seated apostles and an angel, bearing a scroll, flying horizontally above their heads (figs. 50, 51). There is no doubting the huge significance of this sculptural programme. For Zarnecki, the well-preserved figures are of 'astounding quality ... works of art that need not fear comparison with the best Romanesque achievements abroad'. And for Stone both the carving and composition are 'powerful and arresting'.[178] Generally, the iconography of the figurative scenes on the three tympana has been taken to represent Christ and his disciples at the Last Judgement, though this has been challenged in the most recent review of the programme. Kalinowski likens the whole composition to a large half-open triptych, which, if fully opened, would bear some relation to a substantial 'frieze' intended for a church façade. He rejects the Last Judgement interpretation, arguing instead that the composition of Christ above the inner door accords more comfortably with an Ascension scene. The side panels do indeed depict the apostles — with Peter nearest to Christ on the

175 On the Malmesbury façade, see Freeman 1864, 86–88; Talbot 1884, 29; Bazeley 1891–92, 7–8; Perkins 1901, 66–67; [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 10; Brakspear 1912–13, 419–21; Pevsner 1975, 322. For screen façades in general, see McAleer 1988, especially 131–33, 136–37; also Fernie 2000, 262–63.

176 James 1898–1903; Perkins 1901, 66; Pevsner 1975, 322; Smith 1975, 6–7. If carving was intended on the inner arch (fourth order), it seems not to have been carried out. Thurlby (1995, 144) claims it was designed to be plain. The whole of the west door survived until at least 1732 (below, p. 42).

177 Pevsner 1975, 322–24. On the porch within the context of the building, see Bazeley 1891–92, 9 (who quotes J. H. Parker's date of *c.* 1170–80); Perkins 1901, 68–73; Brakspear 1912–13, 417–18. The principal works examining the sculpture are: James 1898–1903; Clapham 1934, 143–44 (who gave *c.* 1160–70); Saxl 1954, 57–64, plates 54–83 (*c.* 1160); Zarnecki 1953, 40–43, 60–61 (*c.* 1160–70); Galbraith 1965 (who accepted *c.* 1170); Stone 1972, 83–84 (*c.* 1160–70); Smith 1975; Kalinowski 1992; Thurlby 1995, *passim*. There is an early (1634) interpretation of the iconography on the outer doorway quoted in Brayley 1834, 411; also given in Jackson 1864, 35–36.

178 Zarnecki 1953, 42; Stone 1972, 84.

west side (with key), and Paul on the east side (with book) — though they are earthbound and witnessing the supernatural event.[179]

The fabulous outer portal to the porch has eight unbroken orders, all exquisitely carved (fig. 52). In particular, the second, fourth, and sixth orders have a rounded profile and are adorned with continuous cycles of symbolic and narrative subjects. The intervening orders are rather flat by comparison, but they provide strong borders, with trailing bands of foliage or geometric patterns. The figurative scenes are all set in shallow medallions and, on the arch, represent episodes from both the Old and New Testaments. The jambs are more worn, but among the scenes here are certainly the Virtues conquering Vices.[180]

The Architectural Context of the Twelfth-Century Church

Contextually, the twelfth-century architecture and sculpture at Malmesbury are of very considerable interest, arising on the one hand from tracking the stylistic sources adopted by the abbey's workshops, and on the other by following the subsequent influence of the resulting church on buildings across the west of England and south Wales.[181] This report is not the place for an extensive review of either sources or influences, yet before progressing to look at the later medieval modifications to the church it is probably helpful to summarize some of the main strands which have been put forward.

In his account of the major churches of late twelfth-century England, Clapham was to claim that there was very considerable variety, both in terms of plan and of structure. In the earlier examples, he suggested, the general scheme was often a direct descent of buildings of time of Henry I (1100–35). Thus, the nave of Malmesbury maintained the traditional west country use of the cylindrical pier, but with the adoption of the pointed arch. Equally, the rib vaults of the aisles were the only parts not covered with timber ceilings, and the triforium retained the form and importance of the previous age. The ornament, moreover, is almost entirely Romanesque in character.[182] Seventy years before him, Freeman had concluded that the interior elevation of the church 'must have been one of the very grandest in England', having 'all the solemn majesty of a Romanesque building, combined with somewhat of Gothic aspiration'.[183]

As noted above, most English cathedrals and pre-Conquest monastic churches had been or were being rebuilt by the 1120s.[184] Among the old Benedictine houses of the south-west, for example, we know that reconstruction at Gloucester and Tewkesbury was underway from the late 1080s; Evesham was begun in the time of Abbot Walter (1078–1104); the rebuilding of Abingdon was initiated by Abbot Reginald (1084–97); and Pershore was probably being reconstructed from *c.* 1100 onwards. At Glastonbury — where the historical and archaeological sources are admittedly complex — it seems the earliest post-Conquest church, begun by Abbot Thurstan (*c.* 1081/82–1100), was itself replaced by a second church initiated by Abbot Herluin (1100–18).[185] Finally, there is a every chance Sherborne

179 Kalinowski 1992. He points out that Christe (1969, 66, 88–89) has also discussed the Malmesbury tympanum as an Ascension scene. Such an interpretation is also claimed for a similar, and earlier, scene known (now lost) from Shobdon in Herefordshire: Thurlby 1999, 77, 79.

180 Galbraith (1965) is the chief authority on the iconography of the Biblical scenes to the arch. There the orders are counted outwards, as three, five and seven. See, also, Smith 1975, 18–25, 27–28.

181 On which, see Brakspear 1931; Wilson 1978; Malone 1973.

182 Clapham 1934, 86–87, 93.

183 Freeman 1864, 86.

184 Above, p. 25. The point is noted in Fernie 2000, 178.

185 Generally, see Fernie 2000, 152–78. Additionally, on Gloucester (where a fire of 1088 prompted the rebuilding), Welander 1991, 22–75, and Wilson 1978; on Evesham, Cox 1990, 125–26; on Abingdon, Biddle *et al.* 1968, 47–48, 65–66; on Glastonbury, Radford 1981, 125–31, and Rahtz 1993, 81–83; on Pershore, Thurlby 1996, 161–63, and Pevsner 1968, 235–40. For the abbots responsible, see Knowles *et al.* 2001, 23–84, *passim*. At other important pre-Conquest houses in the south-west, including Abbotsbury, Athelney, Cerne, Eynsham and Winchcombe, the losses have been too great for us to say anything certain of their Norman fabric. On Abbotsbury and Cerne, see RCHME 1974, 4–8, 77–80.

was under reconstruction in the second quarter of the twelfth century. Abbot Thurstan was installed here by Bishop Roger in 1122, and there are grounds to believe that the bishop also lent his support to the building programme.[186] Malmesbury, then, would have been a very notable exception had its principal late Anglo-Saxon church survived much into the second quarter of the twelfth century.

Stylistically, we are hampered in our search for the earliest potential design sources for the church by a lack of detailed knowledge on the Norman east end. Brakspear, as we have seen, linked his fragmentary archaeological evidence to the surviving remains of the three most important west country Benedictine churches of the previous generation, Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Worcester. However, as we have further noted above, by the mid-1120s, and even more so after 1143, the form of presbytery as proposed by Brakspear would have appeared distinctly old fashioned alongside the rectangular ambulatory plans then increasingly coming into favour.[187] This said, and almost regardless of any definitive conclusion, we might in any case expect there to have indeed been at least two, if not three, principal bays east of the crossing. Not without liturgical significance, this was far and away the most common pattern in the major Benedictine churches of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

As for the nave, with its nine-bay plan and three-storey elevation, all was thoroughly rooted in mainstream English buildings of the previous half century. Among the Benedictine monastic churches alone, naves of comparable length included Binham (nine), Evesham (nine), Glastonbury (eight?), Gloucester (probably nine, with western towers), Peterborough (nine), and Tewkesbury (eight). Those at Battle (seven bays), Great Malvern (six), and Shrewsbury (seven?) were marginally smaller.[188] The columnar piers, in particular, already had a very strong pedigree in the south-west of England, and were to be found, notably, in the nave of St Peter's abbey Gloucester (from 1089), followed to a greater or lesser degree by those at Tewkesbury (after 1087), Great Malvern (*c.* 1095–1100), Shrewsbury (*c.* 1095–1100), Shaftsbury (*c.* 1100), Abingdon (1100–17), Hereford (after 1107), and Evesham (1130–49).[189]

Casting the net rather wider, Wilson has suggested that Burgundy is the likely source for several exotic imports seen in the surface ornament at Malmesbury. Primarily, Wilson's paper is concerned with the sources for the late twelfth-century work at Worcester. He takes as his starting point Brakspear's claim that many of the unusual formal characteristics found in the western bays of the cathedral in turn have antecedents at Malmesbury.[190] Wilson goes on to demonstrate that several of these traits had in fact been in use in England 'long before Malmesbury was begun'. And, in essence, he is in no doubt that the standing church was 'thoroughly English' in its structural conception. As a thought-provoking twist to this basic conclusion, however, he argues that a number of the most distinctive characteristics in the church were without precedent in the west country. Features such as the pointed arcades and transverse aisle arches, the paterae in clerestory, the rich geometric ornament to the arcades in the lantern and on the west front, and the pairs of palmette leaves on the arch of the east processional doorway in the north aisle, should all be ascribed, Wilson argues, to the influence of Burgundian Romanesque architecture.[191] Admittedly, he says, they are little more 'than a kind of fancy dress', yet they are something which makes perfect sense if one attributes the work as a whole to Abbot Peter Moraunt (1141–*c.* 1158/59), the former

186 Stalley 1971, 74. For Sherborne in general, see Gibb 1975; RCHME 1974, 200–06.

187 Above, p. 26. Known apse and ambulatory plans run from *c.* 1071 to *c.* 1123: Huggins 1987, 506–11.

188 In summary, see Fernie 2000, 102–79; Morris 1979, 238–80. For more on the west end of the naves at Gloucester and Tewkesbury, see Welander 1991, 69–75.

189 Fernie 2000, 152–78; Halsey 1985, especially 27–28; Wilson 1985, 68.

190 Wilson 1978, 81–83, taking up arguments in Brakspear 1931.

191 He lists a total on nine of the more important items demonstrating links, especially with Burgundian Cluniac architecture: Wilson 1978, 82. His ideas are broadly accepted in Gem 1984, 37. For Cluny itself, and for other churches Wilson lists, see Conant 1993, 146–51, 185–221; Evans 1971. King (1996, 80) has other ideas on the possible source of beaded roundel paterae in England, pointing to examples in western France.

Cluniac prior of La Charité-sur-Loire, installed at Malmesbury under the patronage of Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester.[192] In sum of course, Wilson's observations are concerned chiefly with the surviving work in the nave, and of necessity leave much about the east end unanswered.[193]

Equally distant sources have been proposed for the sculpture. In particular, since porches with decorative tympana to the side walls are otherwise unknown in England, Zarnecki felt that the idea must in some way be derived from prevailing fashion in south-western France, where similar arrangements occur, for example, in the churches at Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne), Souillac (Lot), Conques (Aveyron), and Ydes (Cantal).[194] As for the style, composition, and iconography seen in the Malmesbury work, Zarnecki felt we should be looking to the Saintonge region of western France, with certain details finding parallels at Aulnay-de-Saintonge.[195]

Pevsner certainly agreed that the use of the side walls in the Malmesbury porch, and the occurrence of the medallion motifs on its outer doorway, could well be ideas indebted to south-western and western France. But he argued that the style of the figures on the tympana depends on Burgundian work of about 1130, with the quality approaching that at Autun (Saône-et-Loire).[196] Similar Burgundian links have again been made by Wilson. Although recognizing that the Malmesbury porch is one of a long line of lateral examples in the west of England, at the same time he suggests that the sculpted tympana were presumably an attempt to emulate the narthexes of Burgundy.[197] More recently, one more potential distance source has been cited. In arguing that the sculpture of the inner porch is better interpreted as representing the Ascension rather than the Last Judgement, Kalinowski claims that the better iconographical and stylistic parallels are to be found in the west portal at Chartres (Eure-et-Loire).[198]

Allowing for the impact of such distant influences, connections to earlier English art should by no means be overlooked. Galbraith was sure that the iconography of the continuous scenes on the outer doorway, for instance, was derived from Anglo-Saxon artistic sources,[199] whereas Stone thought both the medallion scenes and the rows of apostles within the porch resemble the Bible and psalter illuminated for Bishop Henry of Blois at Winchester.[200] However, by far the most important and immediate sculptural-cum-architectural source for the Malmesbury Abbey workshops was the work carried out for Bishop Roger at Old Sarum, at the castles of Sherborne and Devizes, and at related sites. The immense significance of Roger as an architectural patron has been summarized for us

192 Above, pp. 13–14. Another former monk of La Charité, Adam of Senlis, was abbot of Evesham from 1161 to 1189. He completed the nave at the west country house, and also raised some of the claustral buildings, though unfortunately everything is lost: Cox 1990, 127; Knowles *et al.* 2001, 47. For La Charité, rebuilt from *c.* 1125, see Vallery-Radot 1967.

193 Wilson is of the view that the whole church must date to after 1143 (i.e. after the death of William of Malmesbury), and was perhaps not underway until after 1145. He seems cautious of Brakspear's interpretation of the presbytery, noting that it would have been outmoded by 1145, but claims that if it were of rounded ambulatory form it would be a further illustration of the influence of great Burgundian churches: Wilson 1978, 88, notes 25 and 27.

194 Zarnecki 1953, 41–42. For several of the churches mentioned (with illustrations), see Conant 1993, 163–65, 213, 286. The south doorway at Barfreston in Kent (which has figure scenes in medallions) has also been linked to sources in western France: Zarnecki 1953, 40; Newman 1983, 133–35.

195 Ideas also taken up in Stone 1972, 83. On Aulnay itself, see Tcherikover 1990. Meanwhile, King (1996, 80) presents comparisons in the sculpture at St-Jouin-de-Marnes (Deux-Sèvers), Aulnay, and Lullington (Somerset) — the latter, as shown below, related to the work found at Sarum and Malmesbury.

196 Pevsner 1975, 324.

197 Wilson 1978, 88, note 25.

198 Kalinowski 1992. Comparisons with Chartres were earlier made by Saxl (1954, 58–59) and by Smith (1975, 9). Chartres is well illustrated in Williamson 1995, 14–18.

199 Galbraith 1965. Smith (1975, 10, 11–14) also agrees that Anglo-Saxon sources were significant.

200 Stone 1972, 84. The relevant work in the Winchester Bible is dated to *c.* 1155–60: Zarnecki *et al.* 1984, 63–64.

by Stalley, and further thoughts on the atelier and its principal master have been provided by James King, but a full review of the sculpture of this workshop (both its sources and derivatives) is badly needed.[201] In the context of Malmesbury, before moving on we might just remember that Roger's nephew, Bishop Alexander of Lincoln (1123–48), was also a great builder, adding the west doors and frieze to his cathedral, and raising a castle at Newark.

Despite Wilson's views on the Burgundian sources for some of the decorative features at Malmesbury, there can be no doubt that the abbey's masons had knowledge of Old Sarum, as well as other building programmes related to the bishop's sphere of influence.[202] Examples of the paterae seen around the clerestory windows, for instance (fig. 44), are known not only from Sarum, but also from Henry I' Reading, and then from Lullington (Somerset), Kenilworth (Warwickshire), Portchester (Hampshire), and Sherborne (Dorset) in the south and west, from Llandaff in south-east Wales, and from Newark and Lincoln in the province of Bishop Alexander.[203] Likewise, the beast-head label stops found over the nave arcades at Malmesbury (fig. 38) featured once more at Sarum, and are also found at Bishopstone (Wiltshire) and Leonard Stanley (Gloucestershire), as well as at Ewenny and Llandaff in south-east Wales, and again at Lincoln.[204] Even closer to Sarum are the grotesque masks biting the apex of the Malmesbury labels (figs. 21, 38). A comparable motif is found in the westernmost bay of the north arcade at Gloucester Cathedral, but the similarity with a surviving fragment from Sarum is yet more striking.[205]

Stalley points to several other Sarum traits which are found in the nave at Malmesbury, including billeted roll mouldings and a Greek key pattern. Again, he accepts that the church must have been begun about 1145, suggesting that the scheme may have provided work for redundant masons from Roger's cathedral.[206] In all, in what survives from Sarum, Stalley thinks one is able to discern two sculptural hands. One of these may also have worked at Lullington, and perhaps moved on to Malmesbury.[207] The other may subsequently have moved to work at Lincoln.[208] Similar links have been proposed by Zarnecki, who has made the case that masons employed by Bishop Roger at Old Sarum were later engaged by his nephew, Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, on the Elect in Heaven panel on the west front of the cathedral. Zarnecki thought it probable that these masons then returned to Wiltshire to work at Malmesbury.[209]

There is something of a circular argument in all these discussions of the stylistic sources for both the architecture and sculpture at Malmesbury Abbey. It is possible that too much has been based on the negative evidence provided by William of Malmesbury, leading several authors to believe that the church could not have been begun before 1143. Equally,

201 In general, see Stalley 1971; King 1990; King 1996. See, also, Brodie 1988, 34; for Old Sarum, RCHME 1980, 1–24, and Zarnecki *et al.* 1984, 174, 176–77.

202 Apart from the buildings known to have been raised by Bishop Roger, the position of the churches of St John and St Mary in Devizes, for example, needs further investigation. For these, see Stalley 1971, 81–83; Pevsner 1975, 205–08.

203 Stalley 1971, *passim*; Thurlby 1999, 29–30; Thurlby and Baxter 2002, 297; Clapham 1934, 129–30; Brakspear 1912–13, 413. For Lullington, see Pevsner 1958, 222–23, and King 1996, plate XLIIIa; for Kenilworth, Pevsner and Wedgwood 1966, 317–18, plate 2a; for Portchester, Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 382–85; for Sherborne, RCHME 1974, 202; for Llandaff, Newman 1995, 243–44.

204 For Bishopstone, Pevsner 1975, 115; for Leonard Stanley, Swynnerton 1920–21, Verey and Brooks 1999, 444–45; for Ewenny and Llandaff, Newman 1995, 244, 344. Admittedly, some of these may relate to even earlier west country sources.

205 The Gloucester mask is mentioned in Wilson 1978, 87, note 20. For the Sarum mask, see Zarnecki *et al.* 1984, 176–77. Another likely derivative can be found on the south doorway at Elkstone (Gloucestershire): Verey and Brooks 1999, 356–57.

206 Stalley 1971, 76–77. The relationship between the Sarum and Malmesbury sculpture is discussed further in Galbraith 1962.

207 King (1996, 80–81) believes the Sarum master moved to Lullington, and also to Leonard Stanley.

208 For Bishop Alexander at Lincoln, see Stalley 1971, 80.

209 Zarnecki 1953, 40. More recently, see Zarnecki 1988.

the indications of a dedication ceremony in the later 1170s have been accepted as the *terminus ad quem* for the building programme. The south porch sculpture, in particular, has been habitually ascribed to the era around 1160–70, but this must surely merit a comprehensive up-to-date review, one which looks at the orbit of Bishop Roger's influence in the round.[210]

Alterations to the Church in the Later Middle Ages

In so far as we are aware, the first major modification to the Romanesque abbey church took place sometime in the second half of the thirteenth century, namely an extension of the presbytery eastwards and the addition of a Lady Chapel to the far east end (figs. 6, 24).[211] Writing in the 1890s, Bazeley was aware that a Lady Chapel had existed, but said there was nothing to guide us on its form.[212] However, as Roland Paul pointed out soon afterwards, when William Worcestre visited Malmesbury in the late fifteenth century he not only made specific mention of the chapel of St Mary, but also gave its dimensions as 36 paces long by 14 paces wide.[213] Furthermore, by computing Worcestre's dimensions for the whole church against several known measurements, Paul arrived at an overall length for Malmesbury in the 1470s of 305 feet (93m). He calculated that the presbytery was around 110 feet (34.5m) long, giving six bays of a similar span to the nave, with perhaps an eastern ambulatory aisle. He gave the dimensions of the Lady Chapel as 64 feet by 16 feet (19.5m by 4.9m).

Brakspear appears to have discovered very little more by way of either historical or archaeological evidence to give specific information on the later medieval presbytery. Nevertheless, he took as his lead the thirteenth-century eastern extensions to Winchester (begun *c.*1202), Worcester (1224–*c.*1269), Ely (1234–52), Lincoln (begun 1256), and St Albans (begun *c.* 1257), all of them intended 'for the sole reason of giving a sumptuous setting to the shrines of their great saints'.[214] It was Brakspear's view that the community at Malmesbury would undoubtedly have sought a similar improvement to the setting of the shrine of St Aldhelm. To support the argument, he claimed (perhaps correctly) that such an extension to the east end of the Norman church would have encroached on the existing cemetery. In turn, this may well explain the building of a charnel during the time of Abbot William of Colerne (1260–96), itself endowed with land for a chaplain in 1267.[215]

Brakspear felt that the shrine of St Aldhelm would have been moved to the middle bay of the new work (fig. 24), yet he presented no evidence in support of this. Indeed, the only archaeological record given in his published report is that of a wall, 7 feet (2.1m) thick, located some 8 feet (2.4m) south of the line of the presbytery aisle wall. Brakspear interpreted this as representing an eastern chapel, of marginally greater width than the aisle itself, and likened it to a similar arrangement at Exeter.[216] He was not sure if the Lady Chapel was part of the same scheme of enlargement, but he recorded finding two southern buttresses, 14 feet 6 inches (4.4m) from centre to centre, 'showing' that the chapel was

210 John McNeill, who was kind enough to discuss the Malmesbury sculpture with us, suggests there is nothing inherent within the work which would necessarily have to push it later than 1150.

211 Lady Chapels became increasingly common through the thirteenth century, as the liturgy of the Virgin became more elaborate, with its own feasts and hours running in parallel with the monks' daily round, the *opus Dei*. Lady Chapels were frequently placed at the extreme east end of the church, though not exclusively. At west country Evesham, for example, the Lady Chapel was built 1275–95: Cox 1990, 128.

212 Bazeley 1891–92, 12. The Lady Chapel is mentioned, for example, in the abbey's cartulary in the late thirteenth century, and there was a warden of the Lady Chapel at the time of the suppression: *Registrum*, II, 374; VCH 1956, 227.

213 [Paul] 1895, 164. For the correct record, see *Worcestre*, 286–87.

214 Brakspear 1912–13, 408. For the cathedrals in question, see Harvey 1974, *passim*; Wilson 1992, *passim*. Also, Barker 1994 (Worcester); Maddison 2000 (Ely); Hoey 2001 (St Albans).

215 Brakspear 1912–13, 401; *Registrum*, II, 123, 125.

216 Brakspear 1912–13, 408; Brakspear 1913–14, 469. At the same time, Brakspear also made the point that since William Worecestre effectively included the new work in his measurement for the overall length of the church, it must have been carried to the full height of the earlier presbytery.

divided into three bays (fig. 24). At variance with Paul's earlier calculations, Brakspear's reading of William Worcestre gave an overall length for the later medieval church of 279 feet 6 inches (85.2m), with the Lady Chapel measuring 48 feet 9 inches (14.9m) long by 22 feet 9 inches (6.9m) wide.[217] One of the major questions arising from this proposed reconstruction of the east end is the nature of the vault, particularly the relationship between the Norman west bays and the three new bays envisaged by Brakspear.

Though Brakspear appears to have overlooked it, there is confirmation that a Lady Chapel existed within the abbey church, no later than 1287. In a document of that year, Abbot William of Colerne assigned certain revenues of the house to provide lights within the chapel, a further indication, perhaps, that he was responsible for the extension to the eastern arm as a whole.[218]

As most early authorities on Malmesbury recognized, the most significant surviving changes made to the twelfth-century church occurred in the first half of the fourteenth century (figs. 7, 24). As early as 1807, for instance, Britton suggested that the 'upper tier of windows are of the decorated English style, and were probably introduced about the time of Edward the Third [1327–77], when the abbot was made a peer of the realm'. 'The flying buttresses, with the pinnacles, and the elegant fret-work ballustrade', he went on, 'appear to be the same age, and are useful and beautiful appendages to both sides of the building'.[219] These broad conclusions were endorsed by Freeman in the 1860s. He, too, noted that 'Decorated architects' remodelled the clerestory windows in the nave, and 'apparently throughout the whole church'.[220] Such works, he suggested, 'almost necessitated' the stone vault, and this in turn led to the elaborate system of pinnacles and flying buttresses, a scheme further adorned — at least to the south side — with an elaborate pierced parapet to both the aisle and the clerestory. Finally, Freeman further noted that at the same time the great south porch was externally refaced, and the new aisle parapet carried around it.[221] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, similar observations were made by Talbot, by Bazeley, and by Paul, and also by Perkins in 1901.[222]

Even if his assessment of the areas affected differed little from earlier observations, by far the fullest account of the fourteenth-century work at Malmesbury is once again that provided by Brakspear. In sum, he pointed out: 'In the fourteenth century the central tower was raised and a high spire added, vaulting was put to the transepts and nave, and the clearstories were remodelled'. Specifically, Brakspear was to attribute the main programme to the early part of the century. Furthermore, in his view — which was probably quite correct — it was in fact the desire to vault the nave which led to the rebuilding of the clerestory windows.[223]

Thus, it is clear that the nave clerestory, on both the north and south sides, was rebuilt at some point in the first half of the fourteenth century (figs. 35, 36).[224] Yet as Brakspear observed very carefully, there were actually three forms of window tracery in the new work.[225] In the first bay from the crossing (fig. 44), a tall two-light window was inserted

217 Brakspear 1912–13, 402.

218 For the document, *Registrum*, II, 374; also VCH 1956, 221.

219 Britton 1807–20, I, 12. Jackson (1864, 32) also says windows in upper storey of church added in Edward III's time. On the abbot in Parliament, Knowles 1948–59, II, 304.

220 For his account of the Decorated changes as a whole, see Freeman 1864, 90–94. He likened the scheme to near-contemporary remodellings at the Welsh cathedrals of Llandaff and St Davids.

221 Freeman (1864, 93) was aware that the nave vault form was carried through into the transepts, along with new clerestory windows, but he did not mention the presbytery in detail.

222 Talbot 1884, 29–31 (who gave them as 'late Decorated', in the reign of Edward III, and thought it not improbable that the changes were carried into the choir and presbytery); Bazeley 1891–92 (who gave them simply as fourteenth century); [Paul] 1895, 165 (who also gave fourteenth century, and noted that Tewkesbury underwent a 'like change'); Perkins 1901, 53–54, 90–91 (again giving the fourteenth century).

223 Brakspear 1912–13, 401, 415. See, also, [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 10.

224 There is no reason to doubt the three lost west bays on the north side were any different.

225 Brakspear 1912–13, 415–16; Brakspear 1913–14, 476, fig. 4.

within its Norman predecessor, the wall-passage was built up solid, with the triforium gallery also blocked (fig. 53).[226] In the original design for bays two and three, the three-light windows were finished in a form of fishscale tracery, based around six large trefoils (fig. 54).[227] From here, as the work progressed to the west, the entire clerestory was rebuilt afresh, from the level of the string-course over the triforium. In all six of the western bays, a further rendition of the fishscale pattern was used in the heads of the windows, designed around three trefoils. And, along with the completion of these later windows, it seems the masons must have returned to bays two and three, cutting out the lower part of the tracery and modifying the form of the openings so as to match more closely with the most recent work. Meanwhile, at a time which cannot have been very far removed, two very large three-light windows were inserted in place of the simple Norman openings in bays two and three of the south aisle (fig. 55), and a yet more prominent example, complete with a small gable over its head, was introduced to bay four of the north aisle.[228]

Although the evidence is far more fragmentary, it seems these alterations to the clerestory were carried through into the transepts. Thus, in the south transept, above the south-west crossing pier, we find the remains of the northernmost jamb of a window of the same character as those in the nave (fig. 56). And, from what survives of the opposite face of the north transept, it is likely that the remodelling was carried out on both sides. There is, on the other hand, no indication from the surviving fragment of the presbytery arcade that the window scheme was extended into the eastern arm.[229]

Other than some aesthetic desire to improve on the twelfth-century arrangements, coupled with a willingness to experiment with new architectural forms, we are unable to say precisely what prompted one of Malmesbury's early fourteenth-century abbots to embark on the construction of a striking new stone vault over the nave.[230] However, in itself, such a scheme was by no means unusual by this time. At Gloucester, for example, a new stone rib vault over the nave was completed in 1242; at Pershore, a more elaborate vault was raised over the presbytery after a fire of 1287/88; and at Tewkesbury a vault of even greater experimental feel was introduced to the nave *c.* 1322–26.[231] At Malmesbury, in any case, it is clear that the programme began with the three eastern bays, where the new vault constructed inside the walls of the Norman clerestory. Beyond this point, the old walls were completely taken down and the vaulting built at the same time as the new clerestory. Other than in the nave, we should, also note the beginnings of ribs of a similar vault in the south transept (fig. 56).[232]

The nave vault springs from foliage capitals set in line with the string-course at the base of the clerestory (figs. 20, 57). In plan, there are cross, diagonal, and apex ribs, effectively giving four sub-bays to each bay. Liernes are carried from the apex of the cross ribs part way down the diagonals, and up again to the apex of the wall ribs. There are deeply undercut bosses with naturalistic foliage at most intersections, though there are also some

226 The blockings, and the small size of the windows, were intended to give additional support to the tower. The north and south triforium gallery openings were apparently unblocked in 1836.

227 Brakspear (1912–13, 416, note 1) suggested they were the work of the same designer of the side units in the north transept window at Exeter. As Morris (1991, 73, 84, note 83) points out, there is every reason to accept this, though the date of Exeter is *c.* 1316–21, rather than Brakspear's claim of 1280.

228 Brakspear (1912–13, 417) suggested the new south aisle windows were intended to provide more light to the retro-choir, and that the north aisle window lit a chapel in this bay. A closer examination of the fabric may well reveal more about these assertions. One of the moulding profiles in the north aisle window links the work to Decorated forms used in the south-west around the second quarter of the fourteenth century: Morris 1978–79, II, 18. One of the south aisle windows was illustrated in *The Builder*, 1 (1843), 264.

229 Brakspear 1912–13, 408, 409, 410. Also, Pevsner 1975, 325.

230 On the aesthetics of Decorated architecture in general, see Coldstream 1994, 17–59; Wilson 1992, 191–204.

231 These are, as stated, no more than examples: for Gloucester, Welander 1991, 117–20; for Pershore, Thurlby 1996, 186–201; for Tewkesbury, Bony 1979, 50–52.

232 Brakspear 1912–13, 409; Pevsner 1975, 325.

heads in the east bays.[233] Externally, the vault was supported by bold flying buttresses springing across the aisles from small gabled piers built on to the outer walls (figs. 1, 18, 45). The piers were surmounted by tall, square pinnacles with battlemented tops, in turn crowned by plain mini spires with decorative finials. The flyers are all alike, apart that is from the easternmost pair. These two are of rather thinner design and could be later. If so, it would confirm Brakspear's idea that the mason who designed the vault at first trusted the twelfth-century walls to take the thrust, a scheme which he was then obliged to rethink in the later bays.[234]

During these extensive modifications to the nave and transepts, the walls of the south porch were thickened to no less than 10 feet (3m). Large double buttresses were added to the outer angles, and a new arch of two orders was set outside the Norman doorway (fig. 58). Interestingly, the twelfth-century animal mask terminals were rescued from the original label and reused in the new arch. It may be, as Brakspear suggested, that the thickening was designed so that the porch could be carried up as a tower, as can be seen at the priory church of the Bonhommes at Edington, some miles to the south.[235] In the event, a single room was formed over the Malmesbury porch, approached via a spiral stair formed in the angle between the thickened east wall and the south aisle.[236]

To complete the work on the south side of the nave, and as a means of bringing further unity to his scheme, the master mason responsible crowned the outer walls at both levels with continuous decorative parapets. Each is set on a projecting moulded cornice, and pierced with an attractive pattern of cusped trefoils, not unlike the near-contemporary examples at, say, Wells Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey, or that further afield at Heckington in Lincolnshire.[237] The lower parapet was also continued around the reworked porch (fig. 58). On the north side of the nave, parapets were again included in the design, though here they are plain.

It was John Harvey who first suggested that the master mason responsible for these fourteenth-century alterations at Malmesbury may have been Thomas of Witney, the work occurring sometime in the 1330s.[238] More recently, the evidence has been carefully reviewed by Richard Morris, who presents us with a very useful summary of the principal facts.[239] Although the date is unrecorded, the mouldings of the windows show definite links with the clerestory in the presbytery of Winchester Cathedral presbytery (*c.* 1315–42, and known to be by Witney), and also with work of *c.* 1320 and later at St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol (associated with Master William Joy).[240] The nave vault at Malmesbury certainly belongs with the remodelling of the clerestory, and the rib profile bears similarities to designs in the presbytery at Wells Cathedral, (*c.* 1326 and after, and mainly by Joy), but can

233 Brakspear 1912–13, 416; Pevsner 1975, 326. See, also, Freeman 1864, 93; Perkins 1901, 90–91. For a valuable report on the condition of the nave vault in 1934 by Brakspear, see Keystone 2000, 44–48, derived from Wiltshire Record Office, 2512/170/28, file 1. Brakspear (1912–13, 408) also mentions the discovery (unprovenanced) of two fourteenth-century vault bosses on the site of the presbytery (presumably those now displayed in the south aisle of the church). But this can hardly be accepted as concrete proof that the eastern arm was revaulted in this period.

234 Brakspear noted that during his repairs none of the flyers was found to be taking any thrust from the vault: Brakspear 1912–13, 416. Much of the detail in the outer piers, and the tops of the spirelets, is replacement work.

235 Brakspear 1912–13, 419. For Edington, Pevsner 1975, 234–37; Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 203. As Harvey (1978, 239) observed, the encasing of the Norman porch to assimilate the old to the new is an interesting example of respect for ancient work by later craftsmen.

236 In his text, Brakspear (1912–13, 419) gives the stair as fourteenth century, though on his ground plan (reproduced in this report as fig. 24) it is marked as fifteenth century. The purpose to which the room itself was put is unclear, though for an interesting review of ideas on similar rooms above porches, see McAleer 2001.

237 For illustrations of the east ends at Wells and Tewkesbury, see Bony 1979, plates 226, 236, 238, 317.

238 Harvey 1978, 46. For Master Thomas's career , see Harvey 1984, 338–41.

239 Morris 1991, 73–75.

240 On the framework of Joy's career, see Harvey 1984, 164–65; Morris 1997, 45–51.

also be compared to a few details of Master Thomas's work on the nave at Exeter Cathedral (*c.* 1328–42). Consequently, although Harvey's attribution of the Malmesbury scheme to Witney — chiefly on the basis of the clerestory window tracery — finds some substantiation in the mouldings, it is not conclusive. There is more than a hint, as Morris says, that it may have been the work of his younger colleague and successor, William Joy, which in turn has ramifications for the assumed date of the Malmesbury Decorated work. Most of the moulding parallels hint at the years around or soon after *c.* 1320, and if it was Witney's work then the early 1320s is more than a possibility.[241]

Morris further points out that, along with Exeter and Wells, Malmesbury is one of the most important surviving early lierne vaults in England. He sees it as 'perfectly explicable as a creation of Witney's mind around 1320; probably his first major "net" vault, which would explain its rather experimental feel'.[242] In sum, Morris reminds us that Master Thomas of Witney was very probably 'retained' by the Exeter chapter from around 1316 through to 1342. This does not, however, seem to have restricted him from taking on other commissions. Among these we might definitely include Malmesbury, where Master Thomas first appears in the early 1320s to advise on the new clerestory and vault. The project was still in progress through to *c.* 1325–30, with Witney's continued involvement very much to be suspected.[243]

It is very difficult to say to what extent, if any, there was a hiatus in the building campaigns at Malmesbury after the contributions made by Thomas of Witney, though it is of course an intriguing thought to imagine an ongoing programme handed to William Joy.[244] In any case, it seems very likely that by the end of the fourteenth century, and certainly no later than the early years of the fifteenth, two other highly prominent works had been completed, works which would have totally transformed the external silhouette of the Norman abbey church. In sum, a tall tower (crowned with a spire) was added over the crossing; and, at much the same time, a second tower was contrived over the existing walls at the west end of the nave.[245] Sadly, only very minor fragments survive to tell us much about the character of either structure.

Brakspear, nevertheless, was of the view that the changes over the crossing followed on directly from the nave work. In the event, the scheme resulted in a complete masking of the earlier lantern. Vault springers were inserted in each angle, wall ribs were introduced, and a lierne vault with large bosses added over the central area (figs. 27, 29). Pevsner was content to attribute the vault traces to the fourteenth century,[246] and it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the tower itself was remodelled in the same programme. We know, too, that the central tower was eventually finished with a tall spire The primary source for its existence is the record left to us by John Leland in the 1540s, who noted that the 'mighttie high *pyramis*' at the middle of the church was 'a marke to al the countre about'.[247] We can, though, do

241 Morris 1991, 73. See, also, Draper 1981, 25, where it was suggested the Malmesbury clerestory might have predated the more ambitious scheme of works at the Wells Lady Chapel, for which his date was 1323–26.

242 Morris 1991, 74. In general, see Frankl 2000, 187–90.

243 It would be of interest to determine whether the work was begun in the time of Abbot William of Badminton (1296–1324), or Adam de la Hoke (1324–40). The abbey was in some financial difficulty in the later 1330s: Luce 1979 (1929), 48.

244 In passing, we might remember that the known Malmesbury work of *c.* 1320–30 just pre-dated two of the most influential late-medieval Benedictine remodellings in south-west England: the south transept and choir at Gloucester (*c.* 1331– 67), and the choir at Glastonbury (*c.* 1342–74); the context for both given in Wilson 1992, 189–215, *passim*. There is no surviving indication, however, that anything at Malmesbury (including the lost east end) was on this scale.

245 In general, see Freeman 1864, 89–90, 94–97; Talbot 1884, 31; Bazeley 1891–92, 8, 11; Perkins 1901, 54–55; Brakspear 1912–13, 401, 411, 420–21. In the west country region alone, towers were added or rebuilt at Pershore Abbey (late thirteenth century), Salisbury Cathedral (early fourteenth century), Hereford Cathedral (*c.* 1310–20), Worcester Cathedral (1357–74), Gloucester Abbey (*c.* 1450–57), Great Malvern Priory (*c.* 1450–60), and Bristol Abbey (*c.* 1466–71): see Harvey 1978, *passim*.

246 Brakspear 1912–13, 401, 411; Pevsner 1975, 321–22, 325. The springers need closer examination.

247 *Leland Itinerary*, I, 131.

little more than conjecture over its precise form and date.

The same is true in fact of the west tower, though for Brakspear it was likely to have been added 'Quite at the end of the [fourteenth] century'.[248] In any case, one has to appreciate that the tower was part of a rather wider rebuilding of the west end of the Norman nave. Thus, in the west façade (figs. 19, 46), all trace of the twelfth-century window arrangement above the central portal is lost. Instead, we find the southern jamb of a very large late fourteenth-century window. One springer of its head can also be seen, about 24 feet (7.3m) above the sill. This great window was perhaps of seven or eight lights, with fragments of four lines of transoms still surviving, showing that there were cusped heads to each stage.[249]

Meanwhile, the new tower was built up over the two western bays of the nave, in a similar and no less reckless fashion to that at Hereford.[250] The west, north, and south sides were carried up on the existing Norman walls, but to take the east side it was necessary to throw a massive arch across the nave, the southern springer of which can still be seen in line with the second pair of piers (fig. 37). The remarkable fact about the whole operation is that it was completed above the existing vaulting. To further take the weight, in the third bay from the west, flying arches were inserted across the clerestory window and the triforium arch, and the main arch of the arcade was underbuilt. In addition, the small arches of the triforium in the two westernmost bays were built up solid. Other strengthenings were required in the opposite direction, so as to take the thrust of the eastern arch. The tower contained two of the nine bells mentioned at the suppression.

Other than the foregoing remodellings and major additions, several other late-medieval works on the abbey church should be noted. First, there were the alterations to the remaining north and south aisle windows. Whether this work coincided with the tower schemes or not, it must again have been carried out close to the end of the fourteenth century. The windows hitherto unmodified were given a central mullion, with two cusped lights, and a quatrefoil placed under the existing rounded head.[251] Secondly, in the fourth bay of the south arcade, a small box-like loft was introduced at triforium level. Thirdly, according to Brakspear it was in the fifteenth century that a low building with an almost flat roof was added over the six western bays of the south aisle. The crease of its roof may still be seen on the piers of the buttresses, and the building appears on a drawing published in William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* in 1655 (fig. 59).[252] Finally, Hewett states that south aisle roof, 'wrought in well-finished oak', must have been designed after 1512. Given that this is a stylistic attribution, it may be that we are in fact looking at a post-suppression phase of works (fig. 60).[253]

One further argument needs to be addressed before we can conclude on the medieval abbey church, namely the precise fate of the central tower and its crowning spire. It might be fair to say that this has been one of the most keenly debated aspects of the entire site history. In essence, the debate stems from John Leland's 1542 account of Malmesbury, in which he refers to the crossing tower with its great spire, proceeding to tell his readers that it 'felle daungerusly in *hominum memoria*, and sins was not reedified.'[254] The substance of

248 Brakspear 1912–13, 401. Perkins (1901, 54–56) thought the work was fifteenth century.

249 Brakspear 1912–13, 420. Freeman (1864, 89–90) gave the window as Perpendicular, but did not suggest a date. He likened the multiple transoms to the form of the nine-light west window at Winchester (*c.* 1355–71): Harvey 1978, 84–89, *passim*. In the recent Keystone (2000, plate 1) reconstruction of the window (fig. 13) it is shown with seven lights.

250 Brakspear 1912–13, 420–21. He thought Hereford was of the same date, though in fact it was rather earlier (*c.* 1310–20): Aylmer and Tiller 2000, 108, 138, 220–21. The recklessness of the engineering meant the eventual collapse of both towers. The Malmesbury collapse is covered below; the Hereford west tower fell in 1786.

251 Brakspear 1912–13, 417. Pevsner (1975, 322) has them as Perpendicular.

252 *Monasticon I*, I. Brakspear 1912–13, 402, 422. He wondered whether it might have been a song school.

253 Hewett 1980, 237. His illustration of the from compares well with Nash's cross-section (fig. 22). We are not aware of tree-ring dates for any of the church roofs.

254 *Leland Itinerary*, I, 131.

the ensuing arguement centres around two issues: on the one hand is the question of the 'memory of man', or in other words how long before Leland's time the fall might have occurred; on the other, one has to address the likely extent of the resulting damage.

In the 1860s, having considered Leland's testimony, Canon Jackson felt sure that the antiquary must have been referring to a distant event. Moreover, in his view the fall of the spire meant that the east end of the church 'was probably so much injured as to become useless: and may accordingly have been taken down'.[255] A similar line was adopted by Professor Freeman, though he went so far as to suggest that the monks may have retreated into the nave even before the collapse.[256] Again, Talbot was to accept that the fall of the tower destroyed the east end of the church; so, too, did Bazeley, who further argued that the monks then chose to block the west crossing arch, removing their choir to the first two bays of the nave.[257] Paul likewise drew attention to these matters, wondering whether a weaknesses in the central tower may have been discovered even earlier, prompting the construction of the west tower to contain the abbey's bells. On the 'destruction of the presbytery', he suggested, the services would have been transferred to the nave.[258]

Such ideas, however, were entirely rejected by Brakspear. He argued that there is simply no clear evidence in the fabric of the building to indicate that the monks ever occupied the present nave as their choir, which they would have been compelled to do if the tower had fallen. On the contrary, for him, Leland's account must surely have referred to the collapse of the *spire*, and not the supporting *stone tower*. And, since the spire was presumably constructed of wood and lead, it might be expected that there was much less damage to the presbytery and crossing than earlier commentators would have us believe. To further underline his case, Brakspear pointed to the 1655 drawing of the church in Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* (fig. 59), in which all four crossing piers and the surmounting arches are all shown standing.[259] Luce, for one, certainly found these arguments convincing.[260]

Yet one of the greatest arguments in support of Brakspear's views seems hardly, if at all, to have been mentioned in the past: it would be necessary, of course, to address the fate of St Aldhelm's shrine had its architectural setting in the east end of the church been destroyed before the suppression. Since it seems inconceivable that the Malmesbury monks would have been prepared to abandon the body of their saint, we would need to look for evidence of a feretory chapel somewhere in the fabric of the nave. No obvious locations comes to mind.

We should further remember that Malmesbury was one of the richer monastic houses of medieval England. On the face of it, therefore, it seems perfectly reasonable to assume that any structural weakness discovered in the church through into the early Tudor period would have led the community to embark on a fresh programme of building works. There is, after all, no shortage of examples of monastic houses with rather smaller annual incomes committing to major schemes of rebuilding in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In short, it would be very surprising to find that the community had abandoned the crossing and presbytery prior to the suppression of the abbey in 1539.

One last piece of evidence comes from the suppression period records. There is, for example, no indication in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535) that any part of the church lay

255 Jackson 1864, 34.

256 Freeman 1864, 97, 98. In support of his view, Freeman pointed to the wall filling the west crossing arch. Up to the level of the springing of the arch, the quality of the masonry in this wall is of one character, possibly raised in an attempt — Freeman thought — to prop up the tower prior to the suppression. Presumably, he imagined the complete filling of the arch would then have followed on from the destruction of the east end.

257 Talbot 1884, 32; Bazeley 1891–92, 11.

258 [Paul] 1895, 164. Paul was definitely confused about William Worcestre's late fifteenth-century account of Malmesbury, quoting a much later source of evidence. For the William's actual record, see *Worcestre*, 282–83, 286–87.

259 [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 12. Brakspear 1912–13, 411–12.

260 Luce 1929 (1979), 73–74. See, also, Perkins 1901, 55–56.

entirely ruinous. What is more, in the Crown documents of the early 1540s, its seems that the church, choir, aisles, steeples, and Lady Chapel all remained covered with lead, and there were nine bells still housed in the steeples.[261]

The Abbey Church after the Suppression

Malmesbury Abbey was surrendered to the king's visitors in December 1539. Within five years much of the site and its principal buildings had been formally acquired by William Stumpe.[262] Though several mentions of the testimony provided by John Leland have already been made, at this point it is worth recalling what he has to say specifically about the abbey church and the former parish church of St Paul's:

> 'Ther were in thabbay chirch yard 3. chirches: thabbay chirch a right magnificent thing, wher were 2. steples, one that had a mighttie high *pyramis*, and felle daungerusly, in *hominum memoria*, and sins was not reedified: it stode in the midle of the *transeptum* of the chirch, and was a marke to al the countre about; the other yet standith, a greate square toure, at the west ende of the chirch.
>
> The tounes men a late bought this chirch of the king, and hath made it their paroche chirch.
>
> The body of the olde paroch chirch, standing in the west end of the chirch yarde, is clene taken doun. Th est ende is convertid *in aulam civicam*.
>
> The fair square tour in the west ende is kept for a dwelling house.[263]

In other words, by 1542, all that seems to have remained of the medieval parish church was the west tower, then used as a house, and part of the east end, used as a town hall. Although the tower continues to stand today, it was its poor condition in the sixteenth century which led William Stumpe to make over, or sell, the nave of the abbey church for use by the parish.[264]

Presumably, it could not have been too many years after the suppression that the nave was isolated from the former monastic presbytery. The west crossing arch was completely walled up and a buttress added to the middle of the exterior face (figs. 9, 27).[265] And, although there is no written record, Brakspear felt that the tower over the western bays of the nave probably fell shortly after Leland's visit to Malmesbury. Perhaps it was the removal of the west wall of the cloister which aggravated the already inherent weakness in the tower's design. In any case, it seems very likely that it fell northwards, completely destroying three bays of the nave arcade and aisle on this side, and bringing down five bays of the main nave vault. Rather than attempting any form of extensive rebuild, the parish authorities were obliged to construct a new west wall in line with the sixth pair of nave piers, supported by two heavy external buttresses (figs. 24, 61). The wall was pierced by a large pointed window, the mullions and transoms of which may have been of wood (fig. 62). At the same time, the seventh bay of the south aisle was walled up so that the parishioners might continue to use the south porch as the entrance to the church.[266]

261 Youings 1971, 240; Brakspear 1912–13, 403, 434. See, also, Annex 1. In the seventeenth century, the Wiltshire-born antiquary John Aubrey (d. 1697) recorded that in the central tower 'was a great Bell, Called St Aldhelm's Bell': *Topographical Collections*, 255. In 1718 Browne Willis wrote that the local inhabitants had told him there were no less than ten bells in the middle tower and two in the western one.

262 Above, p. 16.

263 *Leland Itinerary*, I, 131; Brakspear 1912–13, 404.

264 See VCH 1991, 157 for further details.

265 Brakspear 1912–13, 412. Britton (1807–20, I, 11) noted that when the church was made parochial it appears to have undergone some alteration: 'the east and west ends being walled up, some windows enlarged, the area pewed, &c'.

266 Brakspear 1912–13, 404, 421. Brakspear mentions the removal of wooden mullions and transoms from the post-suppression west window in the early nineteenth-century restoration. In the watercolour drawing of *c.* 1810 (fig. 62) there is six-light rectangular window with two transoms, only partly filling the full splay of the opening.

From the account left to us by an unknown tourist who visited Malmesbury in 1634, it would seem:

> 'The two great Towers at her West coming in, are quite demolish'd, & her great High Tower, at the upper end of the high Altar much decay'd & ruinated: The Angle there cleane decayed'.[267]

It has recently been argued that the remarkable *c.* 1648 panorama showing the town from the north-west (fig. 4), and providing the earliest known illustration of the church, shows the lower half of the Norman west front still surviving.[268] The southern half of the façade with its stair tower stands out prominently in the foreground, and to the left there is a large window (perhaps introduced as one of the fourteenth-century remodellings) in what must be the northern half. At the centre of the façade, we can possibly make out the remains of the late-medieval west window. There must, nevertheless, have been a further collapse before 1732. Hence, in the drawing published in that year by the brothers Buck (fig. 63), although the west portal at the base of the façade continued to stand complete, the great window and walls above had all gone.[269] In turn, the west portal must have fallen within a few decades. A drawing of 1780 by Thomas Hearne (fig. 64) shows only the southern jamb, much as it survives today.

At the other end of the nave, as already noted, the drawing of *c.* 1648 also shows all four crossing arches still standing (fig. 4). They appear yet again in the 1655 drawing of Malmesbury Abbey published in the first edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon* (fig. 59). It may well be, as noted by a number of authorities, that the collapse of the eastern and southern arches occurred in 1660. The county's own antiquary, John Aubrey (d. 1697), referred to the great rejoicing on Charles II's restoration in 1660. At Malmesbury, he said, such was the noise of artillery, it 'so shook the pillars of the Tower that one pillar and the two parts above fell down that night'.[270]

The drawing from the 1655 edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon* also seems to suggest that the low building over the south aisle of the nave was still in use at this time (fig. 59). It must have been removed before 1733, however, for there in no sign of it in the engraving by the Buck brothers (fig. 63).[271]

Restoration in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The condition of the abbey church exterior as it survived into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be seen in a wide range of engravings and pictures, including those by Thomas Hearne (1744–1817), by J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851), and those published by John Britton (figs. 65–67). A telling glimpse of the interior is given to us in a watercolour by an unknown artist, dated *c.* 1810 (fig. 62).[272] And of course there is a more accurate record in the measured drawings of 1816 by Fredrick Nash (figs. 17–21). In 1822–23, steps were taken to curb some of the long neglect suffered by the fabric. In an appeal for funds, it was said that the whole of the 'venerable structure is at present mouldering into decay'. In particular, the 'groining of the West end of the interior' had given way, and the entire

267 Quoted in Brayley 1834, 411. See, also, Brakspear 1912–13, 412; Luce 1929 (1979), 105; and Jackson 1864, 35, who thought (1864, 48) the west tower fell about 1500.

268 Keystone 2000, 9–10, 32. A reconstruction drawing by Michael Bull, included in the Keystone report (reproduced here as fig. 14), attempts to show the west front as it survived, *c.* 1646.

269 We have found no record of the date of the collapse, other than a mention in 1903 by the bishop of Bristol, George Forrest Browne, that it took place in the time of Charles II (1660–85): see Brakspear *et al.* 1903, 7.

270 *Topographical Collections*, 255. Noted in: Brakspear 1912–13, 404, 412; Jackson 1864, 34–35; [Hills] 1869, 290; Bazeley 1891–92, 11; Luce 1979 (1929), 184.

271 Brakspear 1912–13, 404, 422.

272 The painting can be seen on display in the Pavise at Malmesbury. It is suggested it may be by J. Hanks or Thomas Hearne.

church needed a new roof. This is confirmed by the *c.* 1810 watercolour, where we see a rough boarded ceiling over the west bays (fig. 62), and by the Nash drawings which show no roof detail over this same area (figs. 17, 18, 20). The total cost of the repairs was estimated at £3,500.[273]

The restoration was in due course carried out under the direction of the Bath architect, Henry Goodridge (1797–1864).[274] During his programme, the floor level was raised by about 9 inches (0.22m), hiding the sub-bases of the piers, and a lath and plaster vault was introduced over the fifth and sixth bays. A gallery was built at the west end of the church, supported on a three-bay round-headed arcade linking the fifth pair of piers. An organ was later placed on the gallery. The existing high pews were removed, and replaced by deal benches with cast iron ornamental knobs at the ends. In all, the new benches in the nave and gallery increased the seating capacity of the church quite significantly. Goodridge also designed a new tracery pattern of stone for the post-suppression west window (fig. 61). Meanwhile, the works also led to the uncovering of the doorway in early sixteenth-century stone screen located against the blocking of the west crossing arch (fig. 68).[275] Finally, the triforium arcade was repaired and walls were built up to shut off the gallery spaces from the nave (figs. 35, 36).[276]

In 1837 Benjamin Thomas wrote to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, happily reporting that 'the stables, hovels pigstyes, &c' have been removed from the 'Western fragment' of the church, and that the interior of the western doorway is now seen in all its grandeur. He also tells us that in making the ground level with the original floor of the nave, workmen at the west end of the north aisle came upon part of an encaustic pavement.[277]

At the close of the nineteenth century, the then bishop of Bristol, George Forrest Browne (1897–1914), a vice president of the Society of Antiquaries, expressed concern at the condition of the abbey church at Malmesbury. The upshot of his intervention was a joint report on the state of the fabric, produced by the Society of Antiquaries in conjunction with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, with an unofficial input from the Corsham architect, Harold Brakspear (1870–1934).[278] As we have seen throughout this report, it was Brakspear who was eventually to win the commission for the restoration programme.[279] And, in February 1900, application was made for a faculty to permit a major scheme of works at Malmesbury. The plan was to build up the destroyed portion of the southern wall of the nave, and to repair the south aisle, continuing its roof through to the original twelfth-century west front. The present west wall of the aisle was to be removed, so that the repaired bays might form part of the church. It also seems that at the time of the

273 Keystone 2000, 12, quoting the appeal literature: Wiltshire County Record Office, 815/23. See, also, Brakspear 1912–13, 405; [Paul] 1895, 165; Luce 1979 (1929), 194–95.

274 For Goodridge's career in general, see Colvin 1995, 415–16. There is a printed sketch by Goodridge himself, dedicated to the Revd George Bisset and showing the completed scheme, on display in the Parvise at Malmesbury. There is a good later photograph of the church as completed by Goodridge in Kemble 1901, 67; and another Perkins 1901, 82, 84.

275 Its discovery was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine*: T[homas] 1924.

276 Brakspear (1912–13, 413, note 2) says this was done in 1836, 'for warmth'. Bowen (2000, 66) says it occurred much earlier, when new roofs were built over aisles in the sixteenth century.

277 T[homas] 1837, 572. He thought the pavement was of the time of Abbot Robert Pershore (1424–34).

278 Brakspear's involvement stemmed from his friendship with William St John Hope (1854–1919), then assistant secretary to the Antiquaries, and greatly interested in monastic architecture and archaeology. For Brakspear's career in general, see Roebuck 2001. What survives of Brakspear's extensive correspondence on Malmesbury is now deposited at the Wiltshire County Record Office, 2512/100/9, files 1 and 2. Hope was apparently keen to see Brakspear get the Malmesbury commission, and wrote asking him for his views on the rebuilding of the west end in December 1898. On this and Brakspear's ensuing involvement, see Roebuck 2001, 39–42; also Keystone 2000, 13–16, 37–41 (which includes a transcript of Brakspear's 1898/99 specification and estimate for the necessary works, extracted from the Restoration Fund minute book). There is further background in Perkins 1901, 60–62. Roebuck (2001, 40), drawing on the SPAB archive copy of the initial report, says there was clearly a debate about the possibility of rebuilding the three fallen west bays of the nave, and building a chancel at the east end.

279 The decision to appoint him was made by the bishop of Bristol, and the vicar of Malmesbury, the Revd G. W. Tucker.

application the option to try an rebuild the western portion of the nave was being left open.[280]

When the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society visited Malmesbury in May 1903 the members were accompanied by the bishop of Bristol, who provided a summary of Brakspear's works up to that point:

> 'The last three years have seen the fabric made sound throughout. The roofs of the aisles have been stripped and relaid; the flying buttresses taken down one by one, and built again with old stones, a process revealing the mere thread by which some of them were held together; the compensating pinnacles have been completely repaired; the gutters put in good order; and the drainage for the first time made effective. The treatment of the ruined bays at the west end of the nave presented difficult problems. It was necessary to introduce heavy buttresses, but any buttresses of an ordinary character would have been ugly and expensive, and must have been removed again if at any time the county rebuilt the ruined bays. It was determined that all the money spent upon the west end should be to the good, if the bays were ever rebuilt; and on that principle it was determined to effect the buttressing in the most complete manner, by building the perished piers and half-arches of the south aisle and arcade, and thus supporting the thrust of the unsupported and overhanging masses of ruin at the south-west corner of the present church. Extreme care has been taken to leave the new work without mouldings, to alter the cuspings of the parapets, and in all ways to render it impossible that the new work shall ever by thought to be part of the original work'.[281]

In the event, the three west bays were never rebuilt, and we have been left with Brakspear's blocking walls between his reconstructed south arcade piers, the detailing all left in almost entirely blank outline, as reported by the bishop of Bristol and in accordance with SPAB wishes (fig. 37).

Further work was carried out as and when funds became available. Hence, the vault in the south porch was erected in 1905, and improvements were introduced to the Parvise (the room over the porch) in 1912–14.[282] In July 1926, however, a major appeal was launched, with the aim of raising a fund of £12,000 so that the church authorities might engage Brakspear to proceed with the next substantial phase of works. In particular, it was proposed to replace Goodridge's lath and plaster ceiling over the western bays with a stone vault; whilst in connection with a new heating system the floor was to be reduced once more to its original level (fig. 69). The west gallery (housing the organ built in 1714 by Abraham Jordon) was to go, though the organ and its case were to be reinstated in the chapel at the east end of the north aisle.[283] The poor quality deal seating was also to be taken out, and was to be replaced by oak chairs. Oak side screens, new choir stalls, and a new pulpit were to be introduced at the east end, and finally the font and King Æthelstan's monument were to be moved.[284]

The programme of restoration seems to have been put in hand in 1927–28 and continued into the 1930s. In turn, it was presumably the rebuilding of the west bays vaults which drew greater attention to the four bays of surviving fourteenth-century work. A report was prepared by Brakspear in 1934, and the resulting repairs supervised by his son, Oswald,

280 Keystone 2000, 13, derived from Bristol Record Office, EP/J/6/2/164. See, also, the account of plans in Perkins 1901, 60–62.

281 [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 7.

282 Brakspear 1912–13, 418; Keystone 2000, 14–15 (quoting a petition for a faculty: Bristol Record Office, EP/J/6/164).

283 The old Jordon organ (illustrated in Kemble 1901, 67; Perkins 1901, 82) was apparently in use until 1927. In that year a new organ was donated by the Wills family: Beaghen 1947, 26–27. We have not investigated the fate of the Jordon instrument (the console was moved to the parvise), but a row appear to have broken out over its replacement. It would not fit in the first bay of the north aisle, as planned, and Brakspear was very unhappy that the alternative meant an alteration to the fabric of the building: Keystone 2000, 19. The present organ, alas, does immeasurable damage to the rhythm of the twelfth-century arcade. For the Jordons (father and son), and context, see Bicknell 1996, 148–93.

284 Keystone 2000, 15–16.

with Professor E. W. Tristram advising on the colouring of the vault bosses.[285]

Any number of minor repairs and improvements were to follow, chiefly carried out under the direction of Oswald Brakspear through into the 1980s. In 1936, for instance, the ruined crossing arches received urgent attention; in 1976 the south porch was cleaned and treated, and repairs were made to the west window and several of the buttress pinnacles; the south transept stonework was repaired in 1982; and in 1986 a large legacy allowed for the refurbishment of the Parvise.[286] More recently, Caroe & Partners of Wells have been the parish's appointed architects, with Mr Peter Bird currently holding responsibility for the fabric.

285 Brakspear 1935–37; Keystone 2000, 17, 44–48; Roebuck 2001, 42.

286 There is a very useful summary of all this work in Keystone 2000, 18–22, 34–36.

4
THE CLOISTER AND THE MONASTIC BUILDINGS

Malmesbury's great cloister, together with its surrounding ranges of domestic and administrative buildings, stood on the north side of the nave (fig. 70).[287] In terms of the general monastic trend, we tend to think of this as a somewhat unusual pattern, since it is far more common to find the cloister located to the south of the abbey church. Considering just the larger Benedictine foundations in England, southern cloisters occurred, for example, at Abbotsbury, Abingdon, Battle, Binham, Crowland, Evesham, Glastonbury, Great Malvern, Muchelney, Peterborough, Pershore, Reading, St Albans, Selby, Shrewsbury, Tewkesbury, Westminster, Worcester, Whitby, and St Mary's in York. Even so, Malmesbury was far from alone in its particular arrangement, with other northern cloisters found, for instance, at Blyth, Bury St Edmunds, St Augustine's in Canterbury, Cerne (probably), Chertsey, and Chester, as well as more locally at Gloucester, Leominster, and Sherborne.[288]

In essence, what might be called the 'standard' monastic claustral plan probably emerged during the Carolingian reforms of the mid-eighth to early ninth centuries, with the celebrated St Gall plan of *c.* 820–30 demonstrating that the key elements of the idealized Benedictine layout were indeed established during this era.[289] Stylistic developments apart, little by way of fundamental change was introduced over the succeeding centuries. It is, then, of further to note that the St Gall plan shows the cloister already located in that position favoured by all of the major religious orders throughout the Middle Ages. It can be seen tucked into the angle between the nave and the south transept of the church. Such a location, of course, made perfectly good practical sense, allowing for the best possible use of natural light and warmth. So strong, in fact, was this simple practical consideration (to say nothing of accrued symbolic and liturgical associations), if a community was prompted to depart from the normal arrangement, we can expect there to have been some highly significant overriding factor as the cause. In looking for such factors, commentators have cited, among others, the nature of the terrain, the availability of water, the need for appropriate drainage, and the desire to be secluded from an adjacent population.

At Malmesbury, the entire abbey precinct occupied much of the summit of the hill, with the Alfredian and later monastic borough running away to the south (fig. 25). Thus, with the cloister on the northern side of the church, the community was as far removed from the urban environment as possible.[290] Yet as a consequence of this decision, the monks were obliged to accept a marked degree of compromise in the layout of their monastic buildings, especially given the markedly steep fall to the Tetbury Avon at no great distance from the

287 For the cloister and the monastic buildings in general, see Talbot 1884, 33–34; [Paul] 1895, 165; Pevsner 1975, 326–27; and especially Brakspear 1912–13, 424–31; Brakspear 1913–14, 487–94.

288 These lists are far from exhaustive, and omit the cathedral priories. Apart from the Benedictines, there is no doubting a small concentration of northern cloisters in the Malmesbury region, including Bradenstoke (Augustinian), Lacock (Augustinian nuns), and Stanley (Cistercian). There is no one source which draws all of this information together, though Morris 1979, 238–80, *passim* provides a useful beginning (and is helpful for additional references). Likewise, Midmer 1979 is another place to find basic summaries, with the principal bibliographical material on each site provided. The GWR volume on abbeys (James 1925) is old, but still valuable, especially in the Malmesbury context since it focuses on the west of England. In addition, see Biddle *et al.* 1968; Binski 1995; Cox 1990; Fairweather 1926; Gem 1997; Hare 1985; Norton 1994; Pevsner 1963, 227; Poulton 1988; Radford 1981; Rahtz 1993; RCHME 1952, RCHME 1974, 4–8, 77–80, 200–14; VCH 1908, 483–510; Welander 1991; Whittingham 1952; Wilson and Burton 1988. For the cathedral priories, see Braunfels 1972, 153–74.

289 For background on the Carolingian reforms, see Lawrence 2001, 66–82; Braunfels 1972, 27–46; on the emergence of the 'standard' plan, see Horn 1973; and on St Gall, see Braunfels 1972, 37–46; Conant 1993, 55–59; Stalley 1999, 184–89.

290 The arrangement was not at all unlike that at St Albans, for example, though there the town was to the north and the cloister to the south: Slater 1998.

church itself.[291] All in all, though we cannot be certain, it does seem very likely that other considerations played a part in the community's choice. In particular, given the restricted nature of the site in general, the Norman builders may well have found themselves having to work around or aside from the pre-existing layout of Anglo-Saxon structures.[292]

In turning to those building located around the cloister, and almost regardless of what has been said of St Gall blueprint, there is a certain understandable reluctance these days to refer to any form of 'standard' monastic plan — that idealized layout of a Benedictine (or more often a Cistercian) abbey as presented, for example, by Crossley, or by Dickinson, some decades ago.[293] Useful though this may be for introductory purposes, it does tend to obscure the numerous spatial and temporal differences which were so commonplace. On the one hand, we should not overlook those subtle and near-contemporary differences which existed in the layouts of houses of similar background and status located no great distance apart. On the other, it is now appreciated with much greater clarity the extent to which radical changes were introduced at individual sites over time. In the main, the vast communal chambers raised by those swelling bodies of monks from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries were frequently reduced or altered to suit the needs of the very much smaller groups occupying the sites during the later Middle Ages. With these general caveats in mind, we might look at what is known of the Malmesbury layout, perhaps thinking of avenues for further investigation.[294]

The Cloister and Cloister Walks

Harold Brakspear reported having carried out a partial excavation 'to trace the cloister and site of the surrounding buildings' in 1910,[295] though he gave no indication of the size or location of his trenches on the ground plan published in his report (fig. 24). In terms of the main walls of the buildings, he noted that much had already been 'grubbed up'. He was, nonetheless, confident of having found the extent of the cloister itself, stating that it had been accurately set out (in the twelfth century) and measured precisely 112 feet (34m) square.[296] Recent research across a wide range of monastic sites suggests that the central open garth would have been laid out in garden beds, divided by paths, and filled with flowers and herbs.[297] Archaeological survey or excavation might be required to confirm what survives beneath the present grass cover.

Surrounding the garth were four covered passages, known as walks or alleys, linking the various chambers located around the periphery. The walks themselves provided living space for the community: this was wher the monks read, studied, and meditated. The east and west alleys connected with the church by way of two processional doorways. The east doorway opened into the first bay of the north aisle, and still preserves its twelfth-century head adorned with a frieze of standing palmettes (fig. 42). The west doorway was presumably lost with the collapse of the building at this point, though Brakspear suggests its position on his ground plan.

Writing in the 1880s, Talbot suggested that the Norman cloister alleys would have been covered with simple wooden roofs of lean-to form, resting on open arcades along the edges of the garth.[298] Alas, there are very few intact cloister arcades of the mid- to later twelfth

291 The Benedictine community at the cathedral priory of Coventry had to overcome something similar in terms of topographical conditions.

292 See the discussion above, pp. 22–23.

293 Crossley 1935, 37–55; Dickinson 1961, 11–43. See, also, Gilyard-Beer 1976.

294 For a recent overview of Anglo-Norman cloister buildings, see Fernie 2000, 194–207.

295 Brakspear 1912–13, 405.

296 Brakspear 1912–13, 424–28.

297 There is a brief summary in Coppack 1990, 78–80. There were presumably greater restrictions on the choice of planting in the case of northern cloisters.

298 Talbot 1884, 33.

century surviving anywhere in England, with the notable exception of the work by Prior Wibert (1152/53–67) at Canterbury. But from *ex situ* fragments, notably capitals and bases, it seems the arcade supports could be either double or single columns. In fact, Brakspear recorded finding the base of a just such a twelfth-century coupled column at Malmesbury.[299]

Even without archaeological excavation, Freeman, Talbot, and Bazeley all thought the cloister walks had been rebuilt during the later Middle Ages. The clue came from the changes around the processional doorway in the south-east corner (fig. 42).[300] When Brakspear came to explore the site in 1910, not only was he able confirm that the cloisters had indeed been rebuilt in the fifteenth century, he also recovered enough buried material to allow for convincing reconstructions of the elaborate fan vault and the form of the window heads in the individual bays (fig. 71). Once again, from these discoveries, we can see that the Malmesbury community was continuing to borrow innovative architectural ideas from the greater Benedictine houses and secular cathedrals of the south-west. In this case, ever since the Gloucester monks had embarked on the rebuilding of their cloister in the third quarter of the fourteenth century, patrons and architects in the region had been enthralled with the new possibilities offered in terms of light, space, and aesthetics. It is the east walk at Gloucester which contains the earliest known fan vault (*c.* 1351–64) in the country, and even though it was to take until *c.* 1400 before all four walks were completed to an almost uniform pattern,[301] the idea itself was soon widely imitated.

Malmesbury's remodelled cloister scheme seems to belong to the first half of the fifteenth century. Brakspear found a considerable part of the plinths which had supported the new work around the edges of the garth, enough in fact to allow him to calculate the overall arrangements. Thus, each walk of about 11 feet (3.4m) wide housed ten individual bays, eight of which were clear, with the two corners shared by the adjacent alleys. The bays were separated externally by prominent buttresses, from which Brakspear suggested flyers would have risen to take the thrust of the vault. The windows were of simple grid tracery, having plain splayed mullions and jambs, with cusped heads. Each of the main bays was virtually square in plan, over which the vault was arranged in cones, with ribs and tracery worked over the surface (fig. 71). Eight ribs sprang from each wall column and these were doubled half-way up. The panels were then finished with trefoil cusps. The central spandrel panel was filled with a circle containing large quatrefoils with foliate terminals, further subdivided by smaller cusps.

In the north walk of the cloister, Brakspear tells us that the foundations of the three westernmost bays projected out into the garth (fig. 24). As he suggested, this is most likely to represent the position of the laver (*lavatorium*), where the brothers washed before entering their refectory for meals in the adjacent north range. The arrangements would therefore have been very similar to the examples known at Chester, Canterbury (Christ Church), and Gloucester.[302]

The floors in each of the cloister walks were found to have been laid with handsome patterns of glazed tiles, which Brakspear thought should be dated to different periods. At the southern end of the east alley, the pattern was formed of squares of sixteen tiles, in which the middle tile in each case either carried the letters W.C., or W.W. In contrast, at the east end of the north walk, part of which seems to have been exposed around 1800,[303] the pattern consisted of nine tiles of rather small form. Here, the central tile was found to bear

299 On Wibert's east cloister, see Fernie 2000, 200, and fig. 150. For the Malmesbury find, see Brakspear 1912–13, 424. We have found no record of its form.

300 Talbot 1884, 33; Bazeley 1891–92, 12; Freeman 1864, 99.

301 See Leedy 1980, 166–68; Welander 1991, 215–35; Wilson 1992, 208–11.

302 For comparative examples, see Bond 2001, 115–18.

303 Moffat (1805, 65) noted: 'In digging for stone in a garden adjoining the north-west end of the church, several years ago, the workmen came down upon a pavement of square stained tiles. Very lately the spot has been re-examined, and a quantity of these curious tiles discovered. They are glazed, ornamented with roses, the flower-de-luce, &c. and heads. The cloisters being situated on the north side of the nave, this may be deemed part of its "Mosaic" pavement, (or as an antiquarian would rather denominate it) "encaustic"; which succeeded the "Mosaic", strictly so called'.

the letters T.B. All three of the lettered tiles were presumably commemorative, with two of Malmesbury's known abbots seemingly represented: Walter de Camme (1361–96) and Thomas Bristow (1434–56). Brakspear suggested that W.W. stood for a William (1423), though no such abbot is given in the published lists for the house.[304] It is quite possible that the commemorative tiles were directly linked to phases in the completion of particular parts of the cloister. Leedy, however, suggests that the details of the fabric as recorded by Brakspear fit most comfortably with Abbot Thomas's time.[305]

The East Range

In the standard Benedictine arrangement, the east range of monastic buildings would be expected to run out for some distance from the south transept. At Malmesbury, of course, the position is switched to the north (fig. 24). Here, the narrow room immediately adjoining the transept wall would have served as the private parlour (*locutorium*), perhaps doubling as a passage or slype. Its location (and function) is paralleled at numerous sites, including Bury St Edmunds, Gloucester, and York (St Mary's). Benches may have been located along either wall, and here senior monks could have sat to discuss confidential abbey business. As a slype, it might also have been used as a through passage, the route by which the brothers approached the abbey cemetery.[306]

The next chamber in this range was the chapter house (*capitulum*). Brakspear reported finding a considerable length of the foundation of its north wall, though he failed to trace anything on the south side, nor could he determine the position or form of the eastern termination.[307] The chapter house is perhaps the most notable omission on the St Gall plan of the 820s, though by the twelfth century it had become (apart from the church) the single most important building in the claustral complex, underlined in its frequent role as a mausoleum for abbots. This was true not only for the Benedictines, but for communities of all the principal religious orders.

Each morning, following the service of Prime, the monks assembled within this room for the chapter meeting.[308] The proceedings began with the reading of a lesson; a portion of the *Rule of St Benedict* was read out; saints and benefactors were commemorated. It was here, too, that breaches of regular discipline were confessed or alleged, penances assigned, and duties for the week allocated. Afterwards, the chapter meeting moved on to discussions of abbey business and administration. From its most familiar, and in some ways most significant element, the meeting was early known as the Chapter of Faults. In time, though, the abbot meeting with his monks 'in chapter' gave the room a wider role as the primary gathering place for the community. Architecturally, its importance was generally reflected in both scale and sumptuous detailing.

The entrance to the chapter house was often the most heavily decorated part of the cloister. Inside, the lateral walls might also feature decorative arcades, with the span of the chamber usually vaulted in stone. Early Benedictine chapter houses often featured an apse at the east end, as at Battle, Durham and Reading.[309] If the chamber was retained within the width of the east range, then its height tended to be limited by the dormitory floor above. To overcome this, many communities threw out a much larger room beyond the east wall of the range, either from the outset, or during a phase of expansion. Architects were given the freedom to experiment with more elaborate structures, with greater possibilities in terms of lighting and vaulting. In such cases, as at Chester and York (St Mary's), the enclosed western space was retained as a vestibule.

304 Brakspear 1912–13, 428. For the known abbots, see Smith and London 2001, 52; VCH 1956, 230.

305 Leedy 1980, 182–83. Other known fan-vaulted cloisters in the south-west included those at Muchelney and Tewkesbury, for which see Leedy 1980, 187, 207.

306 Such use is recorded at Durham: *Rites of Durham*, 74.

307 He states that the rock is very near to the surface on the south side: Brakspear 1912–13, 428–29.

308 Knowles 1963, 412–17.

309 For Battle, Hare 1985, 20–23; for Reading, Thurlby and Baxter 2002.

In his excavation report, Brakspear mentions having unearthed various fragments 'of Norman character' within the chapter house, including some vault ribs. He suggested the room was covered with a vault of single span, in a similar arrangement to those at Gloucester and Reading. From documentary evidence, we know that Abbot William of Colerne (1260–96) made a series of extensive modifications to the buildings in the claustral complex.[310] Among these, he 'caused the chapter house as far as the walls to be removed and again put up the whole with new timber and covered with stone and alures in the circuit of the chapter house'. How far these particular alterations went beyond a new roof and a parapet it is difficult to say. We do know, however, that the chapter house roof was covered with lead at the suppression.[311]

In the majority of Benedictine plans, the east range usually extended for quite some distance beyond the chapter house, terminating well outside the confines of the cloister garth, as for example at Bury St Edmunds, Canterbury (St Augustine's), York (St Mary's), and Westminster. The long and comparatively narrow ground-floor chamber (possibly divided into units) was frequently vaulted in stone, either from the outset or as part of an early rebuilding. It would be impossible to impose a single unified model on the way this space was used by communities: too many variations have been suggested across the country, and over time.[312] Even so, among the possibilities, we might expect to find the day stairs to the dormitory (often located next to the chapter house); perhaps a treasury; the warming house; possibly the novices room; and even storage space. Above, the entire first floor along the full length of the east range was generally given over to the monks' dormitory. This was certainly the pattern at Battle, Binham, Bury St Edmunds, Sherborne, Westminster, and elsewhere.[313]

At Malmesbury, however, planning was restricted by the steep fall in ground level not far beyond the confines of the cloister garth itself. The exigencies of having to cope with these physical difficulties may, as Brakspear suggested, have led the builders to lay out the dormitory on an east–west access, somewhere towards the north-east corner of the complex. If this is correct, the arrangement would have been similar to that at Winchester Cathedral Priory, and to the fourteenth-century pattern at Gloucester. Brakspear gives no indication of having traced any archaeological evidence at Malmesbury, and included merely an outline plot on his plan (fig. 24). In turn, this begs a question as to the location of the monks' latrine, or reredorter, usually attached to the end of the dormitory block, and to which we shall return below.

As with the chapter house, William of Colerne is recorded as having remodelled the dormitory in the later thirteenth century. The works may have included the construction of a stone vault, with parapets and perhaps a leaded roof.[314]

The North and West Ranges

Almost without exception in Benedictine houses, the range parallel with the south (or in this case north) walk of the cloister housed the monks' refectory, or frater.[315] It was a large, well-lit chamber, sometimes located at ground level, as at Chester, or more often (it seems) raised over an undercroft, as at Canterbury (St Augustine's), Gloucester, Sherborne, and York (St Mary's); also at the cathedral priories of Durham and Worcester.[316] The internal

310 *Registrum*, II, 365–66. Annex 2, below.

311 Brakspear 1912–13, 434.

312 Dickinson 1961, 32–34; Gilyard-Beer 1976, 30–34.

313 For Battle, see Hare 1985, 16–39; for Sherborne, RCHME 1974; for Bury St Edmunds, Whittingham 1952; for Westminster, RCHME 1924, 82.

314 Annex 2, below; *Registrum*, II, 365.

315 Dickinson 1961, 34–35; Gilyard-Beer 1976, 35–36; Fernie 2000, 204.

316 For Gloucester, see Welander 1990, 326–29; for Sherborne, RCHME 1974, 212–13; for York, Wilson and Burton 1988, 24; for Worcester, Barker 1994, 45–46; Pevsner 1968, 307.

arrangements were not wholly unlike those of any medieval great hall, though one of the principal distinguishing features was the existence of a pulpit, from which one of the brethren read aloud during the meals. Examples survive at, or are known from, Binham, Chester, and Shrewsbury.

At Malmesbury, Brakspear's excavations again recovered no more than the barest detail of the building (fig. 24), though it was presumably from the topography that he suggested it was raised over a sub-vault. The position of the south wall (that supporting the adjacent cloister vault) seems to have been established, though the only indication of its northern counterpart was a small fragment of foundation, located in the bank some 20 feet (6.1m) away. If correctly identified, it would make for a refectory of rather narrow proportions. Unlike the chapter house and the dormitory, there is no indication of the building having been refurbished under Abbot Wiliam of Colerne, though the roof was certainly covered with lead at the time of the suppression.[317]

In most Benedictine plans, the monastery kitchen was a freestanding structure located somewhere adjacent to the outside walls of the refectory.[318] Again, this would not have been possible given the space restrictions at Malmesbury, and instead its position appears to have been shifted westwards (fig. 24). In the late thirteenth century, William of Colerne made 'three ovens next to the kitchen of the convent'. The main building, in any case, survived past the suppression, to be noted by the antiquary John Aubrey in 1650, who wrote: 'on the N. West side of the Abbey Church stand the ruines of the kitchen on four strong freestone pillars'.[319] Talbot inferred from this that the pillars were at the angles of a square, and that the kitchen may have been polygonal. Brakspear, drawing no doubt on the splendid fourteenth-century Benedictine kitchen at Glastonbury, thought the chimney must have stood over the middle of the building, with the fireplaces supported in some way by the pillars. For him, though, the room itself could have been square or octagonal, the outer walls probably having gone by the time Aubrey saw it. In fact, the kitchen was to remain standing well beyond the seventeenth century. It appears as a prominent little structure with a pyramidal roof — north of the ruined west front of the church — in a number of topographical drawings and engravings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including works by Turner and by Hanks.[320] Apart from the Glastonbury survival, a further standing kitchen is to be found at Durham, with another possibly at Ely.[321]

The west range of claustral buildings was perhaps the least subject to any form of regular planning.[322] Normally, however, one would expect to find a two-storey range, with cellarage at the lower level, and possibly accommodation for the abbot or prior, or perhaps for guests, above. At Malmesbury, Brakspear initially reported finding nothing to indicate that a range of buildings had existed along this side, citing Canterbury (St Augustine's), Gloucester, and Westminster as comparable examples. Yet at each of these, and at many other sites where nothing survives, there is either a good case to be made for the loss of the range, or we can demonstrate that the community made alternate arrangements within the claustral planning. At Great Malvern, for example, what seems to have been a hall with a fine wooden roof on the west site of the cloister was demolished without trace in 1841.[323]

Whether Brakspear subsequently discovered more, leading him to change his mind about the west range at Malmesbury, is not clear. Nonetheless, on a plan published in 1930 he does provide an indication of the southern end of the building.[324] Indeed, he shows a narrow

317 Brakspear 1912–13, 434.

318 Dickinson 1961, 36–37; Gilyard-Beer 1976, 36; Fernie 2000, 204.

319 *Topographical Collections*, 260. Noted in Talbot 1884, 34; Brakspear 1912–13, 429–30.

320 Reproduced in Keystone 2000, figs. 11 and 14; Luce 1979 (1929), facing p. 155.

321 The Ely building is illustrated in Fernie 2000, 205, and described in Maddison 2000, 87–88.

322 Dickinson 1961, 38–40; Gilyard-Beer 1976, 36, 38; Fernie 2000, 206.

323 For Gloucester, see Welander 1991, 301–12; for Westminster, RCHME 1924, 85–90; for Great Malvern, Pevsner 1968, 166.

324 The plan accompanies the notes on the Royal Archaeological Institute's visit to Malmesbury in 1930, though it is not dated: *AJ* 1930, facing 456.

chamber adjoining the nave, with doorways to the east and west, which would equate to the common parlour, often found in this position at Benedictine sites.

Other Claustral Buildings

Beyond the three principal claustral ranges, we might expect there to have been a much larger complex of buildings within the wider abbey precinct (fig. 25). Some of these were fundamental to the monastic way of life; others no doubt reflected the increased status and sophisticated tastes of later medieval abbots; and many would have reflected the agricultural and industrial economies which supported the community. Documentary evidence tells us at least of the existence of some of these buildings, and there are also one or two survivals.

In particular, what is today the Old Bell hotel may incorporate fabric of the abbey's principal guest house (fig. 72).[325] In its north wall there is a thirteenth-century window of two lights with shafted jambs. The central room on the first floor has a fine late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century compartmental ceiling with deeply moulded beams. The building may well have stood on the north side of a great court before the west front, with a gateway known as the Spital gate some distance further to the west. The pattern was not unusual at Benedictine sites, with a framework of similar elements still surviving at Evesham, for example.[326] It is presumably the core of the present Old Bell which can be seen in front of the abbey church in the 1648 panorama of the town (fig. 4).

To the north-east of the church lies Abbey House (fig. 73), a building which has intrigued most authors who have sought to make sense of the overall monastic complex at Malmesbury.[327] Again, this appears in the 1648 panorama, as a prominent gabled structure to the rear of the church (fig. 4). In the nineteenth century, Hills chose to reject any idea that it had served as the former abbot's residence, believing instead that it occupied the site of the monastic infirmary. Talbot, on the other hand, discarding any notion that it had been the refectory, reverted to the idea of the abbot's residence, suggesting that the surviving medieval work might have served as an undercroft below a great hall. In turn, both Paul and Perkins were more inclined to agree with Hills, preferring to see the function of the undercroft as the support for the infirmary hall.[328]

Today, it is clear that the house, as it now stands, is a definitely a post-monastic building, probably raised in the late sixteenth century by Sir James Stumpe.[329] This said, its northern half is indeed built over a late thirteenth-century seven-bay undercroft (fig. 24).[330] The undercroft was initially divided into two rib-vaulted chambers, with the ribs supported centrally by a row of (now lost) columns. The four-bay west chamber was 39 feet (11.9m) long and had a tall lancet window in the north wall of each bay. The three-bay east chamber was about 29 feet (8.8m) long, and here there were lancets in just the two outer bays. Both chambers were 23 feet (7m) wide.[331] Brakspear recorded traces of a later medieval structure extending from the south-east corner, though he, too, seems to have been uncertain as to the original function of the undercroft.

325 Brakspear 1912–13, 430; Pevsner 1975, 329; VCH 1991, 157; DNH 1996, 9–10. We have not had the opportunity to conduct our own investigation of the building for the purpose of this report. The hotel used to be known as the Castle (1703).

326 Cox 1990, 132–34. See, also, Aston 2000, 102–07.

327 We have not had the opportunity to view the interior of the house ourselves.

328 [Hills] 1869, 290; Talbot 1884, 34; [Paul] 1895, 165; Perkins 1901, 57. See, also, *Topographical Collections*, 259–60, note 2.

329 Moffatt 1805, 98–99; Brakspear 1912–13, 430–31; Pevsner 1975, 327–28 (where Sir William Stumpe is given as the likely builder); VCH 1991, 134, 157 (Sir James); DNH 1996, 177–78 (*c.* 1540 and after, by one or other of the Stumpes).

330 The undercroft has been compared to that which survives of the west cloister range at the nearby Augustinian priory of Bradenstoke: WANHM 1891, 150. For Bradenstoke (which is clearly a fourteenth-century work), see Brakspear 1922–23, 230–32; Pevsner 1975, 127–28.

331 There is an early mention of the existence of fine late-medieval tile pavements 'which still exist in some lower apartments of the abbey house, now used as dairies': T[homas], 1837, 572.

Given his assumptions about the location of the monks' dormitory, such a narrow rectangular range could have been attached to the east end of the lost building, in which case its upper storey might have served as the monks' latrine, though there is no clear evidence of culverted drainage, or other form of waste disposal, to immediately support such a view.[332] Indeed, on the basis of the stylistic evidence, the structure beneath Abbey House could have been another of those buildings raised or modified by Abbot William of Colerne in the late thirteenth century, especially since he is known to have 'built the infirmary from the foundations'.[333]

Nevertheless, having gone through the two options, in the end Brakspear chose — at least on his published plan (fig. 24) — to place the infirmary a little further to the south, presumably giving marginal preference to the reredorter theory for Abbey House. But he may also have been influenced by the known location of the infirmary complex at many Benedictine sites across the country, including Bury St Edmunds, Canterbury (St Augustine's), Ely, and Westminster.[334]

If Abbey House is also rejected as the site of the former abbot's residence, this is another major building group which has to be located somewhere within the bounds of the precinct. As noted above, at some of the larger Benedictine foundations in England the abbot's accommodation was contrived within or adjacent to the west cloister range. This was true, for example, of Battle, Canterbury (St Augustine's), Gloucester, Sherborne, and Westminster. Elsewhere, it was situated amid a private enclosure featuring gardens, closes, and orchards, somewhere to the east of the main claustral complex. This was the pattern, for instance, at Bury St Edmunds, and York (St Mary's),[335] and Brakspear made the case for just such a location at Malmesbury (fig. 25), at least from the late thirteenth century.[336] It would appear that an earlier (?Anglo-Norman) building on the same spot was extensively remodelled by Abbot William of Colerne. From the abbey cartulary, we know he:

> 'built a great fair hall covered with stone, with a lesser hall towards the gable of the same hall, and of the house which was previously the hall he made an ordinary chamber. And against the same hall he caused to be made a kitchen, and of the larder he rebuilt the walls and strengthened the beams, and covered it in stone'.[337]

The buildings were surrounded by gardens, part laid out to orchard, next to which Abbot William also planted a vineyard and made a herbarium enclosed within a stone wall. At the time of the suppression, this grand abbot's residence was serviced with its own kitchen, larder, buttery, pantry and other offices. The main buildings were covered with lead, and were assigned to remain when the site was entrusted to Sir Edward Baynton in 1539–40.

From the abbey's cartulary, other buildings which received attention (or were mentioned) in the time of Abbot William of Colerne included a carpentry shop, a mill, a granary, the brewhouse, the prison, stables, and a chapel dedicated to St Aldhelm in the abbot's garden. From the same source, it is known that William also spent £100 in putting down water pipes to the various buildings, with the water drawn by conduit from Newnton; the water flowing into the lavatorium for the first time on St Martin's Day, 1284.[338]

According to Brakspear, the formal abbey precinct on the top of the hill enclosed about 6 acres (2.4ha), with the main gatehouse probably situated on the south side (fig. 25). The Spital gate was situated to the west of the church, and gates to the inner and outer courts are

332 Pevsner (1975, 327–28) gives it as the monks' reredorter.

333 *Registrum*, II, 365; Annex 2, below.

334 In general, see Gilyard-Beer 1976, 40–43; Fernie 2000, 206–07. On Ely, see Holton-Krayenbuhl 1997; on Westminster, RCHME 1924, 90–93. At all the sites listed here the position was comparable with that given by Brakspear at Malmesbury.

335 If not the original Norman arrangement in all cases, this was the eventual location at the sites listed.

336 Brakspear 1912–13, 431.

337 *Registrum*, II, 365; Annex 2, below.

338 *Registrum*, II, 361, 376; Luce 1979 (1929), 42; Brakspear 1912–13, 401. In general, see Bond 2001.

mentioned at the time of the suppression. Brakspear suggested that the area of the precinct outside the town walls amounted to a further 26 acres (10.5ha).[339]

We get one further picture of the many ancillary buildings surrounding the main claustral complex from the brief mentions at the time of the suppression. The late abbot's house, with a new lodging adjoining; the kitchen, buttery and pantry, with a lodging over; the abbot's stable; the wool house, and a barn at the Spital Gate, were all to remain. To go were the dormitory, the chapter house, the refectory, and the infirmary, with all adjoining lodgings; the cellarer's chamber (which may have been in the west range) and the convent kitchen; the squire's chamber; St Mary's house and the charnel (that is the house and chapel of the priests of the charnel in the abbey cemetery); all the houses in the sextry end, the steward's lodging, the store house, slaughter house, guests' stable and all other houses in the outer court.[340]

Within a few years of the suppression, William Stumpe had converted every available space within the complex to house cloth looms.[341] When Malmesbury was seen by an anonymous tourist in1634, he noted 'The present sad ruins of that large spacious, strong and famous Abbey, on the North side of the Church, did manifest what her beauty was in her flourishing time'.[342]

339 Brakspear 1912–13, 405–07. See also Butterworth 1999, chapter 5, 15–16. Jackson (1864, 36) said that it was continually stated in books (including Moffatt 1805) that the abbey buildings spread over 45 acres (18.2ha). This is wrong, he claimed, and as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (*Valor*, II, 119) makes clear the site was of 6 acres (2.4ha), but the grounds (including orchards and pasture, and called the Convent garden) covered 40 acres (16.2ha) more. There is another claim that the precincts of the abbey coincided with the boundary of the later Abbey Parish: Luce 1979 (1929), 187. On monastic precincts in general, see Aston 2000, 101–24; Coppack 1990, 100–28.

340 Annex 1, below; Brakspear 1912–13, 402–03.

341 Above, p. 16; *Leland Itinerary*, 131.

342 Quoted in Brayley 1834, 411; also Jackson 1864, 36.

5
THE SOUTH AISLE SCREEN

In the south aisle of the abbey church, towards the eastern end, there is a late-medieval panelled and traceried stone screen. It runs just below the level of the capitals, and is positioned immediately to the west of the first pier in the nave arcade and the corresponding aisle respond (figs. 3, 74–76). Effectively, the screen closes off the last bay of the aisle, that which now serves as a chapel dedicated to St Aldhelm.[343] A second screen, of almost identical form, can be seen in the same position within the north aisle (fig. 77).

These two screens are by no means insignificant features: virtually every historic account of the church makes mention of them. Professor Edward Freeman, for example, thought they were 'of Perpendicular date, but with Decorated tracery'. Gordon Hills wrote of the two 'stone-work screens, occupying the north-eastern and south-eastern corners' of the church. Like Freeman, he thought they were 'of perpendicular date', though added with something of a note of surprise that 'the tracery is very good'. Roland Paul again brought the screens to the attention of his readers, pointing to the 'pierced tracery and doorways in the centre'. Six years later (in what has become the classic guidebook to the abbey) the Revd Thomas Perkins published a photograph of the south aisle screen, though he chose to defer to Harold Brakspear in matters of date and function.[344] Closing this sequence of early references, one of the town's most noted historian, Sir Richard Luce, was in no doubt that the screens were late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century additions to the fabric of the church.[345] Turning to the more recent literature, we find nothing which really contradicts the substance of older opinion. Pevsner, for instance, accepts they were Perpendicular introductions to the building, and in the statutory list description for the abbey they are given as 'fifteenth-century stone screens with Perpendicular tracery'.[346]

Notwithstanding these various descriptions, for some unfathomable reason there appears to be a long-running claim that the two screens do not in fact relate to the Benedictine use of the church. Hearsay evidence, entirely unsubstantiated so far as we can see, has sometimes been put forward to suggest that they were removed from the former parish church of St Paul, abandoned at the time of the suppression.[347] Even more implausibly, it is occasionally argued that the screens were introduced during one of the two principal phases of the building's restoration.

Hence, although both screens are shown on the earliest known ground plan of the abbey, dated 1806 and published by John Britton (fig. 16), in the accompanying text the author seems to have been of the opinion they were introduced as part of the alterations made to the church when it became parochial. They were depicted accordingly on the plan, 'with fainter lines'.[348] Almost a century on, the Revd Perkins made reference to the same local rumour (without necessarily accepting it).[349] Rather more surprisingly, the suggestion of the removal of the screens to the abbey church at the time of the suppression surfaces once again in the Pevsner entry on Malmesbury, sadly without the authors making their own

343 It was previously known as the Lovell chapel, after the Lovell family of Cole Park.

344 Freeman 1864, 99; [Hills] 1869, 289; [Paul] 1895, 165; Perkins 1901, 45, 94. A further description, in Waller 1895–98, 263, follows Freeman very closely.

345 Luce 1929 (1979), 49.

346 Pevsner 1975, 326; DNH 1996, 171.

347 Above, p. 40. We have not had the opportunity to trace the precise origins of this claim, though it had clearly taken root before the end of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, though, in his account of St Paul's church, Moffatt makes no mention of the removal of any fittings to the abbey, which we might perhaps expect had any item been of prominent memory: Moffatt 1805, 94–95.

348 Britton 1807–20, I, U11, and plate I.

349 Perkins 1901, 94.

critical assessment of the fabric evidence.[350] Most recently, the same tale is given fresh credence in another local history of the town: Bowen, states 'it is obvious that they were not purpose designed, and could well have been part of the furnishings of St Paul's and brought from that place in the mid-sixteenth century'.[351]

To address these claims, and to better understand the function and significance of the south aisle screen in particular, in this section of the report we begin with a basic architectural and archaeological description, focusing on the original design of the structure, and examining its relationship to the twelfth- and fourteenth-century fabric of the church. The details are then compared to those of the counterpart screen in the north aisle. Next, we examine the evidence for alteration and damage to the fabric of the southern screen after the suppression, looking at the various reorderings surrounding this part of the church from the eighteenth through to the twentieth centuries. By way of summary, drawing together the evidence thus far, we end the section with earlier authoritative views on the purpose of the two screens within the late-medieval monastic nave. This will prepare us for the final section of the report, in which we present a broader consideration of the Benedictine liturgical arrangements within the church, and of the likely place of the south aisle screen within them.

Architectural and Archaeological Description of the Screen

The south aisle screen stands about 10 feet 9 inches (3.3m) high, its principal elevation running for almost 16 feet (4.8m) from end to end (figs. 74–80).[352] Both in terms of elevation and cross section, it is clear that the east and west sides of the screen were designed to present a virtual mirror image of one another. In essence, the composition comprises six equally spaced bays, each measuring approximately 2 feet 6 inches (0.76m) across. The bays form a prominent vertical grid, defined by principal mullions finished with a roll and fillet. Horizontally, the design falls into two zones of different height, separated by a sloping dado rail or sill, tapering above and below to end as a freestanding fillet. At the middle of the screen, much of the two central bays is occupied by a wide doorway with a depressed four-centred head, its apex situated some 6 feet 6 inches (2m) above the aisle floor. Folding oak doors (themselves panelled and traceried) open into the last aisle bay, turning on pintles set in jambs which cut into the mouldings on the east side of the doorway.[353]

In both façades, the smaller dado zone sits on a moulded base (figs. 80, 81). Each bay is then subdivided as two panels, featuring cinquefoil cusping with foliate terminals beneath two-centred heads (fig. 82). In the upper stage the bays have openwork tracery: two cinquefoil-cusped and ogee-head lights are surmounted by an elliptical eyelet, with four mini cruciform lobes, all set under a two-centred head. There are also circlets with similar mini lobes in the spandrels (fig. 83).[354] Each light is closed with a single iron stanchion and two saddle-bars. The screen is finished with a moulded cornice, having hollow chamfers above and below filleted nosing. Initially, the cornice mouldings projected in like fashion on both the east and west side of the screen. The cornice seems to end very abruptly, giving the impression that something may have sat above its flat upper surface.[355]

350 Pevsner 1975, 326.

351 Bowen 2000, 109.

352 The description of the screen benefits very considerably from a recent archaeological survey carried out by Jerry Sampson: Caroe & Partners 2001. We gratefully acknowledge the contribution made to our report by this work.

353 The same doors appear on an illustration of 1816 (below, fig. 89), though it seems unlikely they are the originals.

354 It was a form by no means unusual in larger window compositions of the last quarter of the fifteenth century: Harvey 1978, 202, 245.

355 In passing, we might just note the general resemblance in the composition of the screen to an example in oak at Salisbury Cathedral, thought to be of fifteenth-century date: Vallance 1947, 81, fig. 79; Brown 1999, 71–73.

At its southern end, the screen abuts the outer wall of the twelfth-century aisle, until it reaches the sill of the inserted fourteenth-century window (figs. 84, 85). About 6 feet 6 inches (2m) up, the screen begins to run on as plain ashlar, gradually extending further into the east splay of the window.[356] At the top, the cornice moulding continues without interruption, though its east face is cut into the chamfer of the splay. Both the plain ashlar, which course for course aligns with the stonework of the tracery in the south bay, and the surmounting cornice, are in turn splayed eastwards to achieve the necessary junction. Given this continuous coursing, as well as the similarities in general wear patterns on the stone, there seems no reason whatsoever to think this plain southern margin was not part of the original design of the screen.[357]

At first glance, the situation at the northern end of the screen is no longer quite so straightforward, since the junction with the Romanesque fabric has been lost (figs. 80, 86). Here, in the west elevation, the northernmost bay is finished with a flat, unmoulded edge. At dado level, this edge has clearly been cut back, in a way which certainly suggests a later reworking rather than poor finishing. On the opposite side of the screen, two of the stones representing the current jamb of the northern tracery bay show definite signs of an eastward return; both bear smears of mortar where further masonry was attached. Again, at dado level, there are strong indications of a return following the alignment above.[358] Both the occurrence of the return, and its 45 degree angle of projection, are further emphasized in the cornice (fig. 86), and in what survives of the base mouldings. Finally, the position where the return would have met the first pier of the nave arcade is indicated by an outline in the yellowish limewash. In other words, the loss of the masonry fragments between the screen and the pier post-dates the application of this wash, though in itself this is perhaps not conclusive proof of a late-medieval junction.

It so happens that the archaeological evidence for the posited northern termination of the south aisle screen at the first nave pier is borne out by several early illustrations and photographs (figs. 87, 88).[359] These views confirm the presence of the flat, unmoulded edge to the northern end of the west façade. From this point, we see a plain ashlar return running at a 45 degree angle, and tapering into the masonry of the twelfth-century pier. The moulded cornice is continued in identical fashion. Indeed, the scar where the outer face of the cornice has been removed from the pier remains clearly visible today.[360]

Turning now to the north aisle, we find the easternmost bay is closed off by a second stone screen of identical character.[361] Today, it is heavily disguised by the structure surrounding the organ, and in the way the generally inaccessible east bay is now used by the parish.[362] However, early photographs are again extremely helpful in the identification of the original details (figs. 77, 89).[363] In sum, there are six bays of the same size and form found in the south aisle screen, with matching tracery and moulding profiles, a central doorway with a depressed four-centred head, and even stanchions and saddle-bars closing the upper lights arranged in a similar pattern. The cornice also ends in like blunt fashion, as if something was intended to run above. The principal difference compared with the south aisle occurs in the way the northern screen abuts the outer wall. Here, it is an altogether less cumbersome fixing, due in large part to the survival on this side of the nave of the second bay twelfth-century window. Without a wide fourteenth-century splay to contend with, the

356 As Jerry Samson observes in his recent report, the aisle wall shows signs of an outward lean at this point (fig. 78). The movement must have been arrested before the insertion of the screen: Caroe & Partners 2001, 1–2.

357 For an early sketch of this southern termination, see [Paul] 1895, 164.

358 Caroe & Partners 2001, 2–3.

359 There are published early photographs: [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, facing 12; Brakspear 1912–13, fig. 2.

360 Roland Paul, at least, was in no doubt this was an original 'Perpendicular' junction, and marked it as such on his ground plan (fig. 23): [Paul] 1895.

361 Caroe & Partners 2001, 5–6.

362 The enclosed bay is currently used as the choir vestry and for storage.

363 There are published early photographs in: Perkins 1901, 84; Brakspear 1912–13, fig. 1.

masons were able to end the screen against a flat Romanesque wall face. Moreover, the fact that the aisle wall had not moved out of line (possibly on account of the support provided by the cloister), meant for a much neater finish to this side of the elevation. As for the southern end of the screen, this appears to have been completed in just the same way as in the opposite aisle (fig. 89). A chase in the west face of the first pier of the north arcade presumably marks the position where the plain ashlar wall face ran in at a 45 degree angle.

Post-Monastic Alteration and Damage to the Screen

To summarize the evidence thus far, from the architectural similarities alone there can be very little doubt these two screens were conceived as a functional pair. Moreover, the archaeological indications are that they were designed to occupy these same positions within the Benedictine nave. In any medieval church, the insertion of such late-Gothic features into earlier fabric almost invariably resulted in the need for some *ad hoc* adjustment, and this is just what we see in the variation of the fixing in either aisle. Indeed, we might dismiss the notion that the screens formed part of one of the nineteenth- or early twentieth-century phases of restoration almost immediately. If the screens had been moved at that time, it would be most unusual had they not undergone equally comprehensive restoration. Yet we find them damaged, their stonework partially eroded and cut, and the method of fixing far from ideal. It would be surprising if a late-Georgian or Victorian architect had handled the Romanesque fabric in this way, with such untidy finishing. One might also question where the screens been since the sixteenth century, especially if they are thought to belong to the lost east end of the monastic church.[364]

Taking this argument forward, there have clearly been several phases of post-suppression alteration in the south-east corner of the church, resulting in quite considerable damage to the south aisle screen. Our earliest opportunity to pick up on its fate comes from the 1806 ground plan of Malmesbury published by John Britton (fig. 16).[365] Although, as noted above, Britton seems to have considered that the two screens were sixteenth-century parochial additions to the monastic church, he depicts the southern screen in its current position, running into the large fourteenth-century window splay to the south, and actually abutting the first pier of the nave arcade to the north. Also, from this same plan, we see that the fifteenth-century Æthelstan tomb-chest (now located in the north aisle) was placed under the first bay of the south arcade. A decade later, the arrangements shown by Britton were confirmed in two more illustrative sources. Frederick Nash's ground plan, published in 1816, locates both the screen, and the Æthelstan tomb-chest, in exactly the same positions (fig. 17). Yet Nash's work is far more refined, not only marking the bay divisions in the screen tracery, but also showing the junctions to the southern window splay and the arcade pier with far greater accuracy. Furthermore, his transverse section of the church portrays the overall form of both aisle screens much as they appear today (fig. 22). The second source, also published in 1816, is the drawing showing the interior of the abbey church from the south-east corner by John Coney (fig. 90).[366] In this illustration we see that the Æthelstan tomb-chest (the effigy orientated with the head to the west) occupied the full width of the first arcade bay. The south screen itself is very much as we see it today, including the folding doors, though alas this takes us no further forward with regard to the precise junction with the arcade pier. Beyond the screen, through the central doorway, we see that the nave was apparently filled with comparatively tall box pews.

It was presumably these same pews which are shown in the anonymous watercolour illustration of *c.* 1810 (fig. 62), and which were then planned with some degree of accuracy by the parish clerk, J. H. Webb, in 1823 (figs. 91, 92). The caption to Webb's drawing

364 This is the underlying conclusion reached by Jerry Sampson's in his recent report: Caroe & Partners 2001, 7–9. We also thank Dr Linda Monckton for her observations.

365 We do discount the possibility of discovering yet earlier documentary or pictorial evidence.

366 There is another early illustration of the south aisle screen (*c.* 1809), not reproduced in the present report, by John Buckler (d. 1851): British Library, Additional Ms. 36391, f. 203.

reads: '*Ground Plan of the interior of Malmesbury-Abbey Church showing the situation of the pews previous to the new pewing which took place, Anno Domini 1823*'.[367] In other words, it is the arrangement in place immediately before Henry Goodridge's extensive restoration programme of 1822–23.[368] From Webb's plan, we see that a line of box pews was set out right along the outer wall of the south aisle, the eastern one (no. 14) abutting the west face of the screen. Another pew (no. 13) is set against the screen's east façade, and is allocated in the schedule at the foot of the plan to the Revd [?]. In the same corner, there is a pew located across the full width of the first arcade bay (no. 12). And, in the case of these last two, there are strong grounds to suggest they stood in elevated positions: staircases are depicted climbing towards them from the easternmost bay of the aisle. Of course, this makes more immediate sense with regard to the pew which was presumably situated over the Æthelstan tomb-chest (no. 12). One other feature of Webb's plan which is worthy of note is the definite junction shown between the northern end of the aisle screen and the first arcade pier (fig. 92), proof perhaps that the present arrangement definitely pre-dates the first major phase of restoration.

In returning now to the archaeological evidence, it is of great interest to find that much concerning these observations on the pre-1823 pews is reflected not only in the fabric of the south aisle screen itself, but also in the adjacent areas.[369] In particular, on the east façade of the screen, there are very distinct traces of both the position and the fixing of one of the elevated gallery pews (no. 13) shown on Webb's plan (figs. 75, 79, 80, 83, 93, 94). The west side of this gallery structure must have been supported on a horizontal wooden beam, set about 2 feet 2 inches (0.66m) below the top of the cornice, more or less in line with the springing of the screen tracery. Most notably, the position of this beam is marked by a regular cut in the vertical mouldings of the mullions framing the four southern bays, the last such cut occurring at the northern edge of the central doorway (fig. 82). In turn, the gallery structure itself was set flush with the main face of the screen. And, to achieve this purpose, the craftsmen responsible thought nothing of neatly cutting back the entire cornice mouldings on this side. Again, the reworking stops at the northern edge of the doorway, where a stub of cornice moulding and a vertical chase presumably formed part of the fixing. To the south, there is but a another short stub of the cornice moulding surviving in the angle with the window jamb. Between the position of the horizontal beam and the cut-back cornice, each of the bay dividing mullions bears signs of having been drilled for fixing vertical studs (figs. 83, 93). In all, these features bear out Webb's plan (fig. 91) very closely. The gallery pew shown there (no. 13) occupies the same four southern bays, with no indication that anything ran further northwards.

The gallery could not have been supported by the fixings to the screen alone, and there were presumably posts taking the weight of the largely free-standing eastern side.[370] The position is probably marked archaeologically by the squared cut which exists on the left side of the principal shaft of the aisle vault respond (figs. 80, 93, 95). This is certainly positioned at the same height as the horizontal beam to the west (fig. 79). A little way above this, around to the right-hand side of the same shaft (fig. 95), there is a small horizontal chase which could well represent the position of the pew seat itself. Higher still, the east (left) side of the capital on this shaft has been cut back, perhaps an indication of the height of the gallery enclosure. And, finally, it is just possible to trace the line of the wooden staircase leading up to the gallery in the appearance of the limewashes on the aisle wall (fig. 95).

Although there appears to have been no direct impact on the south aisle screen itself, traces of the second raised gallery pew (no. 12) shown on Webb's plan (fig. 92) can be found on the eastern and southern faces of the first pier in the nave arcade. In particular, a

367 A copy of the plan is displayed in the Parvise. At the time there was room for 624 worshippers. The church holds a large collection of plans by Webb, which we have not yet had the opportunity to inspect.

368 With further research, it should be possible to date the introduction of these box pews. Pevsner (1975, 326) gives the communion rail, with its twisted balusters, as *c.* 1700.

369 Caroe & Partners 2001, 3–5.

370 This is indeed what we see with the contemporary wooden gallery at the west end of the nave, shown in the *c.* 1810 watercolour of the church (fig. 62).

curving line can once again be picked out in the surface limewash, marking the wooden stair which gave access to the pew over the Æthelstan tomb-chest.

Further signs of damage inflicted on the south aisle screen during post-suppression reordering can be seen on the west façade (figs. 78, 81). In particular, in much of the dado stage in the southern bays, the projecting mouldings have been quite severely cut back. In addition, above these same bays, there are three vertical cuts through the outer edge of the dado sill. There is every chance the cuts relate to the fixing of another pre-Goodridge box pew (no. 15) marked on the Webb plan (fig. 92). And, since the pew in question seems to have run up against the dado stage of the screen, the cutting back of the face mouldings may also date from this phase. However, as Jerry Sampson has recently pointed out, the Goodridge phase of restoration in 1822–23 resulted in the insertion of a suspended wooden floor, the joists of which appear to have been supported on the aisle wall benches and on the plinths of the arcade piers.[371] In any case, it was the Goodridge work which led to the final removal of the box pews throughout the church, including the one suspended on the east side of the screen. It is especially notable that the screen itself survived, along with that in the north aisle.[372] Indeed, it was presumably Goodridge who also introduced two new stone screens, of the same height as those in the aisles, to close off the first bay of the arcade on either side of the nave (fig. 89). These were set on the aisle face of the piers and eastern responds, and were finished with a cornice moulding of very similar profile to the original screens. They made for more enclosed chapel spaces in the east bay of each aisle.

After Goodridge's reordering and restoration, it would appear that the south aisle screen was left unaltered throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Both the north and south screens were, as noted above, observed by Victorian authors on the architecture of the church. And, when Malmesbury was examined by Roland Paul in 1895, he included the details of the screens on his ground plan (fig. 23),[373] giving a quite accurate representation of the junctions with the outer aisle walls and the arcade piers. Paul broke the church down into four broad structural periods, placing the screens in his Perpendicular phase. In addition, his plan shows the two solid screens — probably of the Goodridge period — closing off the first bay of each aisle from the railed chancel. Paul's plan further plots the pulpit alongside the first pier on the south side of the chancel, and the prayer desk in the same position on the north side. The Æthelston tomb-chest still rests along the first bay of the southern arcade.[374]

In this form, the east end of the church was later photographed from many different angles, showing the screens and other more recent liturgical fittings in just the fashion depicted on Paul's plan (figs. 34, 39, 88, 89).[375] To our knowledge, this was also the condition in which Harold Brakspear would have found the church at the turn of the nineteenth century, and it appears that nothing was dramatically altered during the first principal phase of his restoration programme, in the years 1900 to about 1905. At that time, the main efforts were concentrated at the west end of the church, and on the exterior fabric of the building in general. Following a further appeal for funds, however,[376] major internal reordering works were carried out from 1927–28 onwards. These works were to result, it

371 Caroe & Partners 2001, 4. Jerry Sampson points out that the slots for the joists are plainly visible in the north aisle. Later photographs showing the Goodridge seating still in place (fig. 88) show that the vertical cuts in the dado sill were not related, and were thus more likely inflicted at the time to box pews were introduced.

372 Goodridge's restoration was of course a good twenty years before the principles of the Ecclesiological Society took off, though he is known to have designed several Gothic churches: Colvin 1995, 415–16.

373 [Paul] 1895. The report, plan, and illustrations were part of an ongoing series of the 'Abbeys of Great Britain' published in *The Builder* in the late nineteenth and earl twentieth centuries.

374 There is a very good illustration of the arrangement, seen from the chancel side, in Kemble 1901, 66.

375 We include just a few examples in this report, but other published views may be seen in Perkins, *passim*, and in Brakspear 1912–13, *passim*. Moreover, there is a considerable collection of undated, but early twentieth-century views, showing the church in this condition in the Malmesbury Abbey files of the English Heritage, National Monuments Record, Swindon.

376 Above, p. 45.

seems, in a surprising and quite considerable amount of damage to the south aisle screen, as well as to its northern counterpart.

To appreciate why this was the case, we must look at Brakspear's interpretation of the screens. In his first published ground plan of the abbey, that which accompanied the brief exposition of his findings to the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in 1903,[377] he depicted the north and south aisle screens in much the same fashion as Roland Paul, and for him they could be readily assigned to the fifteenth century. And yet, although he shows both screens returning at similar 45 degree angles into the first pier on either side of the nave, he was perhaps not entirely convinced about the arrangement. Hence, he chose to indicate (in dotted outline) that the screens *may* have run past the piers, continuing to run out into the middle of the nave proper. By the time he published his definitive work on Malmesbury,[378] Brakspear must have been convinced that the returns were not in fact part of the original fabric of the screens. His plan (fig. 24) shows a broken edge in line with each pier, but the screens are depicted quite definitely as running out to meet one another at either side of a central doorway. We shall return to this point below, but for the moment it helps us to understand Brakspear's actions during the late 1920s.

As part of the internal restoration and reordering — undertaken by Brakspear some fifteen years after the publication of his Malmesbury research — significant changes were to be occur at the east end of the church. There was to be a new pulpit, new choir stalls, and oak screens and other features were to be introduced. Already, by 1927, the blocking walls which had probably been built by Goodridge in the easternmost arcade bay at either side of the chancel had been removed.[379] Brakspear's objective, whether his own, or one reached in compromise with the parish, was to replace these solid walls with oak traceried screens. Moreover, it was presumably in order to provide appropriate backing to the choir stalls that the second bays of the arcades were also to be filled with such screens (figs. 96, 97). To achieve the purpose, the Æthelston tomb-chest was moved from the south side of the chancel, to occupy its current place in the north aisle. Far more radically, to accommodate his oak screenwork in the second bays, Brakspear must have allowed the 45 degree returns of the north and south aisle screens to be brutally cut, severing their former junctions with the arcade piers. He could take comfort in the fact that this drastic action would at least have the advantage of corresponding with his theories on the original monastic screening arrangements. Nevertheless, Brakspear must have retained some doubt. Hence, in the case of the south aisle screen, the cut-back of the cornice was stopped just short of the return angle (fig. 86), whilst the former junction of the cornice with the nave pier was left as a rough scar, rather than being refaced (fig. 96). Brakspear was clearly concerned that the fabric of the building should continue to speak for itself.

The arrangements over on the north side of the nave were presumably meant to be similar, though there the organ structure now occupies almost all of the bay in question and hides much of the detail, apart from the scar where the cornice once met the pier.

Since the 1930s, nothing further appears to have been done to the aisle screens. They have remained just as they were left by Brakspear.

Earlier Views on the Function of the Screen

As outlined earlier, most of the nineteenth-century authors who discussed the fabric of the abbey church at Malmesbury made mention of the north and south aisle screens. None of them, however, seems to have given a great deal of thought to the original purpose of these features. Rather, their attention was drawn to the screen at the far east end of the surviving church, that running beneath the former western crossing arch which has long served as a

377 [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, facing 14; though see his comments at 12.

378 Brakspear 1912–13; Brakspear 1913–14.

379 Keystone 2000, 16, derived from Wiltshire Record Office, 2512/100/9, file 1. We have not yet had the opportunity to look at Brakspear's extensive correspondence on this subject, but it may contain further clues as to decisions made by the architect at the time.

reredos (figs. 33, 98). It was variously described by the early writers on the building as the rood screen, or the choir screen.[380] We shall need to return to this in a little more detail below, but for the moment our exposition might to better to concentrate on the thoughts of the three scholars whose ideas are the starting point for a fuller understanding of the south aisle screen, and of its relationship to the other liturgical features at the east end of the church. Inevitably, Brakspear's comments on this particular aspect of the building are again of considerable interest. His views were, though, much influenced by the theories of his one-time mentor, Sir William St Hope (1854–1919). In turn, the work of both men was taken up and developed by Aymer Vallance (d. 1943), who was eventually to produce the fullest account of the Malmesbury screens, in a volume devoted entirely to the subject of such furnishings in greater English churches, published posthumously in 1947.[381]

By way of background, it is important to appreciate that at the turn of the nineteenth century Hope and Brakspear were very much pioneers of the liturgical interpretation of screening arrangements in larger medieval churches, most notably monastic churches. The two men were initially friends, and their ideas were in part developed during the excavation of a considerable number of ruined sites, which they explored either together, or independently.[382] One of the great strengths in their method was the willingness to observe and record above and below ground features in like measure, combining evidence from archaeology, from minor *ex situ* fragments of superstructure, and from cuts, scars and holes preserved in the piers and other fabric of standing buildings. It was Hope, in particular, who led the way in the early decades of the twentieth century. The son of a Derbyshire clergyman, and himself a devout High Churchman, he became greatly interested in monastic liturgical practices, publishing an important overview of his knowledge on choir screens in 1917.[383] We might remember, however, that there were others who had been interested in the systematic study of these features across the country. Indeed, Augustus Welby Pugin had produced a treatise on the subject in the mid-nineteenth century.[384] And, just a decade before the appearance of Hope's synthesis, that indefatigable author on all matters of medieval ecclesiastical architecture, Francis Bond, had expanded on his various summary accounts of choir screens, rood screens, and galleries in English churches, with the publication of an impressive volume in 1908.[385] In fact, Bond was to note and describe the screen located at the far east end of the nave at Malmesbury, calling it the 'ancient pulpitum', and setting it in its general monastic context.[386] Meanwhile, Aymer Vallance was also busy recording and collecting the material for the two volumes he eventually produced on church screens. He visited Malmesbury as early as July 1911, at the time when Brakspear was the parish architect. Vallance was also a correspondent of Hope, doubtless exchanging various discoveries and ideas.[387]

Having set the scene, we may progress to look at what the three men actually said about the screens at Malmesbury. Beginning with Brakspear, his views were initially summarized in the account he produced for the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological society's visit

380 T[homas] (1824, 305) wondered if it occupied the position of the rood loft; Freeman (1864, 97–98), Bazeley (1891–92, 14), and [Paul] (1895, 164, 165) thought it the rood screen; Talbot (1884, 32–33) called it the choir screen.

381 Vallance 1947, 110–11.

382 See the comments in Harrison, Morris and Robinson 1998, 249–50.

383 Hope 1916–17. For his career, see *Dictionary of National Biography, 1912–1921*, 267–68. It seems his ideas were, in part, derived from his 'dogmatic friend' J. T. Micklethwaite (1843–1907), a founder member of the St Paul's Ecclesiological Society: Vallance 1947, 19. For Micklethwaite, see the obituary in: *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, series 2, **21** (1907), 435–36.

384 Pugin 1851.

385 Bond 1908; and for one of his summary accounts, Bond 1906, 179–82.

386 Bond 1908, 160.

387 Vallance had published several articles on screens before the appearance of Hope's work in 1916–17, but his two books came rather later: Vallance 1936; Vallance 1947. There is a short obituary in: *Antiquaries Journal*, **24** (1944), 180–81.

to the church in 1903, which ran:

> 'Of the internal arrangements, the eastern bay was occupied by the *pulpitum*, a gallery from which the epistle and gospel were sung on holy days, which was supported on two stone screens. The eastern one remains, and forms the present reredos. It is of the time of Henry VIII, and bears an interesting series of Tudor badges and a fine coat of royal arms in the centre over the choir door. The front of the western screen has been destroyed across the centre of the nave, but exists in either aisle. It was of handsome open-work tracery, with a doorway in the centre of the nave, and one in either aisle. At the third pair of pillars was the rood screen, with the nave altar in front, and in the aisle on either side a small chapel'.[388]

In other words, Brakspear envisaged two screens running across the east end of the nave, which together supported a raised platform or gallery, known as the pulpitum. One of the supporting screens is that which survives between the western crossing piers (fig. 98). The second screen ran immediately in front of the first piers of the arcades, spanning both the central vessel and the aisles, but with only the aisle sections standing today. For Brakspear, then, the south aisle screen was part of one large liturgical furnishing, a feature which would have filled the entire first nave bay of the Benedictine monastic church. And, to complete these nave screening arrangements, he suggested there was a further transverse screen located between the third pair of piers, with the rood above and the nave altar in front.

Brakspear did not really modify these views on the nave screens in his definitive account of Malmesbury, other than to expanded his earlier description (Annex 3). It is, nevertheless, worth mentioning that there are slightly different versions of his account in the two published editions of his paper.[389] In both versions, he says more on the monastic choir, and on the role of the choir screen (the present reredos) as a backing to the stalls. He also redates the arms on the cornice of the reredos to the reign of Henry VII (1485–1509), rather than Henry VIII (1507– 47). In the longer edition of his paper, Brakspear went on to suggest the way access was gained to the raised gallery (pulpitum) he had posited between the two screens. He says it was by way of a wooden stair from the south aisle, and a narrow gangway at the back of the westward screen, 'the notches for which are still quite clear'. He also compared the general character of these Malmesbury arrangements to the pulpitum at Norwich.[390]

In closing the text of his paper on the abbey, Brakspear expressed his thanks to his 'old friend' Dr W. H. St John Hope for 'various suggestions as to the ritual arrangements of the church'.[391] In all probability, they would have reached agreement on the likely form of the Malmesbury pulpitum in their meetings and correspondence since the late 1890s. Not surprisingly, when Hope came to publish his own summary of the surviving medieval screens at Malmesbury Abbey, he stuck very closely to the same interpretation. Hope's paper sets out to produce a broad synthesis of choir screening arrangements in greater English churches generally. And, as we shall examine further in the next section of this report, when it came to monastic churches he attempted to group the known examples of screens into several broad categories. One of his groups (that included Malmesbury) was based on what is known of the arrangements at the Benedictine abbey of St Augustine's (or St Austin's), Canterbury.[392] He described the Malmesbury arrangements thus:

> 'The arrangement at Malmesbury resembled that at St Austin's and had the quire under the great tower. The stalls abutted westwards against a thin wall with a doorway in the middle: this still exists and is *temp.* king Henry VII as shown by his arms. The bay west was roofed

388 [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 12. The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society proceedings also include a piece on the heraldry of the reredos screen by F. Were: [Brakspear] *et al.* 1903, 14–15.

389 Brakspear 1912–13, 422, 424; with a marginally expanded version in Brakspear 1913–14, 485–86.

390 For Norwich, see Vallance 1947, 43–46; Hope 1916–17, 99–101.

391 Brakspear 1912–13, 432; Brakspear 1913–14, 494.

392 For a summary of St Augustine's, see Gem 1997, 110–22, with references to Hope's work on the site, and to the various excavations since.

over from the wall to a light stone screen which was continued across the aisles. The middle part of this has gone, but the aisle sections remain, with doorways through them. The two bays in front formed the retroquire, which was enclosed westwards by the roodscreen with the nave altar between the third pair of piers: there were also screens in line across the aisles, with chapels filling the bay before them. The line of the roodscreen is indicated by the little stone closet for the organs that served it, which projects from the triforium on the south side. There must have been a fencescreen of some sort before the nave altar, but as there are no marks of one upon the pillars it was probably an enterclose, as at Durham, with a way past each side to the rood doors'.[393]

Finally, there is the account of the Malmesbury screens provided by Aymer Vallance, which is by far the fullest of the three (Annex 4). Vallance was, as we have seen, familiar with the work of both Brakspear and Hope, and his description of the overall arrangements in the Wiltshire abbey concurs with theirs in most essential elements. There are, however, one or two notable variations.

In the prologue to what is essentially a catalogue of sites, Vallance emphasizes the paramount importance of the choir screen in greater churches, or 'to call it by its specific name, the pulpitum'.[394] For Vallance, then, it was the solid wall at the back (west) of the choir stalls which should be termed the *pulpitum*, and not necessarily any form of raised gallery which may have been partly supported by such a wall. Consequently, in his specific Malmesbury description, Vallance describes the present high altar reredos as the original *pulpitum*. His account takes us through its various features, including the cornice heraldry, which he dates to post-1501. Interestingly, Vallance seems to have been the first commentator to draw our attention to the fact that the west face of the screen was painted 'with conventional designs and black-letter inscriptions'.

Next, Vallance quotes a section from Brakspear's views on the westward screen, including his ideas on the method of access from the south aisle. Without necessarily agreeing in full, Vallance then provides his own detailed description of the surviving screen elements in the south and north aisles. He concludes in somewhat ambiguous vein, by suggesting that it was the rood screen (contrary to his quote from Brakspear) which once linked the surviving north and south aisles screens across the central vessel of the nave. Above this, he claims, there may have been a woodwork loft, which would explain the partial loss of the label moulds above the arches of the second bays (figs. 96, 97).

In concluding this section of the report, what is clear from all three accounts is that the apparent isolation of the south aisle screen today is entirely misleading. On the contrary, not only is it far more likely that the screen in question was linked to its northern counterpart by a continuation across the central vessel of the nave, it seems that this work as a whole was in turn part of a grander set of liturgical furnishings at the east end of the late-medieval monastic nave.

393 Hope 1916–17, 98.

394 Vallance 1947, 13. Also, Hope 1916–17, 46.

6
SCREENS AND LITURGY AT MALMESBURY

In this last section of our investigation, we will address three main themes. First, having taken account of early twentieth-century scholarly opinion on the role of the south aisle screen in its late-medieval setting, it may be helpful to place such liturgical furnishings in their Benedictine and wider monastic contexts. From there, we might attempt a fresh review of the specific evidence for liturgical divisions at Malmesbury. And, to conclude, we present a *speculative* reconstruction of the east end of the nave in the early sixteenth century, based chiefly on the surviving archaeological and architectural evidence.

Choir Screens, Rood Screens and other Divisions in Monastic Churches

As Fernie has recently summarized with simple clarity, liturgically a great medieval church was divided into three principal areas: the presbytery (*presbyterium*), the choir (*chorus*), and the nave (*navis*).[395] The presbytery — sometimes known as the chancel, from the *cancelli* or little screens which originally marked it off — housed the sanctuary for the high altar, and space to the west for the celebrant and those assisting him in services. The choir was for the singers, or else served as the place where the monastic community chanted the divine office. It was occupied by the choir stalls, and was terminated to the west by the choir screen. The nave was generally for the laity, and accommodated the lay altar, often known as the Jesus altar, or the Holy Cross.[396] If the church possessed a shrine it stood in the feretory, normally located east of the sanctuary. When thinking about these liturgical 'compartments', it is important to be aware that they could sometimes be located with complete disregard to the architectural divisions within a church. Nonetheless, they were invariably discreet entities, separated one from another by screens and other fittings.

Brakspear was keen to make just this point in his work on Malmesbury. As he said, no great abbey church was 'ever intended to impress the visitor with an unbroken vista from end to end'. The difficulty, he felt, after the 'drastic sweepings' which so many churches had undergone at the hands of 'so-called restorers', was for anyone to appreciate 'what the effect of one must have been with all the chapels, altars, screens, and fittings complete'.[397] The very same point is made by Nicola Coldstream in her refreshing new review of medieval architecture.[398] The main difficulties, she says, in 'reading' a medieval building, whilst trying to see it through contemporary eyes, is that today's open vistas were invariably interrupted by liturgical furnishings and obscured by screens. For Paul Binski, such screening was entirely characteristic of 'a culture which lent increasing importance to controlled display'. 'The period from the late thirteenth century', he goes on, 'was one in which the ordered display and promotion of images and relics was accompanied increasingly by the installation ... of screens and other forms of enclosure which controlled sight: of these the most important examples were pulpita, rood and parclose screens'.[399] Yet vast numbers of screens have disappeared. Today they are at best represented by modern replacements, and at worst by slots and cuts in piers and floors.

395 Fernie 2000, 247–48. See, also, Draper 1987; King 1955; Bond 1913, I, 29–176.

396 Cistercian churches were one of the chief monastic exceptions to this rule, the nave being retained by them for the use of their lay brothers, at least into the fourteenth century: Robinson 1998, *passim*.

397 Brakspear 1912–13, 422.

398 Coldstream 2002, 137–39.

399 Binski 1995, 149.

The solid screen marking the west end of the choir, which often acted as a backdrop to the nave altar, was invariably one of the most imposing and important pieces of liturgical furniture in greater medieval churches. It was the choir screen, together with any adjoining parclose screens to the rear of the choir stalls, which often formed the most distinctive enclosure in the building — virtually amounting to a separate church within the abbey or cathedral as a whole. However, the nomenclature surrounding this particular screen and its function, or functions, is very far from straightforward.

We have already noted, from the works of Hope and Vallance mentioned above, that British scholars have tended to vary between the use of choir screen and *pulpitum*.[400] Earlier, Bond had been in no doubt that some of the confusion over the labelling of English church screens emerged from an 'ignorance of or indifference to' the different arrangements in secular cathedral and collegiate buildings on the one hand, and monastic churches on the other.[401] In the former, he claimed, we should expect to find but a single transverse screen between the east and west ends of the church, the choir screen. However, in monastic churches there was not one, 'but at least two distinct screens — one the pulpitum or quire screen, the other the rood screen'. To avoid any such confusion, Bond suggested that where two screens are thought to have existed, the use of *pulpitum* and choir screen should be confined to the eastern example, and the term rood screen be used for the western of the two.[402]

Meanwhile, in other European countries there appears to have been a similar degree of inconsistency, with apparently no clear distinction between choir screens and rood screens.[403] In France, both the use of the word *jubé*, and the attitude of prevailing scholarship towards the purpose of the screen, still tend to follow Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire* definition of the 1860s.[404] As Jacqueline Jung has recently pointed out, following Marcia Hall, *jubé* comes from the formulaic request for blessing before the reading of the Gospel: '*Jube Domne* [*sic*] *benedicere*'.[405] Then again, in Germany, the word *Lettner* tends to be used, a simple derivative of the Latin *lectorium*, denoting a place to read.[406] And in Italy, where choir screens survive in far fewer numbers, they are referred to as the *ponte*, which has no immediate associated liturgical action.[407]

These problems notwithstanding, and regardless of country, the choir screen seems to have performed much the same purpose in terms of the ritual of regular services.[408] To focus on Britain, following the work of Bond and Vallance, the word *pulpitum* is indeed frequently used in the literature, either for a single screen, or for the eastern one of a pair. It has been widely accepted, too, that the name *pulpitum* signifies an elevated place or platform, and in this sense it might be regarded as the forerunner of the modern pulpit.[409] In a monastic great church, it remains fair to say that the essential function of the *pulpitum* was

400 Hope (1916–17, 46) points out that in the custumals and statutes of English churches, the Latin *pulpitum* is used for the solid screen bounding the west side of the choir.

401 Bond 1908, 151–65, especially 157.

402 Bond 1908, 159. He noted, incidentally, that in contemporary sources the term 'pulpitum' was evidentially used in a 'loose sort of way' to refer to the loft above a screen or screens.

403 There is much of interest in this regard in Hall 1974.

404 Viollet-le-Duc 1858–68, VI, 117–50. More recently, see the summary of choirs and choir screens (chiefly in France) in Erlande-Brandenburg 1994, 266–83.

405 Jung 2000, 628; Hall 1974, 171, note 46.

406 Paul Crossley points out (in Frankl 2000, 364, note 6b) that the best general account of medieval choir screens remains a German study: Kirchner-Doberer 1956.

407 Jung (2000, 628–29) suggests that *ponte* allows us 'to recognize the importance of the screen as a structure that spans a space and that may be crossed both laterally (by walking across the bridgelike platform at the top) and longitudinally (by walking through the doors underneath)'. For more on Italian screens, see Hall 1974; Hall 1977–78.

408 In her account of the significance of choir screens, Jung refers to them as 'fundamentally complex things fraught with paradox, markers of a highly charged site of transition and passage': Jung 2000, 624.

409 Vallance 1947, 13.

to close off the U-shaped sacred space of the choir proper from the remaining, and less private, area of the church to the west. Usually constructed of stone, it was designed to present a solid front to the nave. Invariably, there was a doorway or passage running through the middle of the screen from west to east, serving as the choir entrance, the *introitus chori*. Sometimes this entrance is referred to as the *introitus inferior*, distinguishing it from the *superiores introitus* — or upper choir entrances — which were located laterally, beyond the opposite end of the choir stalls, often close to the eastern crossing arch. At the back of the *pulpitum*, within the choir, the return angles of the stalls were arranged to either side of the lower entrance. Against the west façade, facing the nave, there may have been a pair of side altars. Also, it is frequently asserted in the literature that it was not unusual for an organ to be placed on the loft space over the screen.[410]

As stressed by Bond, followed later by Vallance, in the case of monastic churches there was a second transverse screen at the eastern end of the nave. Situated one bay, or perhaps more, to the west of the *pulpitum*, this was the rood screen, one of the principal focal points in all medieval churches, both great and parochial.[411] Its name, of course, is derived from the fact it was surmounted by the great rood: a representation of the crucified Christ, flanked by the figures of the Virgin Mary and St John the Apostle. Most rood screens, it seems, were pierced by two doorways, with the nave altar located between them.[412]

In point of fact, William St John Hope had sought to clarify the setting and purpose of the paired arrangement of the *pulpitum* and rood in monastic churches in the second part of his paper on English medieval choir screens. He began by affirming that nowhere, in either churches of black monks (Benedictines) or regular canons (Augustinians), did the *pulpitum* stand in isolation. The most common arrangements could be grouped, he felt, into three broad categories (fig. 99), apparently with no regional or chronological distinction.[413] In his first group he included those churches with a solid stone *pulpitum*, not unlike that in York Minster,[414] but with an open space in front, bounded by the second screen (rood), usually a bay to the west, against which stood the nave altar between two doorways. His second group featured two screens — or parallel walls — a bay apart, linked by a ceiling over the intervening space, with the nave altar then placed against the west face of the combined structure. Finally, in Hope's third category, the nave altar is to be found detached from the compound *pulpitum* of his group two, and placed against another screen wall (rood) a bay westward. In all three forms, Hope claimed, the doorways that flanked the nave altar opened into the space behind. The wall against which the altar was positioned served as its reredos, and generally had the great rood above it.

As Hope very rightly pointed out, at all monastic sites there was a very close relationship between the use of the church and the layout of the cloister.[415] Direct access between the cloister buildings and the privacy of the choir had to be maintained at all times. The key linkage point was the processional doorway to and from the east walk of the cloister, almost always located in the first bay of the appropriate nave aisle. Hope argued that to ensure this relationship, in monastic churches — 'in every case' — the *pulpitum* at first stood under the western arch of the crossing, or even further west across the nave.[416]

410 Knowles (1963, 560) suggests that all monastic communities were likely to have possessed an organ by *c.* 1150, with no shortage of references to gifts and constructions in various chronicles and other sources. For the assertion that they were sometimes placed on the *pulpitum*: Dickinson 1961, 18; Draper 1987, 84; Hope 1916–17, 49–50 (referring to secular churches), and 106 (for one or two monastic references); Bond 1908, 159; Jung 2000, *passim*.

411 For the rood screen in parish churches, described as 'not a wall but rather a set of windows, a frame for the liturgical drama', see Duffy 1992, 110–14, 157–60.

412 Bond 1908, 161–64; Bond and Camm 1909; Vallance 1936, 1–12; Vallance 1947, 1–12, 21.

413 Hope 1916–17, 68–69.

414 On which see Vallance 1947, 83–88; Hope 1916–17, 59–60.

415 Hope 1916–17, 68.

416 His schematic drawings (fig. 99) all reflect this point. This said, Hope acknowledged one or two early exceptions (Durham and Bardney), and noted that *many* monastic choirs were moved eastwards in the later Middle Ages: Hope 1916–17, 68.

Having made this point, in looking at surviving architectural or archaeological examples of his first class of monastic 'barrier screens' (fig. 99), Hope had to acknowledge that they were all within, or eastwards, of the crossing — chiefly due, he says, to a later rebuilding and extension of the presbytery in most cases. His primary example was the cathedral priory at Durham, where he pointed out that the *pulpitum* lay under the eastern crossing arch and the rood screen under the western arch, an arrangement which certainly existed in the sixteenth century, as encapsulated in the *Rites of Durham*.[417] Others in this group include Bardney Abbey (Lincolnshire), Castle Acre Priory (Norfolk), Christ Church in Canterbury, Crowland Abbey (Lincolnshire), and the cathedral priory at Rochester.[418]

For the earliest example of his second class of screen (fig. 99), Hope turned to the cathedral priory at Ely.[419] He states that in the initial arrangement the stalls of the monks' choir extended from the crossing through into the first bay of the nave, and there abutted the *pulpitum*, which itself filled the second bay. His other sites which could be assigned to this group included Winchester Cathedral Priory, St Albans Abbey (the only example still standing), and the Augustinian abbey at Haughmond (Shropshire).[420]

Hope opened his coverage of the third type of screen arrangement (fig. 99) with an account of St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, the details derived almost entirely from archaeology.[421] Here, he says, the monks' choir was located under the crossing, backing up against a thin wall just outside of the western tower piers. A thicker wall then ran between the first pair of nave piers, with the intervening space roofed over; and somewhere within this space there had to be a stair to the loft above. The freestanding rood screen stood one bay further to the west. Similar arrangements were to be found, Hope claimed, at Gloucester Abbey, Lilleshall Abbey (Shropshire), Norwich Cathedral Priory, Westminster Abbey, and also at Malmesbury Abbey.[422]

Although these many observations and comparisons between such a wide range of monastic sites remain extremely valuable, today we might recognize that Hope's undoubted enthusiasm for his subject may have resulted in a rather too prescriptive approach. In reality, subtle variation in the use of different forms within given spaces, coupled with the possibility of infinite change over time, would surely have made for much greater variety among the many hundreds of monastic sites across the country. This said, far more recently, Arnold Klukas has argued consistently for the overriding power of liturgy to shape architectural planning, which in turn has implications for the positioning of monastic choirs and associated rood screens.[423] Klukas's work focuses on the monastic constitutions of Archbishop Lanfranc (1070–89), composed for the monks of his cathedral priory of Christ Church.[424] Klukas claims that by the middle of the twelfth century at least fifteen houses were following some form of Lanfranc's constitutions, chiefly due to the initiative of individual abbots.[425] Of this group, Klukas attempts to reconstruct the liturgical

417 Hope 1916–17, 71–74; Vallance 1947, 37–41. But see, also, Klukas 1983, 163–65; Russo 1994; and for the late sixteenth-century description, see *Rites of Durham*, 20–37.

418 Nowhere are both screens left standing, with Hope drawing much of his evidence from excavation and traces found on piers: Hope 1916–17, 70–85. Also, Vallance 1947, 19, 27–35, 46–50, 99–100. Hope also gives details of Christchurch, Hampshire (Augustinian), Hexham (Augustinian), Boxgrove (Benedictine), Tynemouth (Benedictine), and Wymondham (Benedictine).

419 Hope 1916–17, 85–88. Also, Vallance 1947, 41–43; Fernie 2000, 248, 249; Maddison 2000, 35, 37.

420 Hope 1916–17, 88–95. Also, Vallance 1947, 50–56, 89–90. On Winchester, see further, Lindley 1989, 613; Fernie2000, 118. On St Albans, VCH 1908, 501–02; RCHME 1952, 23.

421 Hope 1916–17, 95–96. Also, Fernie 2000, 107.

422 Hope 1916–17, 96–101. Also, Vallance 1947, 43–46, 105–07, 122–29. See, further, on Gloucester, Welander 1991, 110–12, 160–62; on Norwich, Fernie 1977.

423 In particular, Klukas 1983.

424 For a new critical edition, see Knowles and Brooke 2002.

425 Klukas 1983, 141–42. His list comprises: Canterbury, influencing St Augustine's, Rochester and Dover; Westminster, influencing Great Malvern; Battle; Durham, influencing Lindisfarne; St Albans, influencing Binham, Tynemouth, and Wymondham; Evesham; and Eynsham. See, also, Knowles 1963, 123–24.

arrangements in eleven churches. In the case of Durham, Lindisfarne, and Winchester, he shows the monastic choir housed in crossing, though in all others it extended at least one bay into the nave. And, in every case, the rood screen is depicted a bay westward, with the nave altar to the front.

This is not the place to examine these arguments in any great detail, we merely wish to highlight the different approaches which have been adopted at different times by scholars seeking to make greater sense of the liturgical divisions in monastic churches. The fundamental difficulty, of course, is the complete lack of a surviving set of liturgical furnishings within a contemporary building. Very little evidence of twelfth-century screening survives from any site, and when later-medieval screens are found inserted into Romanesque fabric, it can be very difficult to prove direct continuity. We are so often left, as William St John Hope and his contemporaries were well aware, having to make sense of the occasional tell-tale scar, which can alas all too easily be misread. In looking at the nave of the French cathedral church at Laon (Aisne), Eric Fernie has suggested that a further clue as to liturgical divisions may be found in more substantial architectural variation, such as the form of nave piers, a theory which he has also applied to Norwich Cathedral Priory.[426]

In sum, then, upstanding evidence for choir screen and rood screen pairings across Britain is extremely rare. Where a screen does exist *in situ*, or where elements have been reconstructed, it is usually in isolation from the other essential component. To take a number of specific examples, we might begin with the early evidence from Ely, Canterbury, and Durham. In the case of Ely, Hope believed that it was the west face of the Romanesque *pulpitum* that survived until a major reordering in 1770–71, and which he was able to reconstruct from a number of mid-eighteenth-century sketches, though nothing could be said with confidence about any associated (and separate) rood screen.[427] As for Christ Church in Canterbury, there has been much discussion concerning the relative positions of the screen or screens before and after the fire of 1174, with the evidence of the chronicler Gervase being somewhat ambiguous in terms of his use of the word *pulpitum* and its relationship to the great cross (rood).[428] Fragments of sculpture have, however, been identified as post-fire work of *c.* 1180, and attributed to the [rood] screen mentioned by Gervase as the work of William the Englishman.[429] In any case, the twelfth-century choir arrangements were swept away when a new *pulpitum* was built by Prior Henry of Eastry (1285–1331), in 1304–05, and any early vestiges in the nave lost when it was rebuilt *c.* 1378–1405.[430] Once again, the character of the twelfth-century work at Durham Cathedral Priory is known only from fragments, dated to *c.* 1155–60, and in this case (as at Canterbury) thought to represent the rood screen rather than the *pulpitum*.[431]

Probably the best surviving *in situ* early rood screen is that at Tynemouth Priory.[432] The initial church there, begun about 1090, is thought to have featured a presbytery with two straight bays and an ambulatory with three radiating chapels. The eastern arm was considerably enlarged from the late twelfth century, works which Hope believed led to the removal of the monks' choir from the nave into the new east end. Henceforth the rood screen lay beneath the western crossing arch and the *pulpitum* was sited under the eastern arch. The rood screen of *c.* 1195 is of no great elaboration, and is not bonded in with the

426 Fernie 1987 (Laon); Fernie 1977 (Norwich). He refers to similar indicators at Romsey and Peterborough.

427 Hope 1916–17, plates IX, X. Maddison (2000, 37) dates the screen to soon after 1169.

428 Blockley *et al.* 1997, 121–24. Also, Hope 1916–17, 69–70, 76; Vallance 1947, 27–31. For the post-fire rebuilding generally, see Wilson 1992, 84–90.

429 Kahn 1991, 144–69; Zarnecki *et al.* 1984, 195–98. See, also, Williamson 1995, 103–04.

430 Vallance 1947, 31–35; Scott 1875; Hope 1916–17, 77–78. Henry of Eastry's choir screen was disguised with the screen of the Six Kings in further works of *c.* 1450: Blockley *et al.* 1997, 124; Wilson 1992, 213–15.

431 Russo 1994; Zarnecki *et al.* 1984, 188–89; Clapham 1934, 149.

432 On the priory in general, see Knowles 1910. On the screen, see Hope 1916–17, 83–84; Vallance 1947, 121–22. Tynemouth is another example of those communities which may have followed some form of Lanfranc's constitutions: Klukas 1983, 158, 161.

crossing piers. It features two-centred doorways at either end, and its eastward face has a central arcade of five pointed arches which sprang from capitals on detached shafts. The nave alter presumably stood against the very plain westward face.[433]

As noted above, the Tynemouth arrangements were allocated by Hope to his first group of paired monastic screens (fig. 99), those for which Durham served as his chief exemplar. Durham is a particularly interesting case for a number of reasons. On the one hand, we have seen that surviving sculptural fragments have been attributed to a mid-twelfth-century rood screen, and on the other in the *Rites of Durham* we have a very full late sixteenth-century description of both the *pulpitum* and the rood screen as they existed in the late monastic period.[434] Hope suggested that the *Rites* appear to describe both an earlier and a later *pulpitum*, the later work to be attributed to Prior John Wessington (1416–46).[435] It was Wessington's screen, he believed, which was described thus:

> 'In the former part of the quire of either side the west dore or cheife entrance therof without the quire dore in the lanthorne were placed in theire severall roomes one above another the most excellent pictures, all gilted verye beautifull to behould of all the kinges and queenes, as well of Scotland as England which weere devout and godly founders and benefactors of this famous Church and sacred monument of St Cuthbert to incite and provoke theire posteritie to the like religious endeavours in theire severall successions whose names hereafter followeth'.[436]

As to the rood screen, although the *Rites of Durham* again provide a marvellously vivid description (Annex 5),[437] there is no clear indication of the date of the work. Hope surmised that the Romanesque screen was likely to have been rebuilt in the time of Prior Wessington. But Russo has recently made the case for the survival of the mid-twelfth-century screen through to the suppression of the monastery, producing a speculative drawing to show the distribution of the elaborate programme of sculptural ornamentation described in the *Rites* passage.[438]

Even for such a well documented pair of screens, there can be disagreement over their precise positioning within the church. Hope placed them, as noted, under the west and east arches of the crossing, with the monks' choir occupying the first two bays of the presbytery. This has been disputed by Klukas, chiefly on the basis that 'the cloister door [in the first bay of the nave south aisle] usually gave access to the passage between the rood screen and the pulpitum'.[439] In turn, considering both the documentary and fabric evidence, Russo reverts to the Hope interpretation.[440]

In the case of Winchester Cathedral Priory, Hope believed that the Romanesque *pulpitum*, witnessed from a documentary source, had survived into the seventeenth century, to be replaced by Inigo Jones's screen of 1637–38, itself removed in 1820.[441] The archaeological evidence for this, he believed, was the condition of the nave piers north and south of its original location. These piers retained cushion capitals, which were not removed when the nave was rebuilt under Bishops William Edendon (1345–66) and William of

433 The screen is illustrated in Vallance 1947, plate 10.

434 The *Rites of Durham* provides a detailed but in many ways incomplete and disorderly account of the ritual and other furnishings of the great church just before the suppression: see Knowles 1948–59, III, 129–37.

435 Hope 1916–17, 71–72.

436 *Rites of Durham*, 20.

437 *Rites of Durham*, 32–34.

438 Russoe 1994, 257, fig. 22. For more on the sculpture, see also Zarnecki *et al.* 1984, 188–89; Zarnecki 1953, 32–33, 58; Stone 1972, 82–83, plate 64 (where it is said to come from the *pulpitum*).

439 Hope 1916–17, fig. 9; Klukas 1983, 164–65; Klukas 1995.

440 Russo 1994, 258–68. See, also, Fernie 2000, 134. The present triple-arched choir screen, on the line proposed by Hope and Russo, is a work of the 1870s by Sir Gilbert Scott.

441 Hope 1916–17, 88. He included Winchester in his second group of monastic sites (fig. 99).

Wykeham (1366–1404). However, as Vallance pointed out, it seems 'practically certain' that the Norman *pulpitum* was replaced in the later Middle Ages, given that the rear faces of fragments of the Jones screen bear clear traces of Gothic tracery. In other words, as Phillip Lindley says, it is likely that Jones's masons reworked a late medieval *pulpitum*, a work which was probably contemporary with the nave rebuilding.[442] Meanwhile, throughout these changes, Fernie believes the choir stalls were to remain where they are found today, namely in the crossing and the first bay of the nave.[443] The nave altar would have been positioned in the second bay of the nave, in front of a silver rood, described in a suppression-period inventory as:

> 'Item in ye body of ye church a gret crosse and the image of Christ & marie & John being of plate silver and partlye gilt'.[444]

St Albans Abbey was begun by Archbishop Lanfranc's nephew, Paul of Caen (d. 1093), in the late 1070s and the church was consecrated by his successor Abbot Richard d'Aubigny (1097–1119) in 1115.[445] The building had a remarkable four-bay eastern arm, terminating with an apse and ambulatory, and a long nave of at least ten bays.[446] Hope claimed, in spite of the presbytery length, that the monks' choir always occupied the space under the crossing tower and two bays of the nave.[447] The stalls abutted a *pulpitum*, he says, filling the third bay, with the rood on its west side, and the nave altar directly in front; in other words fitting his group two (fig. 99). A documentary source reveals that the altar of the Holy Cross was dedicated by Godfrey, bishop of St Asaph (1160–75), in 1163–64, and over it was placed a cross, the great rood.[448] Early in the early thirteenth century, it seems the *pulpitum* was rebuilt, in connection with the translation of the relics of St Amphibalus from their position behind the high altar to a fresh location in the nave:

> 'In the time of abbot William of Trumpington [1214–35] when master Walter of Colchester, then sacrist, an unrivalled painter and sculptor, had completed a loft [*pulpitum*] in the middle of the church with its great Cross and Mary and John, and other carvings and suitable structures at the cost of the sacristy, but without sparing his own labour, abbot William himself solemnly removed the shrine with the relics of blessed Amphibalus ... unto the place in the middle of the church which is enclosed by iron latticed railing, a most beautiful altar being made there with a table and superaltar painted at great cost. And he caused the altar solemnly to be dedicated in honour of the Holy Cross'.

Then, in 1323, five bays of the south arcade of the nave collapsed, either destroying or severely damaging the *pulpitum* in the process. Following the reconstruction work, in the second half of the fourteenth century, that is in the time of Abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349–96), a new screen was built between the third pair of nave piers.[449] About 3 feet (0.9m) thick, and almost 22 feet (6.7m) high, it has a cusped panelled west façade pierced by two lateral processional doorways set within square-headed recesses.[450] Between the

442 Vallance 1947, 50–51; Lindley 1989, 613.

443 Fernie 2000, 118. It is the form in the full liturgical reconstruction proposed by Klukas 1983, 150–53.

444 Hope 1916–17, 89, where it is suggested it had been the gift of Archbishop Stigand (d. 1072).

445 Not surprisingly, Klukas (1983, 157, 159) expects Lanfranc's constitutions to have been 'perfectly fulfilled' in his nephew's new church.

446 In general, see Fernie 2000, 111–15; VCH 1908, 488–507; RCHME 1952.

447 Footings of the choir stalls in the suggested location were encountered during restorations of 1875–76: RCHME 1952, 23.

448 On this, and what follows, see Hope 1916–17, 89–92; Vallance 1947, 89–90.

449 VCH 1908, 501–02; RCHME 1952, 23. It was presumably as part or the reordering associated with these works that the shrine of St Amphibalus was set up in the middle of the Lady Chapel vestibule: Lindley 2001, 266.

450 The St Albans Abbey screen is illustrated in Vallance 1947, plates 8 (from a drawing by J. C. Buckler, 1832) 87, 89.

doorways, there is a row of seven lofty canopied niches which would have housed statues, with further niches to the outer edges. The top of the screen is finished with an ornamental cornice and cresting. Hope regarded this relatively elaborate feature as a new front to the *pulpitum*, over which the rood would have been suspended, though Vallance referred to it simply as the rood screen. Hope also noted that in the fifteenth century, in the time of Abbot John Wheathampstead (1420–40), two new organs was made for the church, which he suggests were probably set up in the loft of the *pulpitum*.[451]

To look at too many further examples of the variation which is know to have occurred in the pairing of *pulpitum* and rood screens in monastic churches might prove tedious, but it is worth looking briefly at what is known of several other Benedictine sites in the vicinity of Malmesbury.

Evesham, for instance, is particularly intriguing as one of the few black monk houses in the west country where Archbishop Lanfranc's constitutions are known to have been introduced.[452] Lanfranc's former chaplain, Walter of Cerisy (d. 1104), became abbot of Evesham in 1077/78 and began rebuilding the Anglo-Saxon monastery.[453] By the time of his appointment to the Worcestershire site, he had direct experience of the designs of at least two of the newest and most influential Norman churches: Saint-Étienne in Caen (Calvados), and Lanfranc's Canterbury.[454] Therefore, in formulating a scheme for his new church at Evesham, Walter would surely have been at least partly influenced by the buildings known to him. Furthermore, it might be expected that the liturgical provision would in some way follow the dictates of the archbishop's monastic constitutions. Evesham was unfinished by the time of Abbot Walter's death, and work was not resumed until the time of Abbot Reginald Foliot (1130–49), eventually to be completed by Abbot Adam (1161–89), who like Abbot Peter Moraunt at Malmesbury had previously been a monk of the great Cluniac house at La Charité-sur-Loire.[455] After the collapse of the tower, probably in 1210, the east end of the church was remodelled, with a Lady Chapel added from 1275–76.[456] Sadly, very little is known with confidence about the archaeology of Evesham, but this has not prevented Klukas attempting to reconstruct the liturgical plan, in which he shows a four-bay eastern arm, a crossing with narrow flanking transepts, and a nine-bay nave.[457] In fact, in a nave of similar proportions to that at Malmesbury Abbey, he shows the choir extending for three bays westward from the west crossing arch, with the rood screen a further bay forward between the fourth pair of piers. What makes these *very* tentative connections that touch more interesting is that fact that a very significant agreement of union is known to have been drawn up between Evesham and Malmesbury, *c.* 1200. Through it there was to be a mutual sharing of all rights between the communities, and it would be surprising were there not some close common ground in liturgical practice.[458]

The Norman rebuilding of St Peter's Abbey at Gloucester was begun by Abbot Serlo (1072–1104) in 1089, with the nave completed over the initial decades of the twelfth century.[459] We have no knowledge of the early liturgical divisions in the church, and no real

451 Hope 1916–17, 93.

452 Klukas 1983, 143; Knowles 1963, 123–24; Knowles and Brooke 2002. The other known sites are Eynsham, and Westminster's dependency at Great Malvern. A copy of the constitutions was also held in the library at Worcester Catherdral Priory.

453 See Cox 1990, 125–26; Knowles *et al.* 2001, 47.

454 Saint-Étienne was begun after 1066, and Christ Church, Canterbury in 1070: See Fernie 2000, 100–02 (Saint-Étienne); Fernie 2000, 104–06; Blockley *et al.* 1997, 111–23 (Canterbury). The building of the church at Walter's abbey at Cerisy-la-Forêt (Manche) is undated, though early work may again have been known to him before his arrival in England.

455 For the abbots, Knowles *et al.* 2001, 47; for the Evesham building programme, Cox 1990, 126–27; for Peter Moraunt at Malmesbury, above, pp. 14, 32–33.

456 Cox 1990, 127–28.

457 Klukas 1983, 155–56, 159.

458 On the agreement, drawn up sometime between 1190 and 1208, see Knowles 1963, 474. This said, Malmesbury also had a union with Winchester Cathedral Priory and twenty-two others: VCH 1956, 219.

459 In general, see Fernie 2000, 157–60; Wilson 1985; Welander 1991, 22–75.

indication of the nature of the screening arrangements before the first half of the fourteenth century. This said, there has been some question as to whether the mid-thirteenth-century screen in front of the entrance to the Treasury in the north transept (traditionally known as the Reliquary) might have been the *pulpitum* set beneath the new vault in the nave, completed in 1242. It seems, in any case, that a new screen was built by Abbot John of Wigmore (1328–37), apparently filling the first bay of the nave (fig. 100).[460] Hope thought that the Gloucester layout accorded with his third group of monastic sites (fig. 99).[461] He placed the monks' choir beneath the crossing, with the stalls backing onto a thin wall located immediately beyond the western crossing piers. A second, broader screen wall ran between the first pair of nave piers, its central doorway leading to the *introitus chori*, and its front alignment continued as further walls across the aisles. Within the thickness of the southern half of the main wall, there was a stair climbing to a loft or gallery above. The loft, Hope believed, extended over the whole area between the two walls. The rood screen was then positioned between the second pair of nave piers. Indeed, Hope pointed to a 'new' stone inserted in the sixth course from the top of both piers, suggesting these marked the points were the rood beam would have once fitted. To complete the arrangements, it seems there were screened-off chapels in the second bay of both the north and south aisle. The west façade of Abbot Wigmore's *pulpitum* was further adorned with figures, set in tabernacles, by Abbot Thomas de Horton (1351–77), and the whole appears to have survived into the seventeenth century when it was drawn by Wencelaus Hollar (1607–77) in 1644.[462] All surviving remnants of the medieval layout were removed in the following century by Bishop Martin Benson (1734–52).

At nearby Tewkesbury Abbey, where the Norman church was begun after 1087, and where — as with Gloucester — the main body of the east end was never extended beyond the Romanesque footprint,[463] Hope was of the view that the choir filled the crossing and the first bay of the nave.[464] He could not be sure if the *pulpitum* was of solid screen form, simply linking the first pair of nave piers, or if it was of the extended loft type occupying the full second bay, as at St Albans and other sites in his group two category (fig. 99). He thought it more likely, however, that it was of the latter type, 'because another screen wall, with the nave altar against it, certainly stood between the second pair of piers and had other screens in line with it across the aisles'. Hope says that on the outer face of these piers there are traces of the winding stairs which led to the rood loft. The whole arrangement would have stood on the existing step or platform which crosses the church in the third bay.[465]

To take one last example, this time of a rather smaller black monk church, we might turn to the priory of St John at Brecon, established as a dependency of Battle Abbey, probably in the first decade of the twelfth century.[466] The aisleless presbytery was rebuilt in the early thirteenth century, and the nave was gradually altered from the late thirteenth into the fourteenth centuries.[467] By the later Middle Ages, the great rood at Brecon had evidently become quite famous. Indeed, the popular name for the parish part of the church (i.e. the nave) was '*crog Aberhonddu*' — the cross of Brecon. Poetic descriptions indicate it was of considerable scale, having the central figure of the crucified Christ, the two thieves, probably St John and Mary, and the symbols of the four Evangelists, all painted and gilded.[468] Very little survives today to indicate its form, other than lateral doorways and

460 Hope 1897; Hope 1916–17, 96–98; Vallance 1947, 105–07; Wealander 1991, 110–12, 160–62.

461 For his reconstructed plan, see Hope 1916–17, fig. 19; Welander 1991, 162.

462 Illustrated in Welander 1991, 161.

463 In general, see Fernie 2000, 160–65; Halsey 1985. Both churches, however, had Lady Chapels built east of the Norman ambulatory.

464 Hope 1916–17, 108; Vallance 1947, 121.

465 We have not, as yet, looked at the Tewkesbury evidence for ourselves.

466 Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 52, 60; RCAHMW 1994, 5.

467 RCAHMW 1994, 9–14.

468 For background on Welsh screens see Crossley 1942–43; Crossley and Ridgway 1944–59.

projecting corbels, but there have been various proposals in the past, usually assuming the evidence represents a single phase.[469] Recently, in a fuller review of the structural evidence, coupled with comparative material from elsewhere, a plausible sequence of development has been put forward, with conjectural reconstructions of the developing form of the rood screen over the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries (fig. 101).[470] Even so, there is much less indication as to the position and form of the *pulpitum*, or of any screen backing the monks' choir stalls, in any of the suggested phases.

The recent work on the evidence at Brecon Priory serves to remind us of the many different ways subtle archaeological and architectural clues as to the form of choir screens and rood screens might be interpreted. Indeed, it seems very likely that close modern scrutiny of any of the monastic sites examined by both William St John Hope and Aymer Vallance would throw up many new questions, fresh ideas, and other possible interpretations.

We must turn now, however, to look briefly at other prominent screen divisions within medieval monastic churches. As noted earlier, it has been argued that the increasingly controlled display and promotion of images and relics in cathedrals and monastic churches during the later Middle Ages was accompanied by growing formality in the partition of liturgical spaces within the buildings.[471] This is not the place to explore the topic at length, but we should be aware that the display of relics of a major saint, and the access provided to the shrine, made for a significant element in the overall development.[472] The extent to which an important shrine could be glimpsed or seen form the nave in the earlier post-Conquest period might be debated, but the choir screen and the rood screen must surely have impeded an unbroken vista. Those shrines sited behind the high altar, in an ambulatory or retrochoir, would also have been part hidden by the altar screen or reredos.

In a detailed study of the high altar screen (the Neville Screen) at Durham Cathedral Priory, Christopher Wilson points out that of the dozen or so from the later Middle Ages which survive, or of which there is record, the majority are in essence a high wall terminating in a horizontal cornice, the façades decorated with several tiers of niches for sculptured figures.[473] The smaller group, of which Durham is one, were designed with a rather lower wall supporting a series of freestanding canopies or tabernacles, also intended to house statuary.[474] The time span covered by his 'canopy type' is *c.* 1315 to 1372, whereas the high wall screens extend from *c.* 1340–50 to *c.* 1501–28. In looking for the antecedents of these developed forms, Wilson suggests that the thirteenth-century high altar at Westminster Abbey had at least one of the key elements of the canopy reredoses, namely a low backing wall pierced by doorways located at each end. And, in embryo, the concept of a 'screen' extending the full width of the presbytery may have existed more than a century earlier, at Canterbury Cathedral Priory. Gervase's careful description of the high altar, dedicated in 1130, notes that the presbytery was spanned by a beam resting on the capitals of main arcades, and on two columns set at the eastern corners of the altar. The large cross, and other furnishing mentioned by Gervase, might be seen as equivalent to the retables then beginning to find general acceptance. For Wilson, then, 'it seems reasonable to interpret the openings bounded by arcade piers, altar columns and beam as forerunners of the doorways familiar from late medieval screens'.[475]

469 W. D. Caroe, for example, proposed a rood of three of four storeys; Crossley and Ridgway suggested a wide screen aligned with the doorways, above which there was a rood and a tympanum, with a sloping celure above: RCAHME 1994, 16; Crossley and Ridgway 1952, 56–59.

470 RCAHMW 1994, 14–17. The authors claim the surviving evidence allows 'enough for conjecture, but insufficient for certainty'.

471 In general, see Binski 1995, 141–52; Nilson 1998, 63–91; Wilson 1980, 93–95; Lindley 2001, 266–67; Brooke 1971.

472 On the early setting of shrines, see Crook 2000; also Nilson 1998; Coldstream 1976..

473 Wilson 1980, 91. Examples include Ottery St Mary (*c.* 1342–45) in Devon, St Albans, Winchester, and Southwark (*c.* 1520).

474 Exeter and Peterborough were also of this form.

475 Wilson 1980, 93–94.

At Durham, the Neville Screen seems to have been completed in time for a consecration in 1380. From the *Rites of Durham* we know that the central statues portrayed the Virgin, flanked by St Cuthbert and St Oswald, and that these and the many other figures were of alabaster painted and gilt.[476] Its innovative significance was, as Wilson says, that it 'marked a new stage' in the severing of the visual association of the major shrine and the altar in great churches. The process had been under way since the late twelfth century, when important relics began to be moved east of the high altar, but the Neville Screen might be seen as representing 'a remarkable triumph of architectural fashion over religious tradition'.[477]

The emergence of the canopy reredos was effectively the penultimate stage in the decline of the freestanding character of high altars in great churches. The development was taken that stage further with Wilson's so-called high wall screens, which proved yet more emphatic in their visual separation of the area behind high altar. Two of the best known examples are those which survive at the cathedrals of Winchester and St Albans.

Chronological precedence seems to belong to Winchester, where the magnificent great screen was completed in the time of Bishop William Waynflete (1447–86), probably by 1476.[478] Although the west façade has been drastically restored, it is clear it would have formed a hugely impressive backdrop to the high altar. In three principal registers, there was a total of more than fifty niches, all with intricately carved canopies, housing some eighteen life-size images and thirty-four smaller figures. At the centre, above the altar, there was very likely a rood flanked by the figures of Mary and John.[479] From 1476, the shrine of St Swithan was located in the retrochoir east of the screen.

The equally impressive high altar screen at St Albans dates from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and was the work of Abbot William of Wallingford (1476–92).[480] Like that at Winchester, it is effectively a massive stone wall, backing the altar, with doors at the outer edges providing access to and from the feretory beyond. The shrine of St Alban, and the remainder of the church to the east, were entirely closed off by the introduction of the screen. It, too, has three principal tiers of large statue niches with elaborate canopies. The central focus today, as doubtless when first completed, is an image of the crucified Christ, with Mary and John at the feet.

Finally, at the Benedictine abbey of Westminster, we know that by the fourteenth century the high altar had a celatura or celure (i.e. a large flat tester-like canopy),[481] a rood, and figures of St Peter and St Paul. In 1440–41, however, a new high altar screen was completed for the community by John Thirsk.[482] Now just over 14 feet (4.3m) high, the screen was once surmounted by two further tiers of liturgical furnishings. Fortunately, the whole is depicted with great clarity in the remarkable Islip Roll (fig. 102), that is the obituary roll of Abbot John Islip (1500–32).[483] In one telling illustration, we see that the lower register of the screen composition was punctuated around the doors by canopied niches containing figures, the centre pair being a king and a bishop. The reredos and the high altar itself are covered with funeral hangings.[484] Above, supported on the stone cornice, is what must have been a wooden gallery, accommodating what appears almost as a triptych. Here, there are life-size statues of St Peter with tiara and St Paul with his sword,

476 Wilson 1980, 90; *Rites of Durham*, 5–7.

477 Wilson 1980, 95.

478 Lindley 1989; Lindley 1993.

479 The existing sculptural programme dates from 1884–99. Many heads, torsos, and other fragments of the original scheme of *c.* 1470–90 survive.

480 Lindley 2001.

481 For a brief account of such canopies, see Vallance 1936, 13–15.

482 Binski 1995, 148–52. Thirsk had also been the mason responsible for Henry V's chantry: Harvey 1984, 295–96. Also, RCHM 1924, 25.

483 Hope 1906, where the illustration in question is plate XXII.

484 The west façade of the altar screen was reworked by Sir Gilbert Scott in the 1860s.

and between them hangs the pyx (the tabernacle housing the Blessed Sacrament) above the altar. A large tester covers the gallery, supported on the underside of a beam. The beam carries the great rood, flanked by Mary and John, with Seraphim on wheels to the left and right. The arms of the rood extend as a further beam, supported in the arcade walls near the vault shaft responds. The whole assembly stood almost to the height of the gallery.[485]

Increasingly, then, as the centuries passed the screening arrangements in greater medieval churches became ever more emphatic: the tendency was for height to be increased and visibility reduced. This was especially true of the screens separating the sanctuary and choir from their lateral aisles, and from the nave to the west; and, for rather different reasons, from the shrine area behind the high altar. The choir screen, or *pulpitum*, was at first glance a very definite barrier, further emphasized by the rood complex above or to the fore. Such screens defined the monastic and lay areas of the church, though it might be said that there was also a link, literally by the doorways through the screens, and metaphorically through the sermons, reading, and even masses that were sometimes delivered from the raised platforms. As for the high altar screen, it may be said to have reorinentated the ritual emphasis at the east end of the church. Important shrines, once visible at least to the celebrant above the altar, were henceforth to be screened out: the Eucharistic sacrament, the turning of bread into Christ's body, was massively enhanced — it was the key element of the late-medieval Christian liturgy.[486]

Notes Towards Reconstructing the Liturgical Arrangements at Malmesbury

The abbey church at Malmesbury was, of course, laid out with the three fundamental liturgical divisions of presbytery, choir, and nave, as outlined by Eric Fernie.[487] The presbytery would have housed a sanctuary with the high altar at the east end. West of this lay the choir stalls, arranged in several rows facing the centre of the church, and returning at right-angles at the far perimeter of this most privately reserved space. The monastic community gathered here eight times each day to chant the regular round of the divine office, the *opus Dei*, beginning at dawn and finishing at dusk. Westward again was the nave, the focus of which was presumably the nave altar and the great rood.

Fundamental to our fuller understanding of the probable liturgical arrangements in the twelfth-century church is the recovery of further evidence about the form of the original choir. Equally, to have any definite chance of appreciating potential late-medieval change, we need to know a great deal more about the posited thirteenth-century extension to the presbytery and the addition of the Lady Chapel to the far east end of the building. There is, however, some clue as to the significance of ritual, and of its impact on the architectural form of the church, in occasional fragments of documentary evidence.

Principally, we know that the monks of Malmesbury maintained a significant shrine housing the relics of St Aldhelm.[488] William of Malmesbury tells us that Abbot Warin (1070–*c.*1091) showed scant regard for many of the relics of the Anglo-Saxon house, including those of the alleged founder, Mailduib. Yet in 1078, assisted first by Abbot Serlo of Gloucester, and later by [St] Osmund, bishop of Sarum, he translated the relics of St Aldhelm to a magnificent shrine which had been prepared, 'beside the high altar'.[489] Though we have no record of it, the shrine presumably had to be moved once more into the east end of the completed Anglo-Norman church, probably sometime in the first half of the twelfth

485 The statues and the rood were mentioned in the sacrist's roll for 1445/46: Nilson 1998, 84. The tester under the rood beam may have been part of the original thirteenth-century arrangement.

486 Jung 2000; Lindley 2001, 266–67.

487 See above, p. 66.

488 His feast is 25 May; translation, 5 May (to commemorate the translation of AD 986), and 3 October (for the 1078 translation): *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 3rd edition (1992), 13–14.

489 *Gestis Pontificum*, 423–25; VCH 1956, 215; Gem 1993, 58–60.

century. Brakspear seems to have placed it behind the high altar, in the posited ambulatory of his post-1143 building (fig. 24).[490]

Again, from documentary sources, we have a record of various altars housed in the abbey church. There is mention of the altars of St Aldhelm, St Mary Magdalene, St Mary (i.e. the Lady Chapel altar), and of a 'picture' acquired for the high altar.[491] From the time of Abbot William of Colerne (1260–96), who may well have been a patron of learning, we are provided with a list of ornaments and books acquired for the church and monastery by one of the monks, William Favel. The list includes works by St Augustine and Aristotle, vestments, and £1 spent on painting a retable for the altar of St Mary Magdalene.[492] And we know that in the fourteenth century Abbot Walter de Camme (1362–96) used the revenues of a newly acquired important property in London, together with other local revenues, to provide a foundation for the Lady Chapel. Henceforth, there was to be a daily sung mass, at which six candles were to burn. There was also to be a private mass each day for the abbot's soul. To oversee the foundation, a new obedientiary was created within the community, the warden of the Lady Chapel.[493]

Of more direct relevance to the present study, it is interesting to note that William of Malmesbury wrote of several episodes associated with miraculous power of the rood at his abbey church, in the time of Abbot Godfrey (1091–1106).[494] For example, a girl from Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire, suffering from a spinal curvature, had already visited the shrine of St Aldhelm on two successive feasts of the saint. The third occasion was the feast of the Ascension, and on entering she prostrated herself on the ground before the rood, when 'her ears drank in the sound of the tramping of the festival crowd following the procession, and she was shaken by fits of sobbing, her own affliction in contrast to the happiness of the crowd'. In a moment, she rose up cured. Similarly, a woman from Killingholm in Lincolnshire was cured of paralysis, and a blind fisherman from the Isle of Wight, and woman from Calne were both given back their sight, all after praying before the great rood.[495] These events, and the rood to which William referred, are of course to be placed in the pre-Conquest monastic church, though at the very least they signify the role of the rood as a symbol of lay piety and devotion, something we might reasonably expect to have been maintained in the Anglo-Norman and later building.

Brakspear placed the Romanesque high altar at Malmesbury in the centre of his proposed apse, a position also known from Winchester and Norwich. And, he says, 'as at those places, it does not seem to have been moved in later days'.[496] But he gives no archaeological evidence to support this opinion.

Clearly, of greatest significance to our understanding of the screening arrangements between the east and west ends of the church is the position of the monastic choir. The nineteenth-century scholars who wrote on Malmesbury chose to speculate on the basis of the upstanding architecture, and on their knowledge of other buildings. Freeman, for instance, proposed that the choir was 'doubtless, as is usual in Norman minsters, under the lantern', a ritual consideration which had some effect on the architecture, with the eastern and western arches of the crossing having 'as little projection in the pier as possible, the shafts being recessed'. This was normal, he states, 'to get as much uninterrupted backing for the stalls as possible'. Freeman also thought that the 'ritual choir' always retained its original place beneath the lantern.[497] As if to underline his point, he referred to the surviving 'rood-screen across the western arch' of the crossing, now 'forming [the] altar-screen' of the

490 Brakspear 1912–13, 407–08. For general comparison, see Crook 2000; Nilson 1998, 63–81.

491 *Registrum*, I, 24, 118, 121, 369, 434; II, 20, 33, 138, 245, 292, 328, 373, 376, 380.

492 *Registrum*, II, 379–80.

493 VCH 1956, 223.

494 Knowles *et al.* 2001, 55.

495 *Gestis Pontificum*, 435–36, 439–40, 442; Vallance 1947, 5–6.

496 Brakspear 1912–13, 408–09.

497 Freeman 1864, 88–89, 90.

present church. The central doorway shows, he said, that it was originally a rood-screen and not a reredos.[498] Following Freeman's ideas, Waller also thought that it was the 'perpendicular rood screen' which still remains within the present church, 'and forms an altar screen'.[499] Similarly, Talbot agreed that the position of the choir screen (*sic*), under the western tower arch, would be consistent with the monks' choir having been located under the central tower.[500]

Somewhat in contrast, Bazeley claimed, though apparently without supporting evidence, that the crossing, 'together with two bays of the nave, formed the choir'. The present reredos, he said, was constructed 'for a screen in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII, and was 'placed against the east wall later on'.[501] Then, a few years later, Roland Paul wrote:

> 'The ritual choir, as may be seen by the inner faces of the tower piers, was under the crossing, and perhaps projected one bay into the nave, where it was screened off from the rest of the nave by the rood-screen.
>
> This rood-screen remains, but is now placed between the piers under the western arch of the crossing, and forms a reredos behind the present parish altar. It has a central door and is finished with an embattled cornice'.[502]

In point of fact, all of these accounts include elements of speculation, and there are clear signs of confusion among the authors over the different roles of choir screens and rood screens. Alas, Brakspear's limited excavations do not appear to have thrown any further light on the matter, with no record of the foundations of choir stalls, or any such confirmatory evidence, being found.

If we are to accept William St John Hope's views, in the twelfth-century planning of the abbey church the monks' choir would almost certainly have extended to the western crossing arch, and *possibly* for several bays further down the nave.[503] The community would have entered the church for services in the choir, either from a night stair (connecting with the dormitory) located in the north transept, or via the processional doorway in the first bay of the north aisle (fig. 42). None of this helps to determine where the choir stalls terminated on the sanctuary side, or where we should look for the *superiores introitus* — the upper choir entrances. Nevertheless, as most Victorian authors observed, both the eastern and western pairs of crossing piers have large half-shafts recessed into the core of the pier (figs. 23, 28). Although the precise form is somewhat unusual, the resulting flat face to the choir side of the piers made for a neat backing for the wooden stalls. Numerous examples of such an architectural response on western piers can be found all over the country. Yet whether the flat surfaces on the eastern piers at Malmesbury can be taken as proof that the stalls projected to at least this position is perhaps a moot point. We might be able to say a little more if the form of the Romanesque presbytery were known with certainty.

Rather more critical to this study is the western limit of the twelfth-century choir, and the possibility of reordering having occurred in the later Middle Ages. Identifying fragmentary traces of early screening arrangements might be one method of pursuing this. However, after the scars introduced in post-monastic changes to the church — resulting from the insertion of features such as box pews, galleries, and pulpits (fig. 62) — a certain amount of caution is necessary. It might well be that a rather more prominent *indication* of the

498 In the same way, Freeman claimed, as at Waltham, Crowland, and Binham: Freeman 1864, 97–98. For those screens, see Vallance 1947, 91, 99–100, 122. In fact, unlike Malmesbury, these three all have the usual paired arrangement of doorways.

499 Waller 1895–98, 263.

500 Talbot 1884, 32–33.

501 Bazeley 1891–92, 6, 10, 14. He again pointed to the central doorway as proof that it was always designed to serve as a screen.

502 [Paul] 1895, 164.

503 He claimed this was virtually the universal initial monastic pattern, even if choirs were sometimes moved eastward in the later Middle Ages: Hope 1916–17, 68.

extension of the early choir into the nave is provided in the design of the arcades. As noted earlier, in the first two bays of the nave (figs. 96, 97), the outer-order roll on each side of the central vessel is enriched with decorative geometric carving. Beyond this point, the remaining stretches of the arcades are entirely plain.[504] It so happens this very point was noted by the Revd Thomas Perkins, who suggested that it 'probably indicates the extent of the ritual choir'.[505] Elsewhere, however, such comparatively minor changes in architectural form are sometimes regarded as evidence of a constructional break, and it was definitely not uncommon to end a presbytery and lantern programme of works with one or two bays of the nave. Nevertheless, this is also just the sort of evidence that Fernie has cited as being of liturgical significance at a number of other major early medieval churches, both in England and in France.[506]

Given Hope's general views, together with not a few examples of Anglo-Norman monastic churches where the choir stalls extended for several bays into the nave (further coupled with the liturgical reconstructions proposed by Klukas for Canterbury, Evesham and elsewhere), it is not unreasonable to allow that such an arrangement may have occurred at twelfth-century Malmesbury.[507] The choir screen, of stone or of wood, may have been positioned between the second pair of nave piers, with the rood screen (if such existed as a freestanding furnishing) located a bay further forward. The intermediary bay would then have housed the retrochoir, the place where infirm monks, or those otherwise not permitted to enter the privacy of the monastic choir, might be able to participate to some degree in the ritual beyond.[508] The arrangement would also have the added advantage of confining the linkage point between church and cloister (i.e. the east bay processional doorway) within the fully monastic area of the building. Brakspear certainly mentions a screen between the third piers of the arcades, 'above which was the beam to carry the great rood'.[509] If traces do indeed exist, perhaps they mark the position of the twelfth-century rood, rather than something belonging to the later nave arrangements.

Several of the Victorian authors on Malmesbury claimed that the nave of the abbey church had no true parochial function until after the suppression,[510] claiming that during the Middle Ages this function would have been served by St Paul's church. Though this may in essence be true, it would certainly not imply that the nave was reserved exclusively for the monastic community. However minor, the borough inhabitants were patrons and benefactors, upon whom the abbey depended for support. A lay altar is to be expected beneath the rood.

One further intriguing detail in the layout of the twelfth-century church, and which may reflect liturgical usage, occurs in bay four of the south aisle. We have noted earlier that the abacus above the capital of the fourth pier is singularly adorned with a continuous pattern of small upright palmettes.[511] In the aisle bay to the south-east of this, the window splays are curiously fashioned: the east side is straight, the west side splayed as if to afford light towards the pier in question.

Turning to the later medieval period, one would clearly wish to enquire as to whether some form of significant liturgical reordering followed the assumed extension of the presbytery in the later thirteenth century, or possibly after the major remodelling works of

504 Above, p. 28. We might also recall that the string-course above the main arcades is adorned with a Greek key pattern, in the three eastern bays on the south side, and in the single easternmost bay on the north side.

505 Perkins 1901, 86–87.

506 Fernie 1977; Fernie 1987.

507 Hope 1916–17, 68–110; Klukas 1983. The same is proposed, with more authority, for Lanfranc's Canterbury, though there the east end was markedly limited: Blockley *et al.* 1997, 122, fig. 53.

508 Hope 1916–17, 70.

509 Brakspear 1912–13, 422.

510 See, for example, Freeman 1864, 83; Bazeley 1891–92, 6.

511 See above, p. 28.

the 1320s and 1330s.[512] Sadly, as is the case with the Romanesque detail, we are again hampered by knowing so very little about the form of the east end, though the Lady Chapel seems quite definitely to have assumed increasing importance in the daily round of the community. In the surviving fabric of the nave, it would be difficult to point with confidence to any architectural or archaeological clues which reflect changes in the principal screening arrangements during the fourteenth century. The new features which do seem to have been introduced at this time occur in the aisles, and perhaps in the galleries. In bay four of the north aisle, a large three-light window, with its head in a projecting gable, was inserted as part of the programme of works (fig. 45). Inside, a new ribbed vault was cleverly arranged to spring out to the gable from the twelfth-century work. Brakspear suggested a chapel had been contrived within the bay space, closed off by lateral screens running from the piers to the aisle wall. He placed a second chapel in the facing bay of the opposite aisle, that with the unusual twelfth-century window splays.[513] On the same line as these proposed chapels, built out from the triforium gallery on the south side, there is an intriguing box-like feature, variously described in the past as a watching chamber, an organ loft, and even a seating place reserved for the abbot to watch services.[514] The wave-moulded base is corbelled out, and the top finished with cresting, otherwise it is a remarkably plain structure. There is a large opening in the north face, and a smaller rectangular opening in each side. Brakspear rejected the watching loft idea, and thought that it was built to hold the organs for the nave altar services. Hope was in no doubt that this was precisely its purpose.[515] None of this would be at odds with the idea that the rood screen continued to stand between the third pair of nave piers.

Now, as all previous authorities on the church have noted, the screens which currently run across the east end of the nave — those in the north and south aisles, and that serving as the high altar reredos against the end wall — belong to the late Middle Ages. The next issue to address, therefore, is whether or not they are contemporary works. To take the aisle screens first, in the past they have either been categorized as structures in the Perpendicular style, or have been attributed more specifically to the fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Architectural works of this nature are notoriously difficult to date with accuracy; one is entirely dependent upon stylistic comparison, with no guarantee of an absolute chronological bracket. Thus, in isolation, one might be inclined to accept the broad range hitherto proposed.

Fortunately, the date of the present high altar reredos can be tied down with rather more certainty (fig. 98). Before taking this up, however, we might just remind ourselves of the 'rediscovery' of its central doorway, and ensure that we are familiar with its basic form. In terms of the first, although the situation immediately following the suppression of the abbey is unclear, at some point before the end of the eighteenth century the central doorway was hidden from view. It was exposed once more during Henry Goodridge's restoration of the church in 1822–23, the discoveries being reported to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in September 1824.[516] The correspondent, almost certainly Benjamin Thomas, noted the form of the doorway and gave a drawing of its elevation, together with a section of the architrave and another of the screen cornice (fig. 68). He thought that the screen itself was in the position 'usually appropriated to the rood loft', though 'whether there was a screen in this situation when the Abbey was entire, of course cannot be ascertained; if there was, it must either have been destroyed or removed, and the present one erected in its stead'.[517]

512 Brakspear 1912–13, 408–09, 415–17. See above, pp. 35–39.

513 Brakspear 1912–13, 417, 424.

514 See, for example, Freeman 1864, 99; Bazeley 1891–92, 14; [Paul] 1895, 165; Perkins 1901, 87–89; Pevsner 1975, 325. One nineteenth-century source says that it was popularly known as 'The confession box': [Hills] 1869, 290.

515 Brakspear 1912–13, 422, 424; Hope 1916–17, 98.

516 T[homas] 1824, 305.

517 He concluded with a confused discussion on Leland's evidence for the fall of the central tower or spire, and on the role of the screen if the east end had been abandoned. We think this largely irrelevant, given out belief that the presbytery remained in use through to the suppression: above, pp. 40–42.

The screen, which is about 2 feet 6 inches (0.76m) thick, is positioned between the outer edges of the western crossing piers (figs. 23, 24, 98). It is some 31 feet (9.4m) long, and a little over 11 feet (3.4m) in height. At the centre of the nave façade there is a doorway (now blocked) with a four-centred head, some 7 feet 6 inches (2.3m) in height by 4 feet 3 inches (1.3m) wide. The moulded frame (fig. 68) has a deep central hollow featuring regularly spaced carved fleurons. Vallance noted traces of a horizontal label or string-course, crossing the screen at the level of the springing of the arch of the doorway.[518] Along the summit of the nave façade there is a moulded cornice, its topmost edge featuring embattled cresting, and its lower hollow accommodating a series of carved emblems and ornaments. A coat of arms, with supporters, lies at the centre (figs. 103, 104). The cornice extends beyond the outer edge of the main screen wall, continuing to the nook shafts of the twelfth-century arcade responds (figs. 98, 105). Much of the front face of the screen is now covered with panelling introduced by Brakspear after 1927. From the top (fig. 105), we see that the infill behind the screen, at least in its upper levels, is of rubble build. Above the position of the central doorway there is a section of dressed stone, apparently with the same crested moulding seen to the west. It is difficult to know how much alteration there has been here since the suppression.

Coming to the question of dating, when the doorway was rediscovered in the 1820s, Thomas thought the form of the arch 'denotes it to have been of the time of the Tudors', with the heraldry suggesting the screen as a whole post-dated the marriage of King Henry VII to house of York. He felt it likely it belonged to the reign of King Henry VIII.[519] Later in the century, Talbot thought this screen was fifteenth-century work, and 'may be of time of Henry the Seventh'. Bazeley, on the other hand, argued that the arms and supporters were those of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon (d. 1536). He concluded that it was a work of about 1520.[520] In turn, Paul suggested that the screen was of the fifteenth century, noting that the cornice was ornamented with various paterae, including griffins, a portcullis, a Tudor rose, a harp (? for St Aldhelm), a pomegranate, and a knot. He felt the arms at the centre were those of Henry VII.[521] Little more is added in the description offered by Perkins, who also attributed the arms to Henry VII.[522] Finally, the screen's heraldry was fully described by Vallance, who again favoured the attribution of the arms to Henry VII.

Stylistically, the screen might easily span the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries, and the key to accurate dating is clearly the cornice heraldry, especially the royal arms at the centre (fig. 103).[523] They show France modern and England quarterly, apparently within a Garter, and probably with the motto HONI.SOIT.QUE.MAL.Y.PENSE. The supporters are badly mutilated, but to the left there may be a hound (or perhaps a lion rampant), and to the right there is a dragon. The composition may have been ensigned with a crown, now lost.[524] These arms could indeed be those of Henry VII, though they were also used by Henry VIII.[525] As Vallance pointed out, it is the introduction of the pomegranate which ought to help us to refine the date bracket.[526] This is the badge of the Spanish royal house, and

518 Vallance 1947, 111.

519 T[homas] 1924, 305.

520 Talbot 1884, 32–33; Bazeley 1891–92, 14. Again, Bazeley was in part influenced by Leland's testimony, which led him to think that the east end had been lost and that the screen was erected *c.* 1520, 'to form a temporary choir in the nave'.

521 [Paul] 1895, 164, 165.

522 Perkins 1901, 89–90.

523 The portcullis emblem is clearly derived from the family of Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. Portcullises appear in profusion, for example, in Henry VII's chapel at Westminster Abbey, and on Prince Arthur's chantry chapel at Worcester Cathedral.

524 Could such a crown have been supported by a cramp set in the hole seen on the top of the cornice (fig. 105) at this point?

525 Cautley (1974, 16–17) points out that Henry VII and Henry VIII both used the Beaufort hound (of Margaret Beaufort) and the dragon as supporters of the arms of England. We are grateful to Jerry Sampson, who makes this point and provides the Cautley reference: Caroe & Partners 2001, 12.

526 Vallance 1947, 111.

presumably would only have been introduced after the marriage of Henry VII's first son, Arthur (d. 1502), to Catherine of Aragon in 1501. Thereafter, as Vallance recognized, the emblem might continue to have been used through the period of Prince Henry's betrothal to Catherine. But the most likely date for the appearance of the pomegranate at Malmesbury is the period following Henry marriage to Catherine in 1509. The emblem is unlikely to have remained popular into the late 1520s, and would have been finally abandoned after the marriage was declared null and void in May 1533.

In sum, we have to acknowledge that there is some possibility the aisle screens pre-date the present high altar screen, and that they may have been in position before the end of the fifteenth century. This said, it is only the cornice heraldry and the central doorway which perhaps pushes the high altar screen marginally later. The screen wall itself might easily have been introduced rather earlier. In any case, there can be very little doubt that for the last few decades of monastic life at Malmesbury, both the screen under the western crossing arch, and the screen(s) running in line with the first pair of nave piers, were integral elements in the ongoing liturgical arrangements of the church.

A Speculative Reconstruction of the Malmesbury Screens in the Early Sixteenth Century

To draw all of this evidence together, and to underline the specific significance of the south aisle screen, we might attempt to offer a *speculative* reconstruction of the screening arrangements at the east end of the nave in the years immediately before the suppression of the great abbey. It is as well to recap on some of the more salient aspects of the earlier discussion, and to draw attention to several additional architectural features which may well have been linked to the features in question.

There seems no reason to believe that the screen below the western crossing arch is not in its original position. William St John Hope noted many examples of choir screens located in just this position, though for the most part they have been assumed to be somewhat earlier in date. The screen is not particularly thick, but was ample to provide the necessary backing for the right-angled return of the choir stalls beyond. Regardless of the twelfth- and fourteenth-century arrangements, then, this is to accept that at some point prior to the suppression the choir had been confined (westward) to the area beneath the crossing.

The doorway at the centre of the screen is typical of what we know of *pulpitum* or choir screen arrangements throughout the Middle Ages. It must have served as the *introitus chori*, or the lower choir entrance. The screen has a flat top (fig. 105), which may have supported a timber superstructure. The change of material is in part suggested by the cresting to the cornice. It seems unlikely there would have been any further masonry build above such a terminal feature. The doorway at the centre of the screen has rebates on the east side, so that door-leaf, or door-leaves, would have opened between two sets of choir stalls.

Both Brakspear and Hope, later followed by Vallance,[527] suggested that the area west of this screen was roofed over, but there is no certain physical evidence to support this. Hope, in particular, was keen to impose a structuralist model; he was convinced there had to be a broad loft, a *pulpitum*, occupying the entire first bay of the nave, on which organs may have been placed, singers may have gathered, and even sermons preached. We could not discount this entirely. A wall plate of some form might have sat along the top of the cornice, possibly reflected in the marginally projecting courses of masonry seen in the main blocking wall behind the screen (fig. 105). If so, the beams for the flooring would then have run westward to meet the second screen. Yet as we have said, there is no really convincing physical evidence to attest to such an arrangement.

Next, we might consider the projecting corbels which are set high up on the piers of the western crossing arch (figs. 27, 96, 97). The arch is now blocked, of course, by the eastern terminal wall of the present church. Either side of the blocking, however, we are still able to see the capitals and strings that indicate that the wall conceals a pair of recessed respond

527 Brakspear 1913–14, 485; Hope, 1916–17, 98; Vallance 1947, 111.

shafts like those in the eastern crossing arch (fig. 28). Several feet below the springing of the crossing arch itself, there are three projecting corbels: two on the north pier, one inside the church and one out, and another on the inside of the south pier. They appear, therefore, to have been symmetrically placed about the respond shafts. Although the two corbels inside the post-monastic terminal wall match one another, their alignment varies slightly. On the south side, the corbel is set flush with the edge of the pier, but on the north side it is slightly set back. On the outside, there was no doubt a fourth corbel on the south pier (to match the surviving example on the north side) but this appears to have been cut back flush with the wall face. All of the corbels are very plain, with no hint of elaboration.

Because none of the surrounding ashlar shows any sign of disturbance, the corbels indicate timber features rather than anything of masonry construction. Furthermore, because there are no signs of sockets in the ashlar facing above the corbels, it seems most likely that they supported timbers set against the flat surface of the piers. Such timbers might have been horizontal, vertical, or even a combination of both, perhaps employing arched braces.[528] The size of the corbels also suggests a modest timber scantling. It would certainly be unusual if the corbels were significantly smaller than the timbers they supported.

The implied timber feature or features associated with the corbels may or may not have spanned the full width of the nave. Either way, we might expect there to have been some additional disturbance to the masonry of the crossing piers, but the present terminal blocking wall might well conceal this. On balance, it seems likely that the scale of any individual timber capable of spanning the whole width of the crossing arch would have been greater than that implied by the corbels. Moreover, such large timbers would perhaps have been set within sockets let into the wall face. It is, nevertheless, quite possible that a large timber of this kind would have been centred on each pier, and that the traces of its fixing are now hidden by the blocking wall.[529]

Moving on, we might look at the short polygonal shafts set in the return angles between the triforium gallery and the western crossing piers (fig. 96, 97). These shafts sit on pendant corbels carved as heads, and have floriate capitals turning the angles. The detailing of the shafts and capitals is curiously anomalous. The chamfered face on the southern shaft is much broader than is the case on the northern example, and the plans presented by the tops of the two sets of capitals do not seem match across the nave. The use of polygonal shafts, and the quality of the carving, are not features which appear to fit with the detailing of the fourteenth-century vault, or with any other feature close by.[530] In the present arrangement, the shafts have no clear function.

The relationship between these features and the plain corbels positioned just below them is not clear. However, at least one aspect of their design suggests that they respect the timber feature originally supported on the corbels. Although the capitals above the polygonal shafts return into the nave walls, where they approach the post-suppression blocking wall they are cut short. This suggests that when the polygonal shafts were inserted, they respected the structure associated with plain corbels. Perhaps the capitals were designed as a masonry continuation of a carved timber cornice spanning the width of the nave. Above the level of the clerestory sill, the higher level of the western crossing piers are treated as splays (figs. 96, 97). The reason for this is not entirely clear, though the insertion of the splays probably removed whatever feature the polygonal shafts were designed to support.

We may now turn to review the evidence from the north and south aisle screens, and to look at their probable continuation across the main vessel of the nave. It has been shown

528 The use of arch braces in lightweight timber structures is witnessed, for example, in the testers over the tombs of King Henry III (d. 1272), Eleanor of Castille (d. 1290), Richard II (d. 1399) and Anne of Bohemia (d. 1394), commissioned 1394: Binski 1995; RCHM 1924.

529 Small, plain corbels of the type seen at Malmesbury can be found associated with screen structures all over the country. They were, for example used to support rood beams, as at Brecon (RCAHMW 1994, figs. 19, 90), as well as the overhanging cove or celure. At Manorbier in Pembrokeshire, such corbels are used to support the northern extension of the rood loft platform: Vallance 1936, fig. 227.

530 We have not had the opportunity to examine the corbels or capitals at close quarters. The human head corbel on the north side, however, would seem to have an earlier fourteenth-century hair style.

that the eastern façade of the south aisle screen was altered by those cuts introduced in order to accommodate a gallery pew, sometime before 1800 (figs. 75, 79). The position of the pew appears in a plan of 1823 (figs. 91, 92), the details of which accord with the physical damage to the southern two-thirds of the screen. The gallery pew was accessed by a wooden stair, climbing from east to west, and positioned against the south wall of the aisle. Its location is confirmed by faint traces in the limewash on the wallface (fig. 95). Similar marks can be seen on the south face of the first pier of the arcade. These are associated with the curving stair which rose to a second gallery pew spanning the first bay.

The removal of the northern return of the screen by Brakspear in the late 1920s has exposed a rectangular socket cut into the face of the pier (fig. 96).[531] This socket would have provided a key for the joint between the Romanesque fabric of the pier and the cornice of the late-medieval screen (fig. 88).

To all intents and purposes, the screen in the north aisle is a mirror image of that to the south, except for minor details such as the junction with the outer wall, easily explained by differences in the earlier treatments of the aisle windows. As the plan of 1823 demonstrates, there were no raised pews in the first bay of the north aisle (fig. 91). Consequently, the northern screen is less damaged. This said, as in the south aisle, its return to the nave pier was removed by Brakspear, exposing another rectangular socket (fig. 106) in line with the cornice moulding (fig. 89). But there are clearly other cuts and sockets in the adjacent pier and arcade masonry, which can neither attributed to the pewing arrangements of the eighteenth-century, or to the masonry of the north aisle screen itself.

The topmost surfaces of both screens are perfectly flat (figs. 85, 86). The width of the surface in each case is about 1 foot 6 inches (0.46m), and would have been sufficient to support a timber superstructure, not unlike — say — the timber gallery which projected out from the high altar reredos at Westminster Abbey from the 1440s (fig. 102).[532] There is no clear physical evidence at Malmesbury to confirm this point, though one would be equally hard pressed to find the traces at Westminster. In so far as we can take the evidence back, the angled returns of both aisle screens, seen in pre-restoration photographs and plans (figs. 16, 17, 23, 87–89) was the original arrangement. In other words, at least some of the pier face would have remained exposed to view from the nave side.

As for a screen across the main vessel of the nave between the first pair of piers, we must admit that below the level of the capitals the evidence is somewhat mixed.[533] The four lowest courses on the northern face of the south pier possibly shows traces of paint from a structure built up against it, but this is not entirely clear. And there are two cuts near the top of the pier, just above the aisle cornice scar (fig. 96). To the north, on the other hand, almost the entire southern face of the first pier is made up of new stone. A photograph showing this pier before Brakspear's restoration (fig. 107) seems to indicate that the entire south face had been flattened. Though there is a monument mounted just below the capital, it would be surprising if the entire surface were reduced for this purpose. Rather, it is tempting to see this as evidence of a wall abutment, but we cannot be sure, especially given the condition of the southern pier.

From the capital level and above, with the features occurring at a similar height on both sides, the area around these two piers shows much more evidence for the continuation of the aisle screens across the centre of the nave. In particular, the west face of each capital has been worked back to a flat surface (figs. 96, 107), part disguised on the south side by the renewal of some of the scallop mouldings and the section of the abacus.[534] Above the capital, the lower part of the decorated outer-order roll is flattened, and the square mid-order moulding entirely cut back, to a height of about 1 foot (0.3m). Again, to the same height, the arcade soffit rolls have also been neatly cut back, the evidence showing far more clearly on pre-restoration photographs of the north side (figs. 89, 107).

531 See above, p. 62.

532 See above, pp. 76–77.

533 See , also, Caroe & Partners 2001, 6.

534 Perkins (1901, 97) noted that the capitals of the two easternmost piers had been cut back, 'apparently with the intention of inserting some wooden beam'.

As Jerry Sampson has also recently concluded, the evidence seems to indicate a stone screen continuing across the central vessel of the nave, possibly returning with angles to meet the arcade piers,[535] though we believe the junction was more likely to have been straight at this point. The principal screen appears to have supported a timber loft, perhaps standing up to 3 feet (0.9m) high, and which passed through beneath the arcades, and may have continued into the aisles. At present, we cannot be sure of the way this loft was accessed. Brakspear suggested it was by way of a 'wooden stair from the south aisle and a narrow gangway at the back of the screen, the notches for which are still quite clear'. He noted, too, that the 'main arches of the arcade are cut away to give passage on to the middle part of the loft' (Annex 3).[536] We have shown, however, that the stair to which Brakspear referred was more likely to be associated with the gallery pew which existed prior to 1823. The medieval stair could, of course, have followed this same alignment, or was perhaps even reflected by the stair seen climbing around the first pier of the south arcade in the 1823 plan (fig. 92). Alternatively, the approach may have been from the triforium galleries, in which case the traces are likely to have been lost when the galleries were walled up. Or, one might think of a simple stair arrangement enclosed on the rear side of the screen, in the retrochoir bay.

Our *speculative* reconstruction (figs. 108, 109) is by no means the only possibility. It draws largely on the surviving architectural evidence, but some elements are of necessity conjectural, and are intended to highlight the significance of the surviving fragments. We have opted for a choir screen and rood screen pairing, suggesting that this was the more likely arrangement in the early sixteenth-century church. There may have been a grander and taller finishing to the choir screen. It is possible it had a curving canopy or celure projecting forward from the crossing arch, making use of the corbels we identified in this area. We have located an organ on the loft above the choir screen.[537] The rood screen supports a timber gallery, not unlike that evidenced at Westminster in the same period, or the reconstruction proposed for Brecon Priory (fig. 101). We show a tester above, and a rood suspended from transverse beams, again like the arrangement seen at Westminster. From the account of a fire at Bury St Edmunds Abbey in 1465, for example, it is clear that the rood there was also of a hanging form.[538]

There is one other piece of fabric evidence in the surviving church which may be related to the late-medieval screening arrangements. In the second bay of both the north and south arcades, the lower eastern end of the billeted label mould has been lost (figs. 96, 97). This is rather higher than any of the other cuts or scars in the fabric suggest the gallery and associated features may have risen, but we cannot be sure. Something similar occurs at the church of Charlton-on-Otmoor in Oxfordshire, where the elaborate early sixteenth-century rood screen canopy rises to meet such cut-back labels.[539]

535 Caroe & Partners 2001, 7.

536 Brakspear 1913–14, 485–86.

537 We have opted simply for a form based on the early sixteenth-century organ at St Stephen's church, Old Radnor: Bicknell 1996, 42.

538 Vallance 1947, 1, 5, 7.

539 Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 529–30, plate 46; Vallance 1936, figs. 31, 32.

7
CONCLUSION

If anything, this review of the historical, archaeological, and architectural evidence for the great medieval abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Aldhelm at Malmesbury underlines the importance of the once vast Benedictine monastic complex to our understanding of the entire development of Wiltshire's ancient hilltop town. The surviving archaeological and architectural legacy of Malmesbury Abbey may very well span a period of more than 1,300 years. It is an ecclesiastical site where continuity of worship, coupled with prestigious architectural ambition, combine to present a huge spectrum of potential interest.

Our report reaffirms that the abbey church itself is a building of truly outstanding national importance, and yet at the same time the work demonstrates just how much more we still have to learn and appreciate about the complex as a whole. Our focus has been on a single later-medieval liturgical fitting, significant enough in itself, but we hope to have demonstrated the value of a somewhat more comprehensive approach to the assemblage of relevant material, and of its importance in establishing context, significance, and understanding.[540]

Outside the standing fabric of the abbey church, too little is known of the monastic complex as a whole. The archaeology of the site, in particular, is very much an unknown quantity, a fact of especial relevance to the Anglo-Saxon period. The historical sources for the early *monasterium* are much in need of modern scholarly review, as are those for the tenth-century revival period, not to mention the works of William of Malmesbury. In terms of the physical evidence, although we have documented clues to a 'family' sequence of Anglo-Saxon churches, we know virtually nothing about their character — not even the location of the complex can be predicted with real certainty.

For the post-Conquest era, and for the high Middle Ages, the most accessible historical information comes from the now-dated Victoria County History account. A new and critical edition of the Malmesbury cartulary would be a major asset in advancing our understanding of the abbey's history, its landholdings and estate organization, and its relationship and interaction with the town and its burgesses. Turning to the Romanesque and Gothic fabric, although there have been various studies of the upstanding church over a long period, the only comprehensive account was published almost ninety years ago. There have, of course, been enormous advances in the way we look at our greater medieval churches since that time, yet hitherto the only additional information on Malmesbury has been the odd passing reference, or an update on a specific aspect of the building.

Of fundamental importance to advancing our knowledge of the twelfth-century and later church is the recovery of definitive information on the east end — the ruined choir and presbytery areas. Only with firm archaeological evidence for the form of the Romanesque eastern arm can we possibly hope to determine whether the church was begun before or after 1143, and it is archaeology once again which should be able to confirm the date and full form of the additions to the presbytery in the later Middle Ages. In fact, archaeological method is surely one of the keys to further understanding of the changing liturgical divisions in the church over the medieval period as a whole. Where, indeed, was the shrine of St Aldhelm, and does anything survive today? The early fourteenth-century remodelling of the nave is better understood, though again we know little of the impact of this programme (if at all) in the presbytery. Nor again or do we know anything of substance about the late-medieval work at Malmesbury, especially the addition of the west tower and the central spire. Finally, given its enormous importance, the south porch sculpture and its national and international contexts might be singled out as another area crying out for fresh and critical examination.

540 All seen as crucial elements in the better management of the historic environment in EH 2000; Clark 2001, DCMS 2001.

Elsewhere on the site, it is clear that Brakspear's archaeological work was extremely limited. Apart form the major details of the fifteenth-century cloister alleys, he recovered very little about the nature and date of the surrounding monastic buildings. A wealthy Benedictine abbey of the scale of Malmesbury might be expected to have had an extensive complex of communal and private structures, many of them of no mean architectural pretension. The complex seems to have covered much of the hilltop, enclosed by a precinct wall, and further surrounded by gardens, orchards, and a demesne estate.

Much more work remains to be done on the post-suppression history of the site, and on the sources for the fabric of the parish church. We have not, for example, located any work on the roofs above the main vessel of the nave or aisles. The aisle roofs appear to be post-monastic, but further investigation and dendrochronological survey might be considered. In this report, we have of necessity rather skated over the nature of the furnishings and fittings within the church before the Goodridge restoration of 1822–23, and with more research it should be possible to chart the character of the earlier phases. It would be particularly interesting to know more about the introduction of the box pews, and of the gallery pews around the chancel. Goodridge's work is of considerable interest in its own right, and deserves to be better understood. He was an architect content to work in the Gothic style, which may explain the good fortune in his leaving the medieval screens untouched.

The report has focussed on the late-medieval stone screen which closes off the eastern bay (St Aldhelm's Chapel) of the south aisle in the abbey church. The screen is in fact matched by one of identical style situated in the same position within the north aisle. In the past, there has been a general, but unsubstantiated, claim that these screens do not occupy original monastic positions. Indeed, hearsay evidence has sometimes been put forward to suggest they were removed from the former parish church of St Paul, abandoned at the time of the suppression. However, having presented the architectural and archaeological evidence, we believe there can be very little doubt that the screens are *in situ*, and that they are late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century additions to the monastic church. The damage inflicted on the south aisle screen seems to occurred when the box pews were introduced in a reordering before 1800. We have also presented the opinions of early scholars, and have followed this up with a contextual section on the significance of liturgical screening within cathedral and greater monastic churches. To summarize our views on Malmesbury, we have offered two *speculative* reconstruction drawings. We have emphasized that these drawings are in no way put forward as statements of fact; they are to be seen as interpretative suggestions, based the surviving evidence and current understanding. They do, nevertheless, provide a vivid demonstration of the architectural and historical significance of the south aisle screen.

Primarily, our work demonstrates that all notion of the south aisle screen having been moved to its current position in the post-monastic period should be rejected. It is not supported by the archaeological or historical evidence. On the contrary, there can be very little doubt that the screen is anything other than related to the late-medieval liturgical arrangements within the Benedictine monastic church, an important element within the overall choir and rood screen pairing.

Over the past few decades, scholars have shown increasing interest in the way our greater cathedral and monastic churches were used during the Middle Ages. Reconstructing medieval liturgical practice merely from documentary sources can be misleading, yet surviving physical evidence is all too scarce. There is renewed interest in screening in particular. Since the work of William St John Hope and others, the monumental screens erected at the boundary of the nave and choir in great medieval churches have been perceived as barricades, self-consciously designed to exclude the lay faithful from the liturgical solemnities beyond. Fresh studies of the ritual and social functions of these structures, however, and of the iconography of the sculptural programmes which often decorated their façades, suggests that contrary to traditional assumptions, a conscious effort was made by monastic authorities to address, engage, and draw their flocks into the importance of the sacred events taking place on the other side of the 'barrier', in the choir and sanctuary beyond.

The Malmesbury high altar reredos, and the associated north and south aisle screens, are highly significant survivals of such medieval liturgical practice. As such, their continued

preservation in their present (i.e. original) monastic positions has to be an underlying premise in all future use of the church. In any proposal to remove or relocate these screens, it would presumably be necessary to demonstrate limited historical and architectural significance. This report should be sufficient to counter all such notion. Furthermore, one would need to consider very carefully what impact any removal would have on the fabric of the screen or screens. The distinct possibility of damage during dismantling and reassembly has to be a major consideration. Since the south aisle screen is complete, and currently *in situ*, this point needs to be considered very carefully as part of any debate on a fully justified proposal for relocation.

On the contrary, at this stage, the onus is upon the parish to set out a very clear and justifiable 'Significance of Need', outlining very fully why its present objectives cannot be met in some other way. All alternatives need to be carefully examined. Might, for example, the largely 'dead space' in the north aisle be put to better use? Is the current bookshop arrangement too large, and should the current plans be seen in a wider framework of change at Malmesbury?

This report may assist in the appreciation of the wider issues that various Malmesbury authorities must surely face up to in the near future. Fundamental to better management practice, of course, is the need for a Conservation Plan, a document which not only takes into account the surviving church, but the entire medieval monastic complex.[541] A thorough audit of all surviving fragments is required.

We have hinted in a number of places through the report that archaeological method is likely to be essential in advancing knowledge about the site. We imagine both survey and intrusive work may have a part to play. If geophysical survey failed to recover accurate plots of, say, the east end of the church, there may well be an argument for a carefully planned and targeted programme of excavation, which might be justifiable if the results were to better inform future management regimes.

541 For general backround, see Clark 1999, especially 103–08.

Fig. 1 General view of Malmesbury Abbey from the south-west. The Benedictine church was built in the twelfth century and heavily remodelled in the early fourteenth century. Six bays of the nave have served as the parish church since the 1540s.

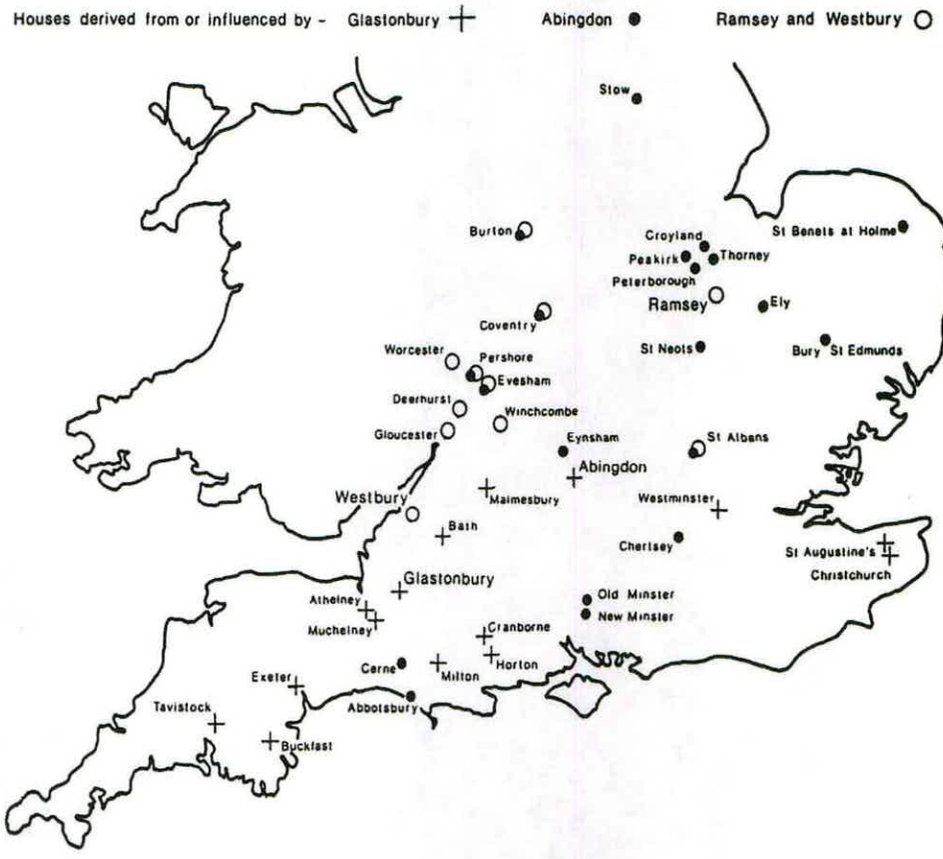


Fig. 2 Monastic houses founded or refounded following the tenth-century reforms, based on Glastonbury, Abingdon, and Ramsey. With a few addition, this represents the full complement of monasteries in England at the time of the Norman Conquest, 1066. (*After Aston 2000*)

Fig. 3 The south aisle screen at Malmesbury Abbey, west elevation. A late-medieval addition to the fabric of the church, it is currently the subject of a proposal for removal one bay to the west.

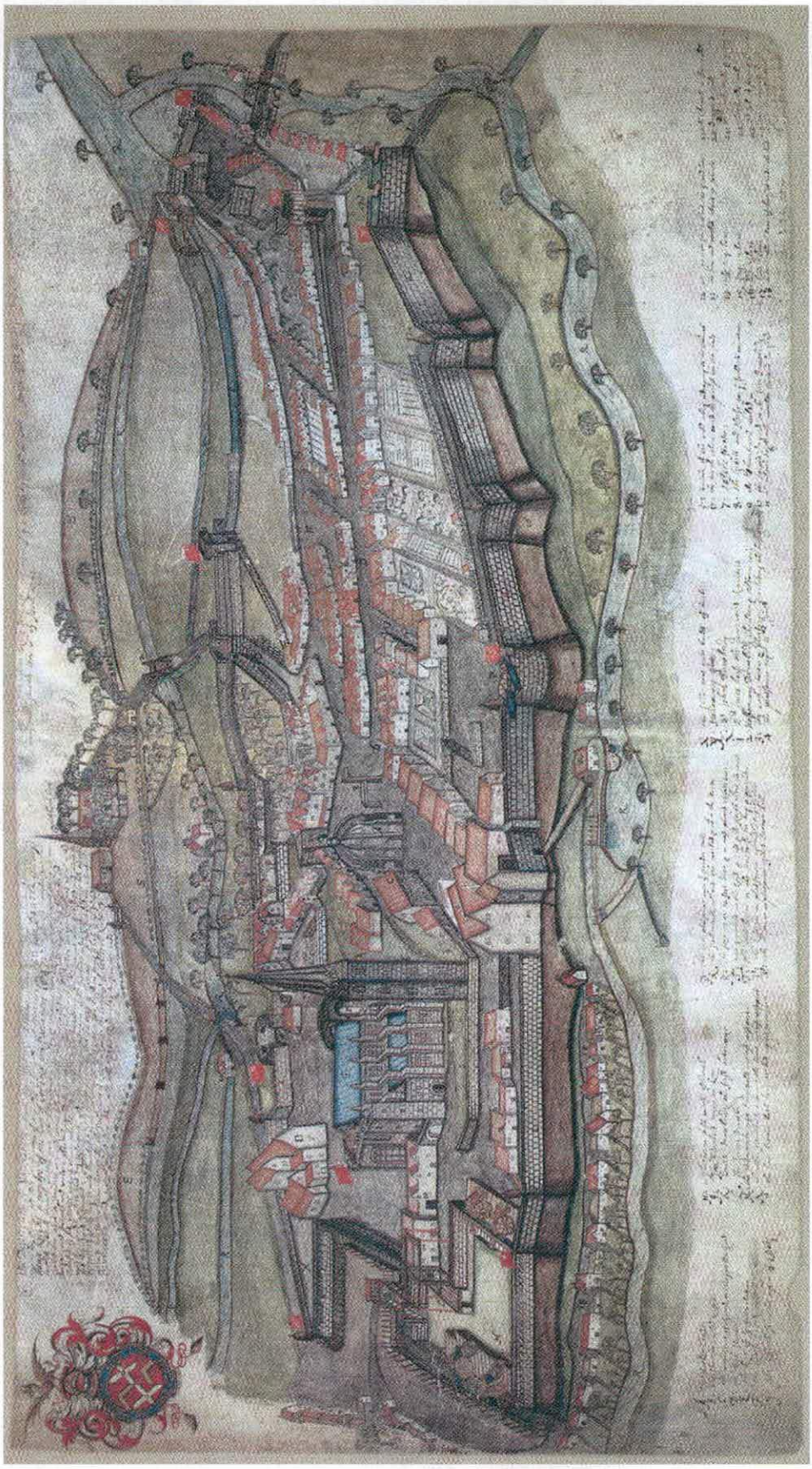


Fig. 4 Panoramic view of the town of Malmesbury, *c.* 1648. The abbey church appears to the left, the roofs still covered with lead. The four arches of the crossing stand complete, and the west front of the church is seen before the collapse of its northern half.
(© *The Warden & Freemen of Malmesbury, Malmesbury Town Council*)

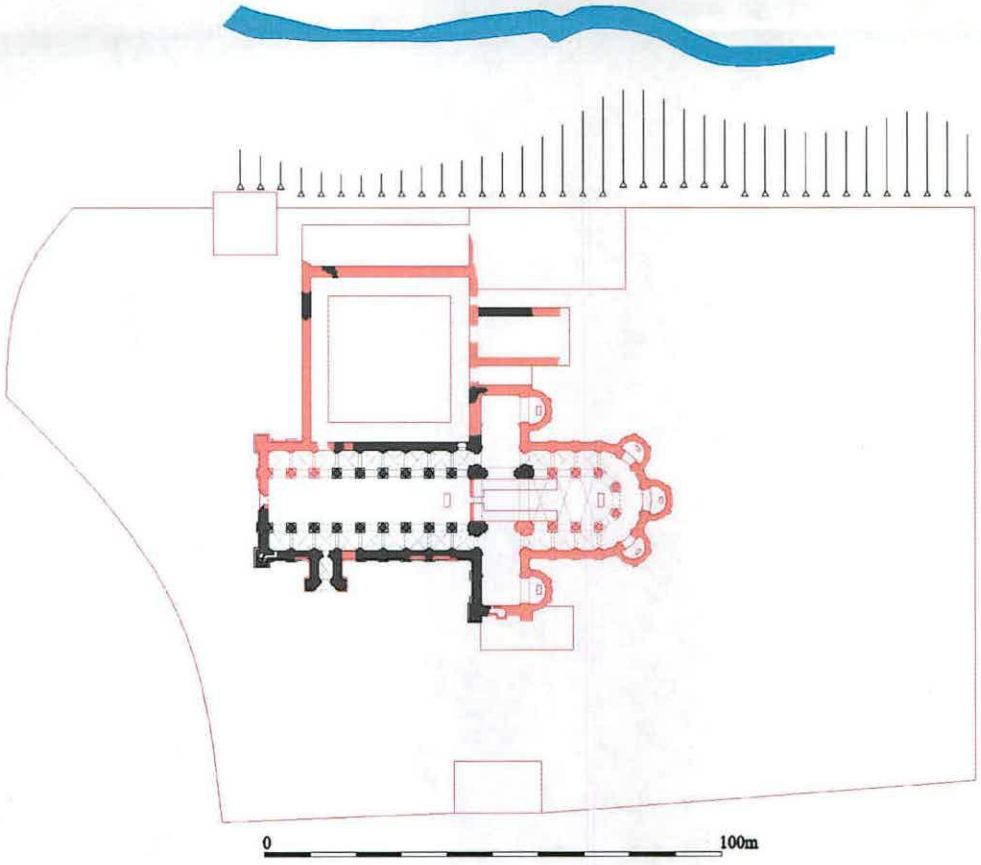


Fig. 5 Speculative ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1180. Black shows surviving masonry; red shows restored and conjectural areas.
(*Richard Lea, after Brakspear 1912–13*)

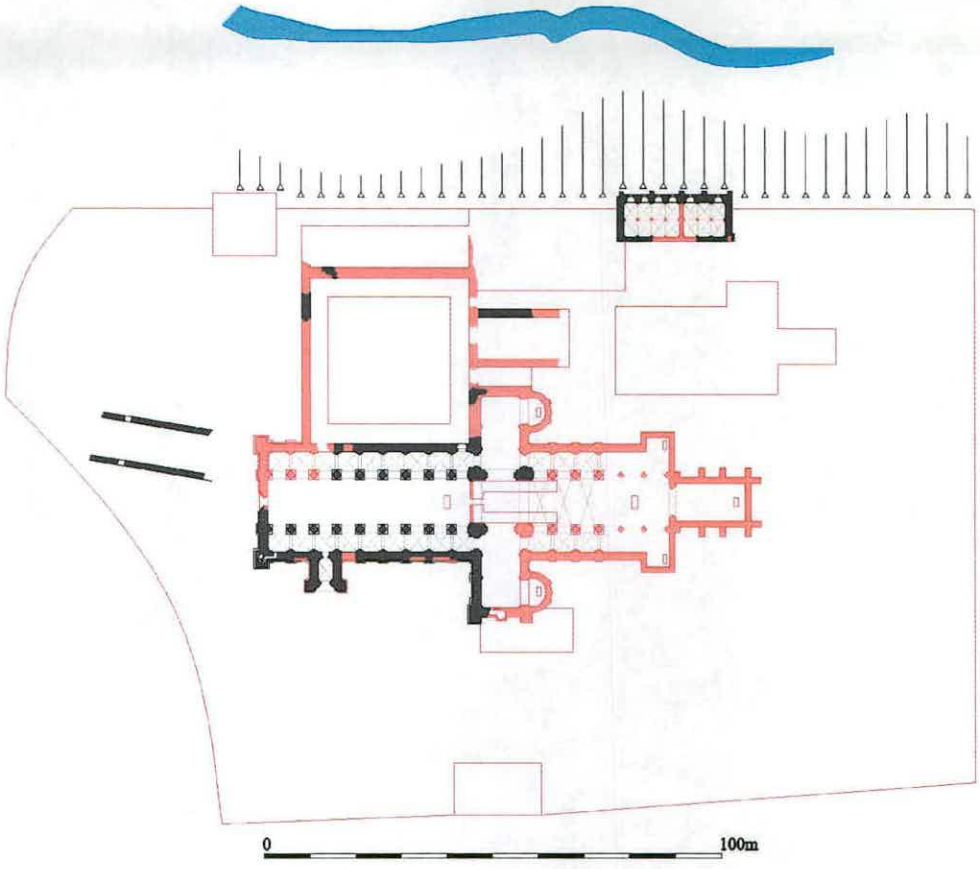


Fig. 6 Speculative ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1275–1300. Black shows surviving masonry; red shows restored and conjectural areas.
(*Richard Lea, after Brakspear 1912–13*)

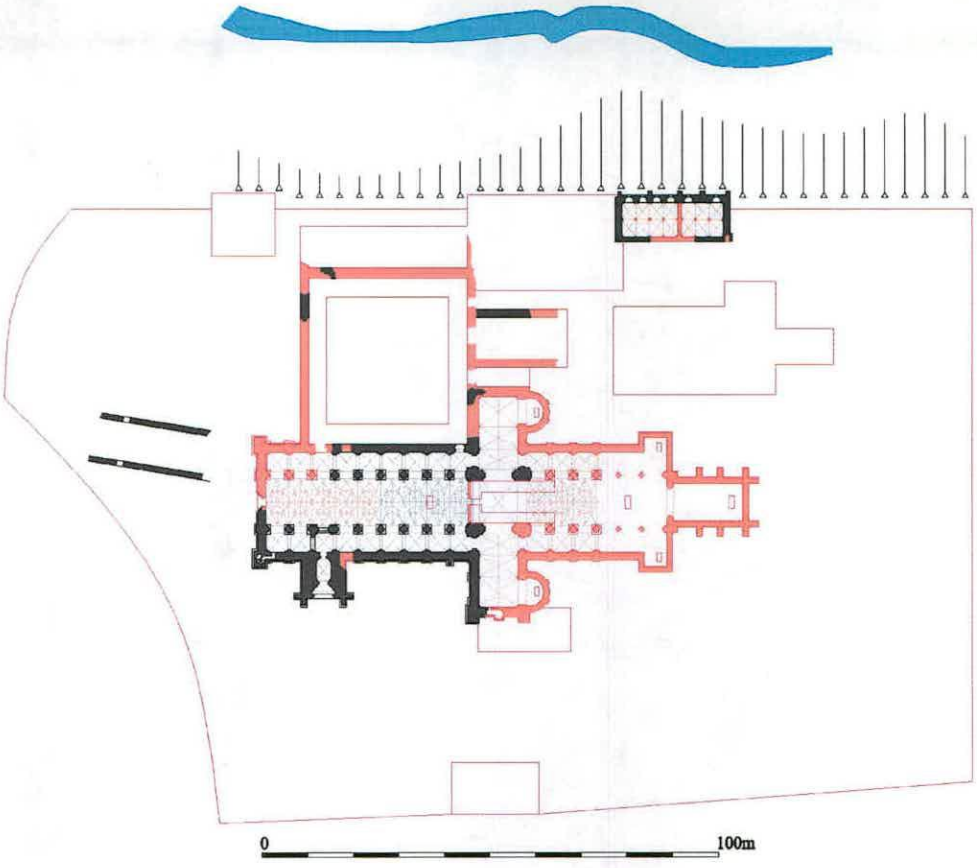


Fig. 7 Speculative ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1350. Black shows surviving masonry; red shows restored and conjectural areas.
(*Richard Lea, after Brakspear 1912–13*)

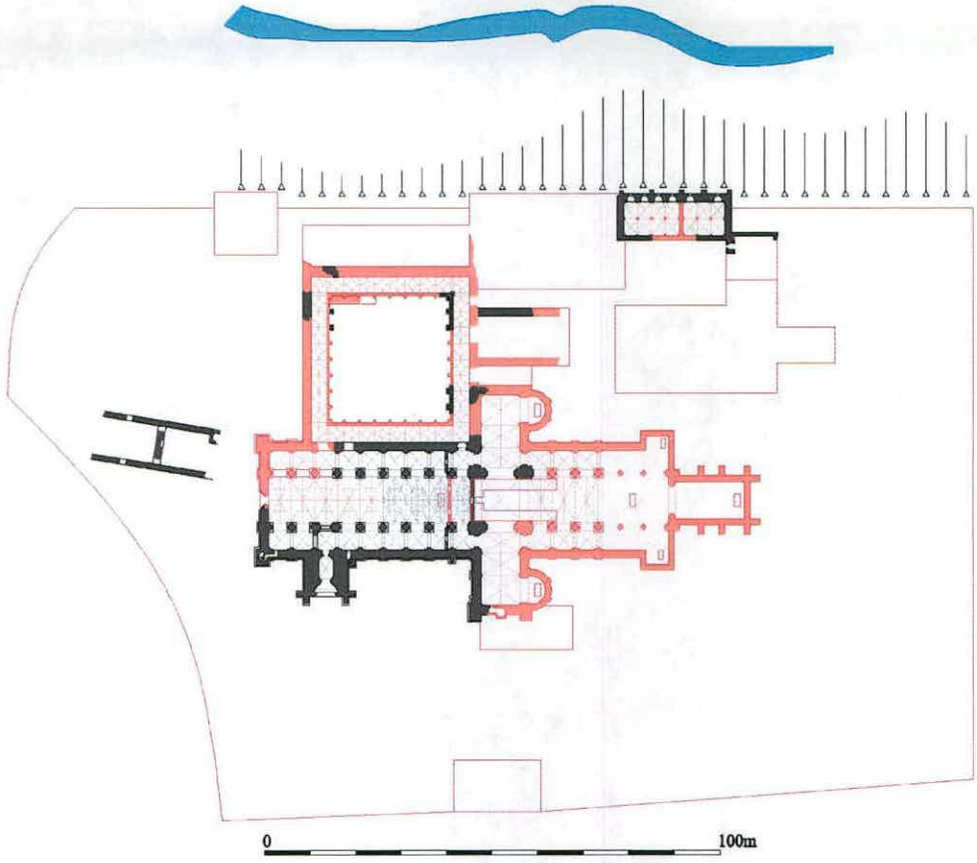


Fig. 8 Speculative ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1530. Black shows surviving masonry; red shows restored and conjectural areas.
(*Richard Lea, after Brakspear 1912–13*)

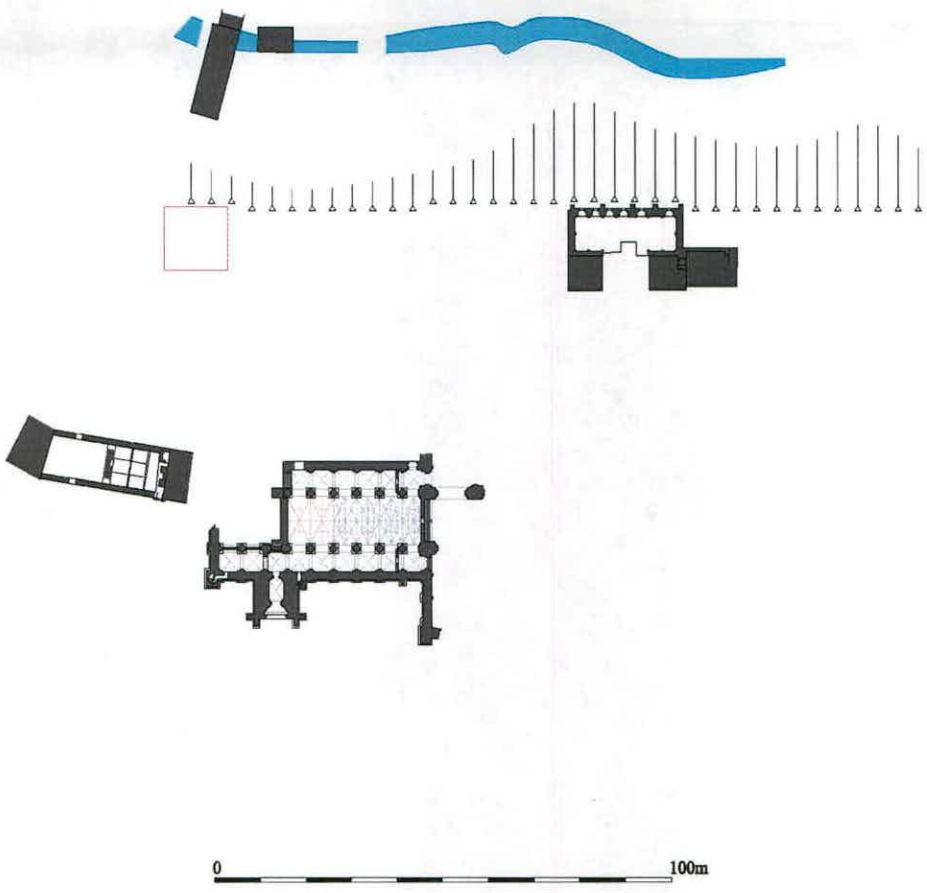


Fig. 9 Speculative ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1660–1700. Black shows surviving masonry; red shows restored and conjectural areas.
(*Richard Lea, after Brakspear 1912–13*)

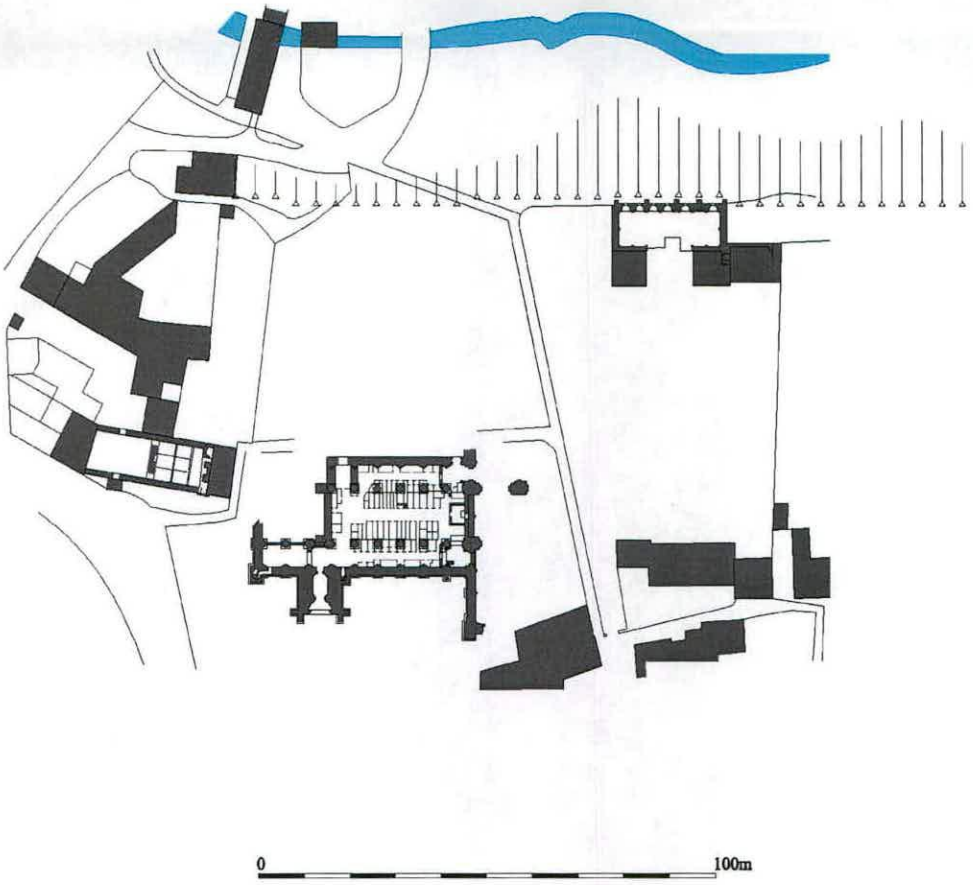


Fig. 10 Speculative ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1823.
(*After Brakspear 1912–13 and J. H. Webb 1823*)

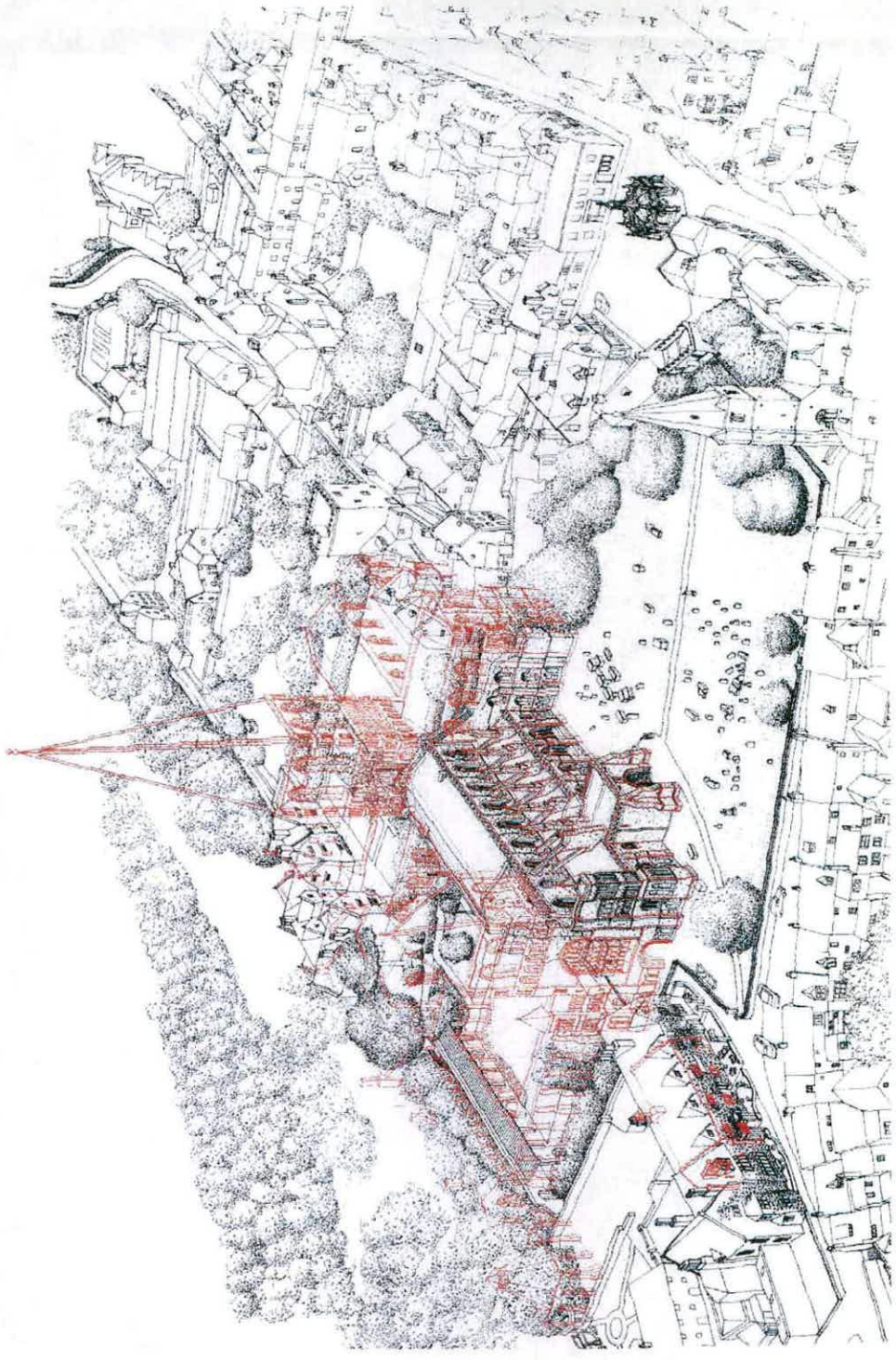


Fig. 11 Suggested reconstruction of Malmesbury Abbey, *c.* 1450–1500. Black shows surviving fabric; red shows restored and conjectural features against the background of the modern topography. The crossing tower is thought to have been raised in the late fourteenth century, at which time a spire was added. Very little is known of the west tower. The building north-west of the cloister is and indication of the abbey kitchen, and north-east of the cloister lies Abbey House, which is raised over a late thirteenth-century undercroft. (*Andrew MacDonald, for North Wiltshire District Council*).

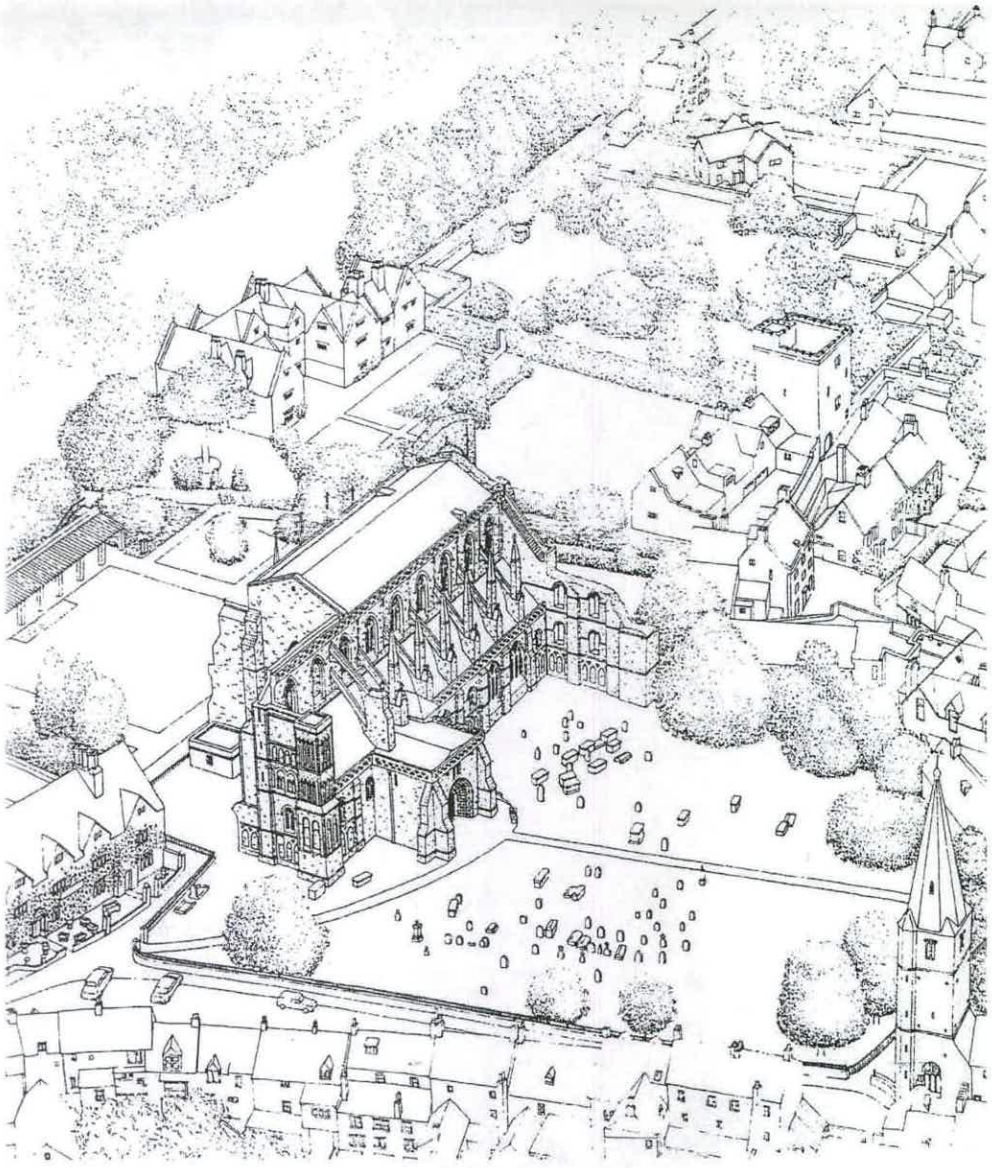


Fig. 12 Drawing of Malmesbury Abbey as it survives today (to compare with fig. 11).
(*Andrew MacDonald, for North Wiltshire District Council*).

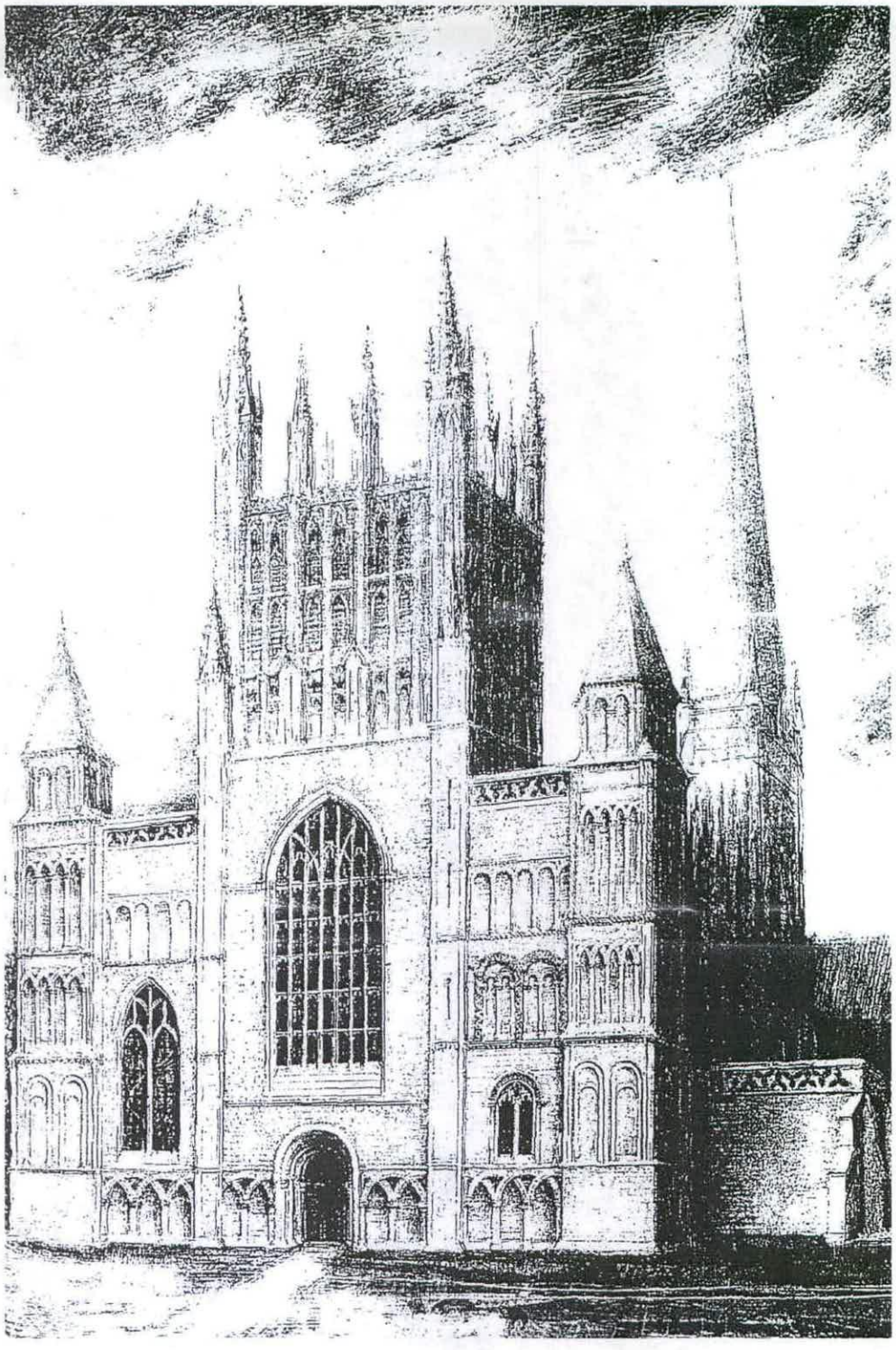


Fig. 13 Sketch reconstruction of the west front of Malmesbury Abbey, as it may have appeared *c.* 1539. The right (south jamb) of the principal window survives, though apart from its existence, very little is known of the form of the west tower. The indication of a fourteenth-century window at the end of the north aisle is based on the evidence of a large window seemingly shown at this point in the *c.* 1648 panorama of the town (fig. 4). (*Keystone Historic Building Consultants, Michael Bull*)

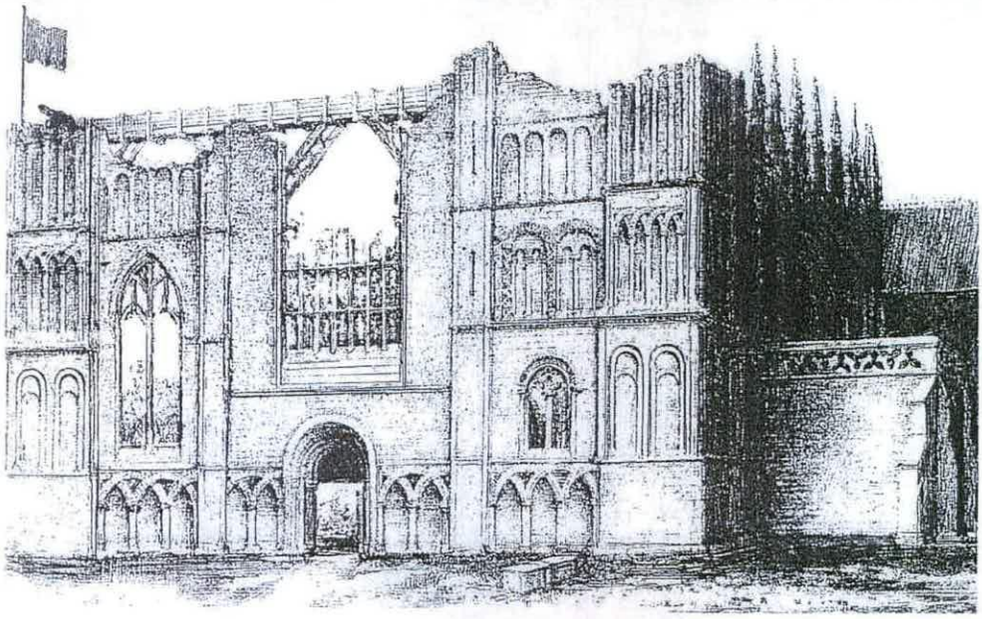


Fig. 14 Sketch reconstruction of the west front of Malmesbury Abbey, as it may have appeared *c.* 1646. There is a case to be made for the northern half of the façade surviving into the late seventeenth century. Half of the west doorway collapsed sometime between 1655 and 1732.
(*Keystone Historic Building Consultants, Michael Bull*)

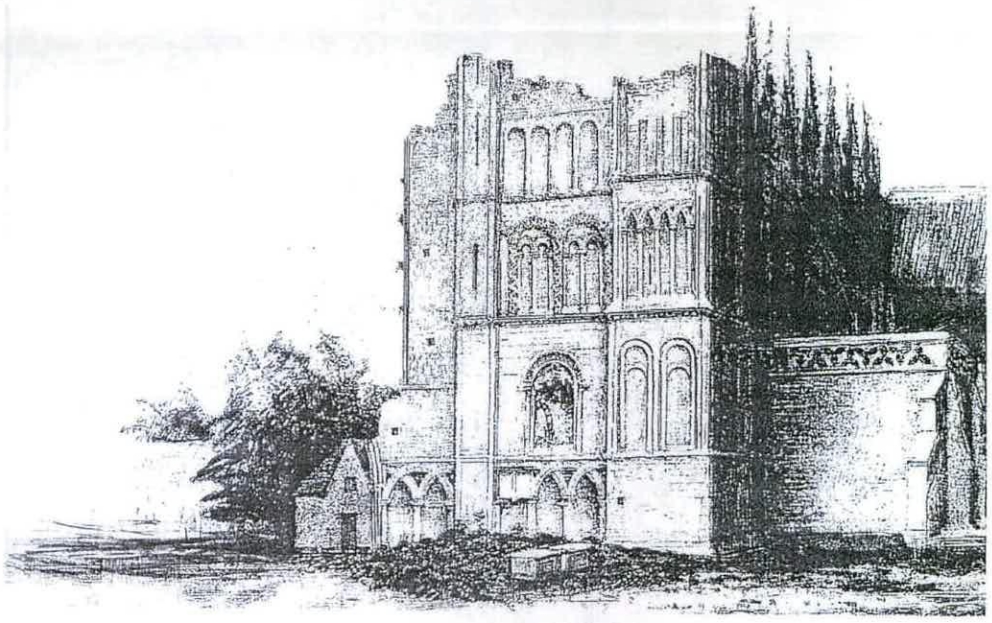


Fig. 15 Sketch reconstruction of the west front of Malmesbury Abbey, as it may have appeared *c.* 1850, before the restoration of the early twentieth century.
(*Keystone Historic Building Consultants, Michael Bull*)

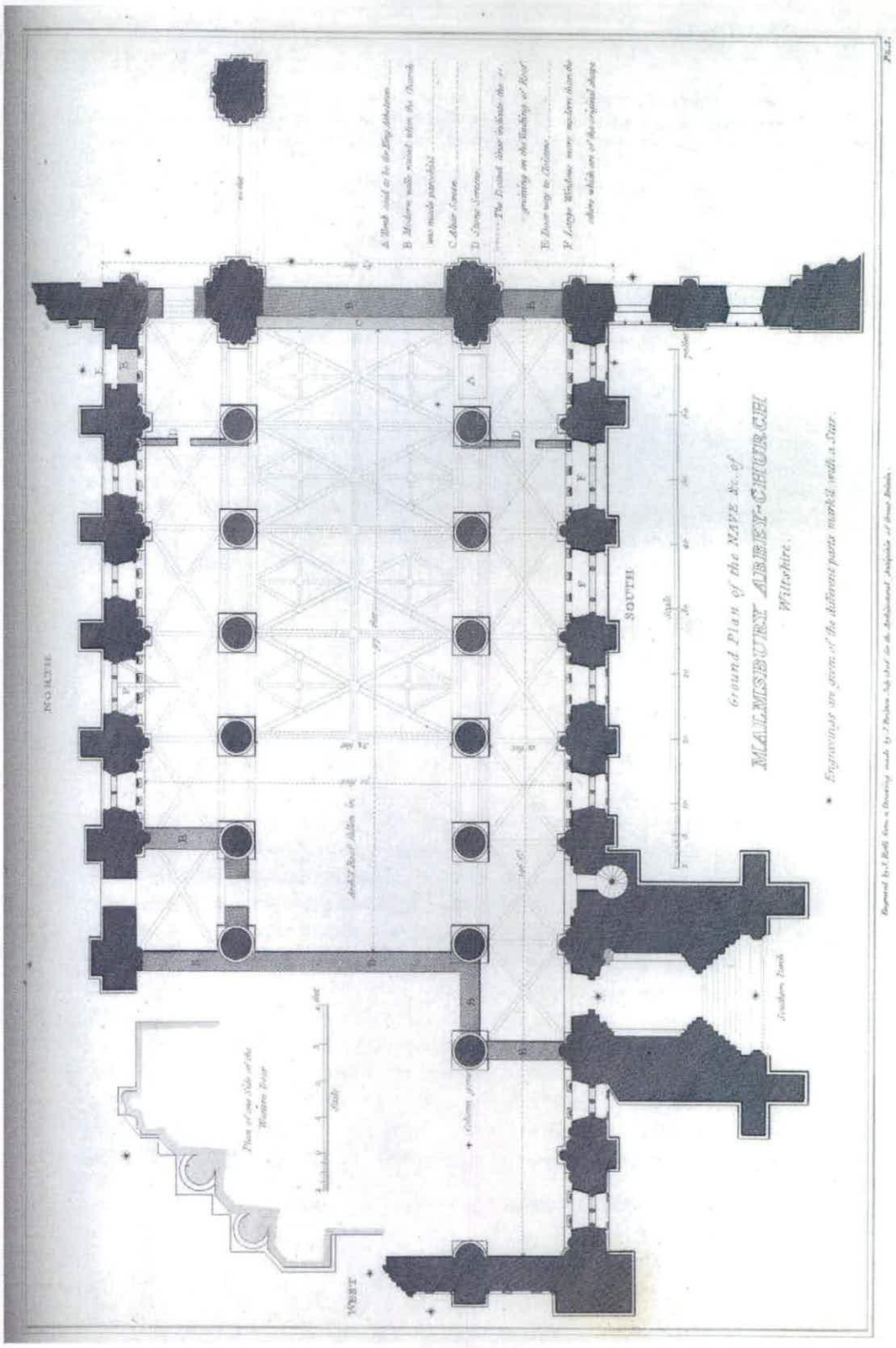


Fig. 16 Ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, 1807. This is the earliest known plan of the church, and shows the south aisle screen in its current position.
(*Britton 1807–10, I*)

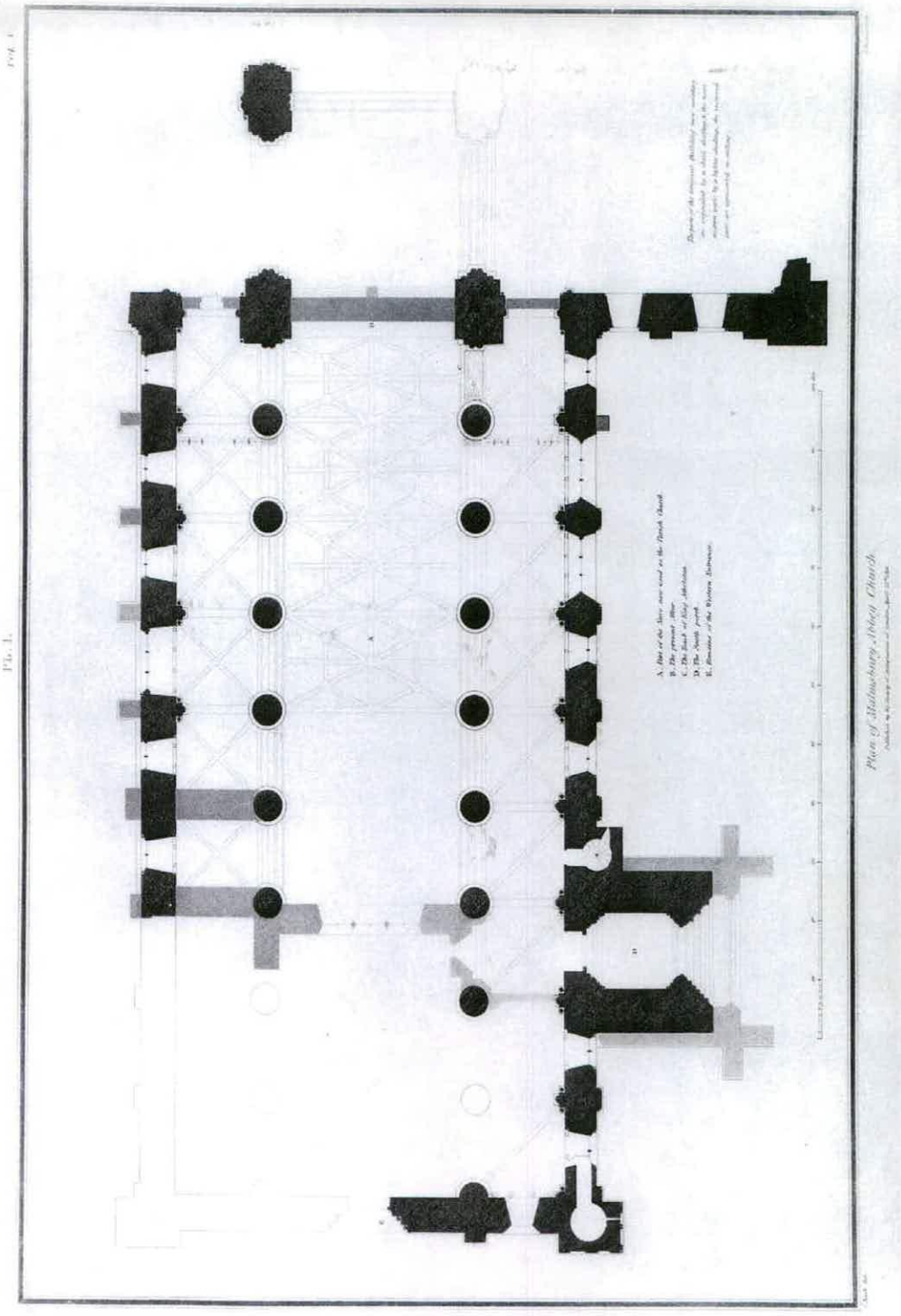


Fig. 17 Ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, Frederick Nash (d. 1856), published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1816. The south aisle screen is shown. (*Society of Antiquaries,* Vetusta Monumenta*, 1816–35, Plate I*)

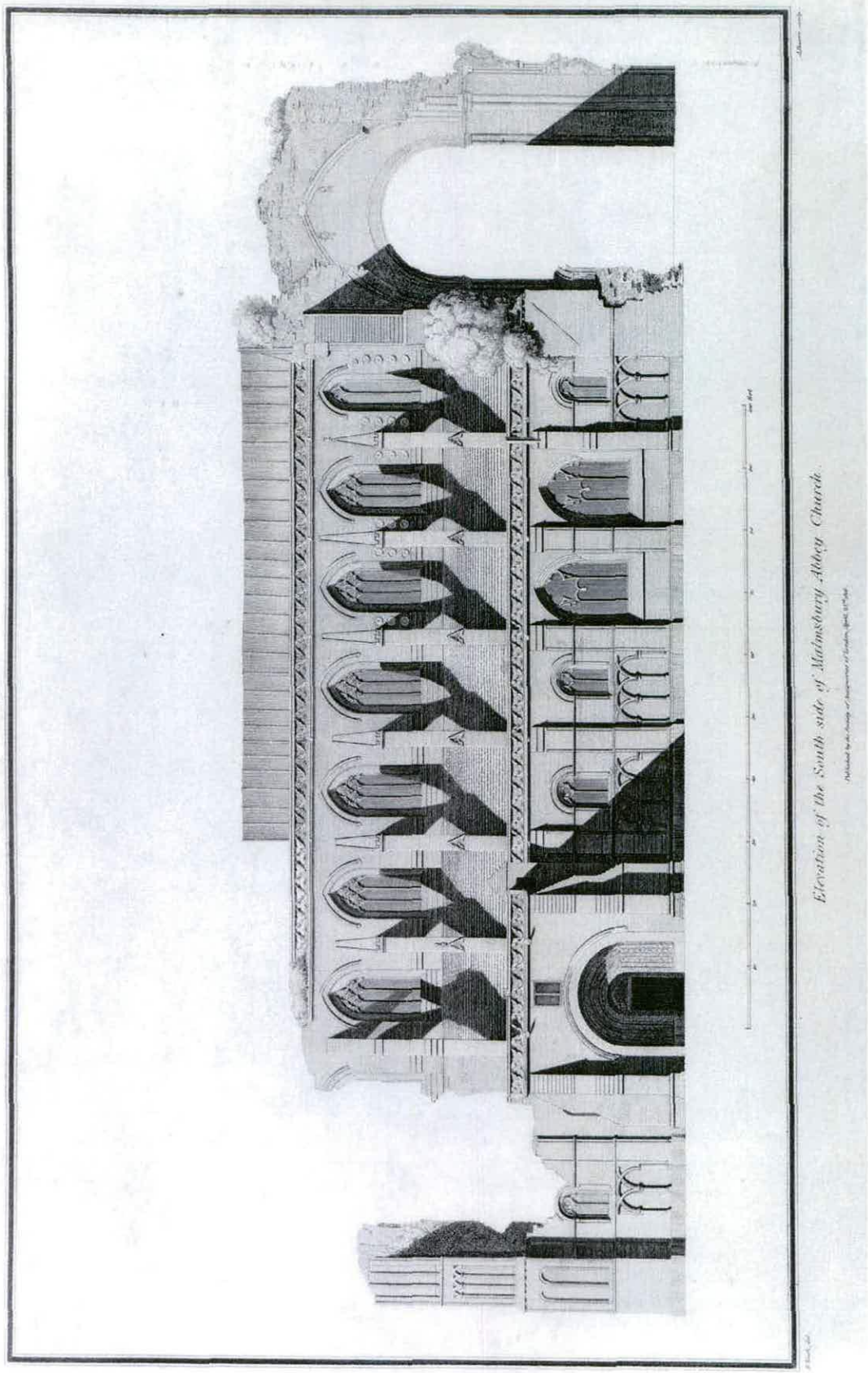


Fig. 18 South elevation of Malmesbury Abbey, Frederick Nash (d. 1856), published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1816.
(*Society of Antiquaries,* Vetusta Monumenta, *1816–35, Plate II*)

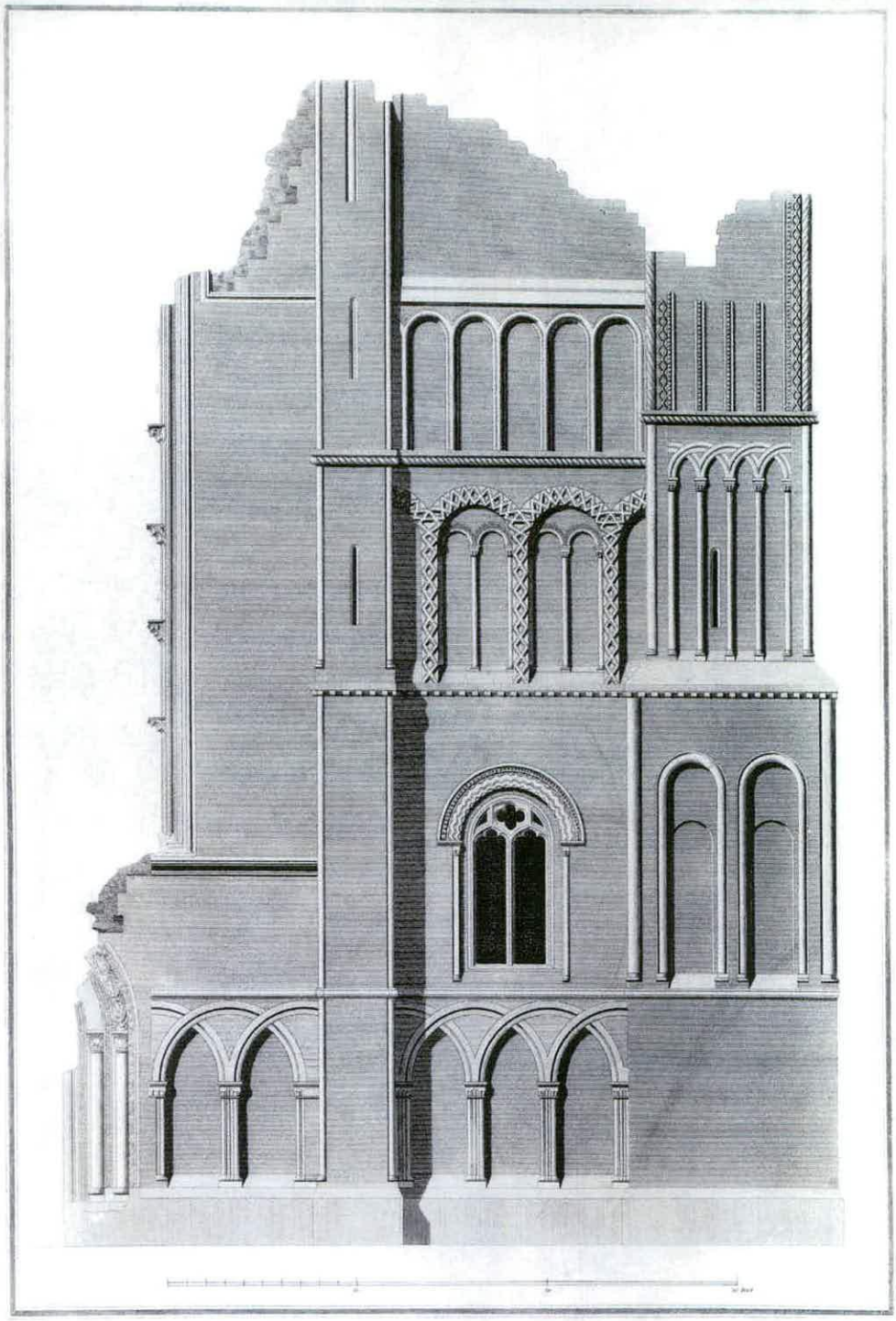


Fig. 19 West front of Malmesbury Abbey, Frederick Nash (d. 1856), published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1816.
(*Society of Antiquaries,* Vetusta Monumenta, *1816–35, Plate III*)

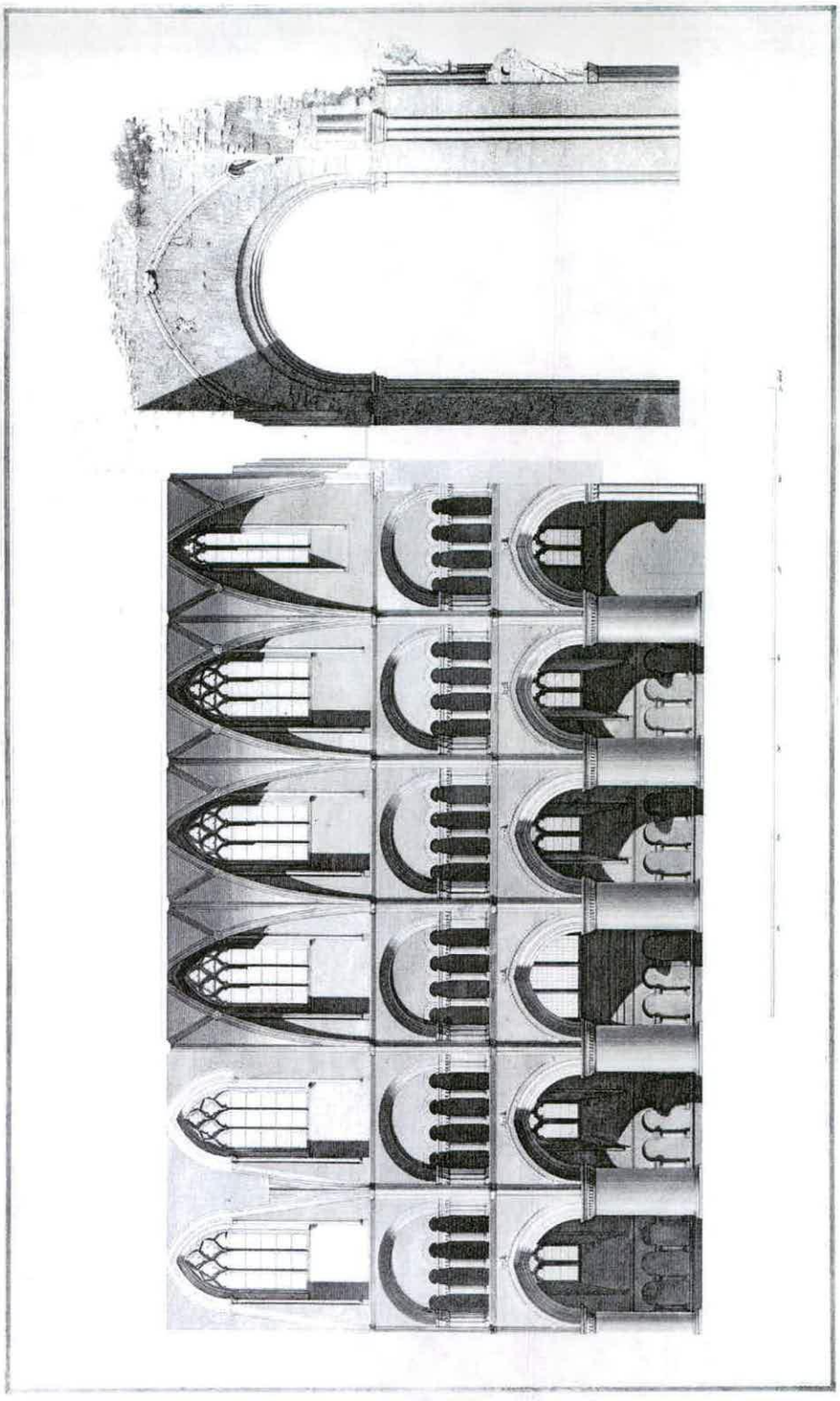


Fig. 20 Longitudinal section of Malmesbury Abbey, Frederick Nash (d. 1856), published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1816.
(*Society of Antiquaries,* Vetusta Monumenta*, 1816–35, Plate IV*)

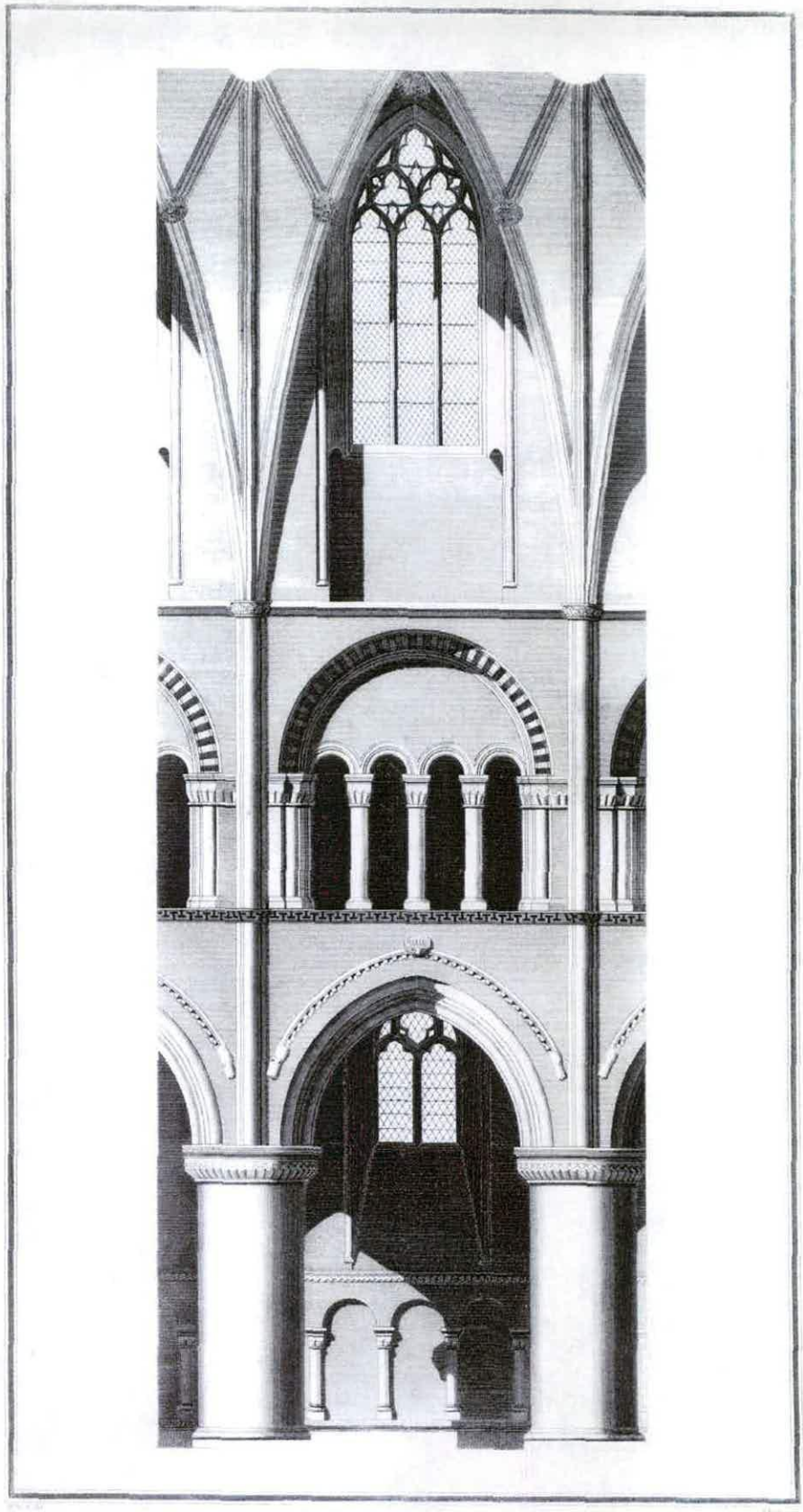


Fig. 21 Nave bay elevation at Malmesbury Abbey, Frederick Nash (d. 1856), published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1816.
(*Society of Antiquaries,* Vetusta Monumenta*, 1816–35, Plate V*)

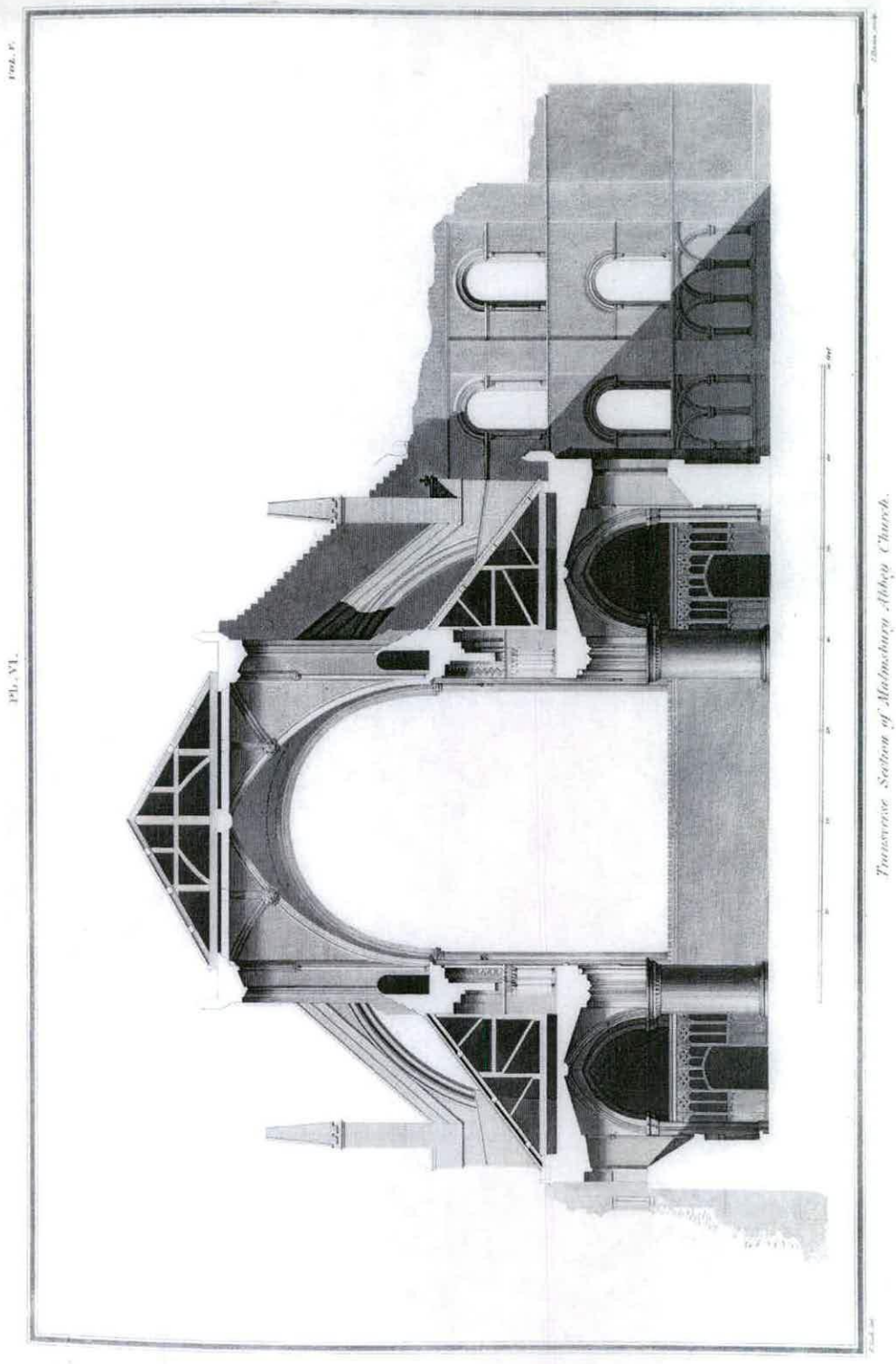


Fig. 22 Transverse section of Malmesbury Abbey, looking west, Frederick Nash (d. 1856), published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1816.
(*Society of Antiquaries,* Vetusta Monumenta, *1816–35, Plate VI*)

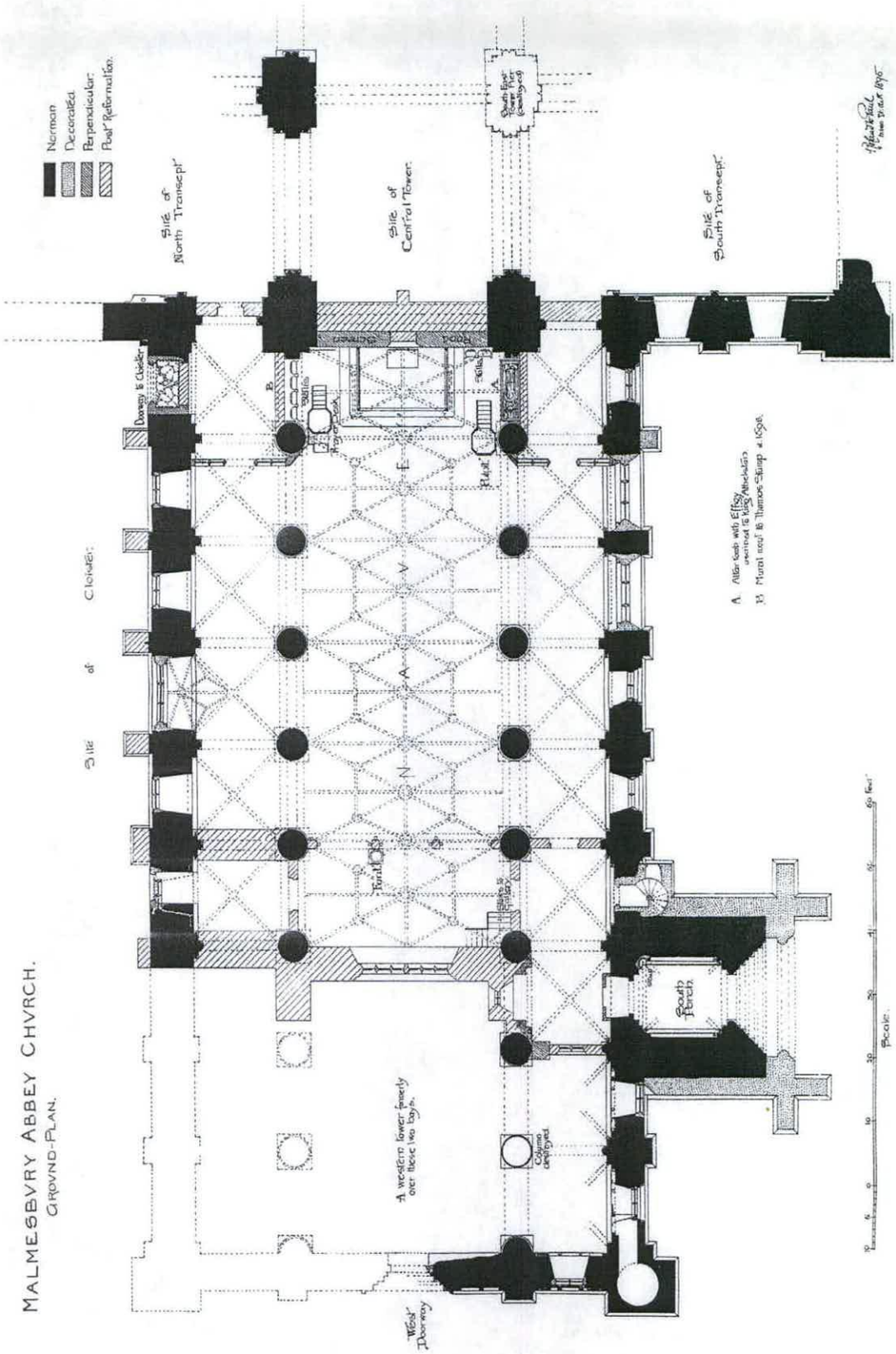


Fig. 23 Ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, Roland W. Paul, 1895. The plan shows the south aisle screen as Perpendicular work.
(*The Builder, **68**, 1895*)

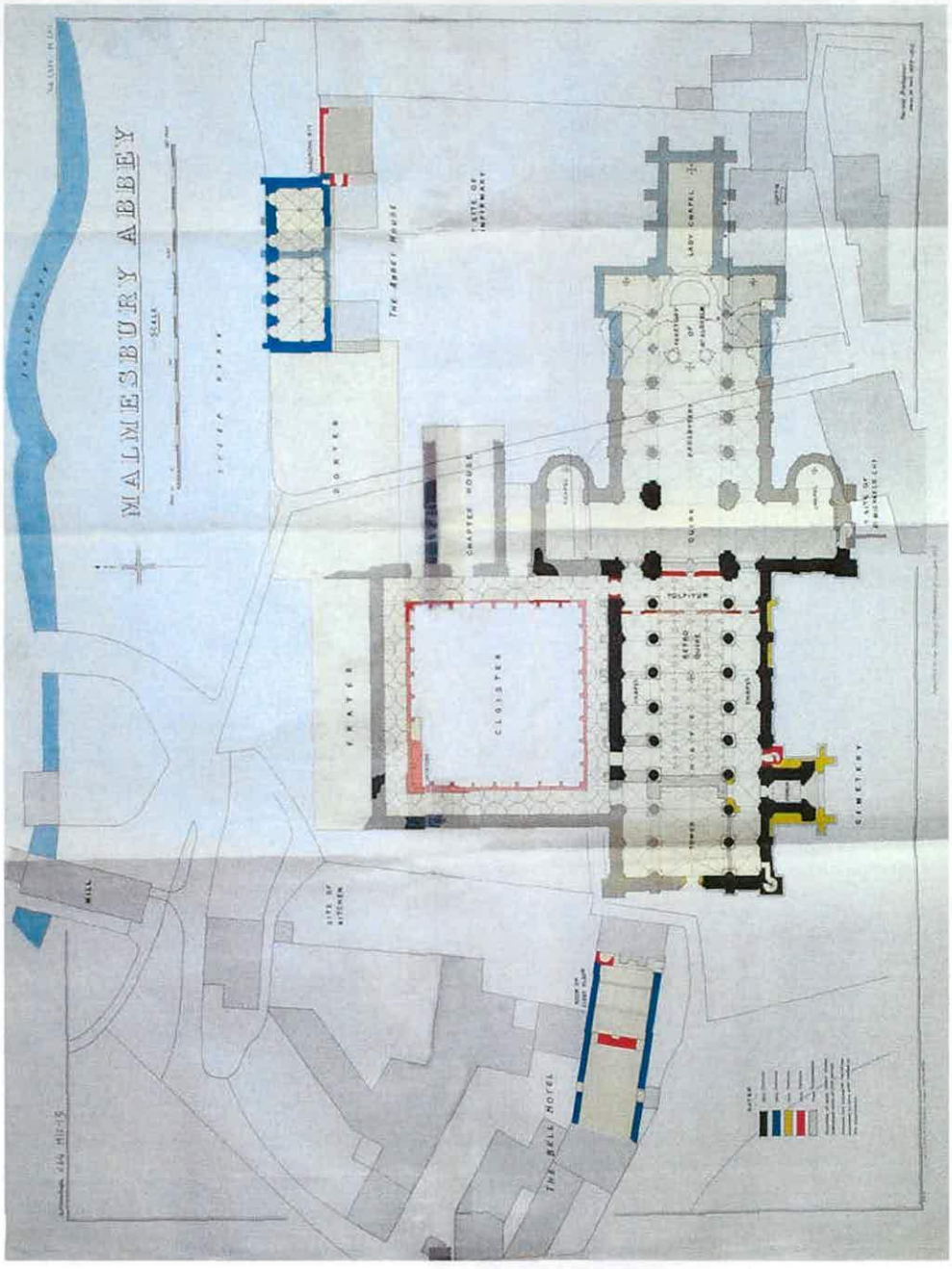


Fig. 24 Ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey, by Harold Brakspear (1870–1934), based on his researches and limited excavations of 1899–1911.
(*Brakspear 1912–13*)

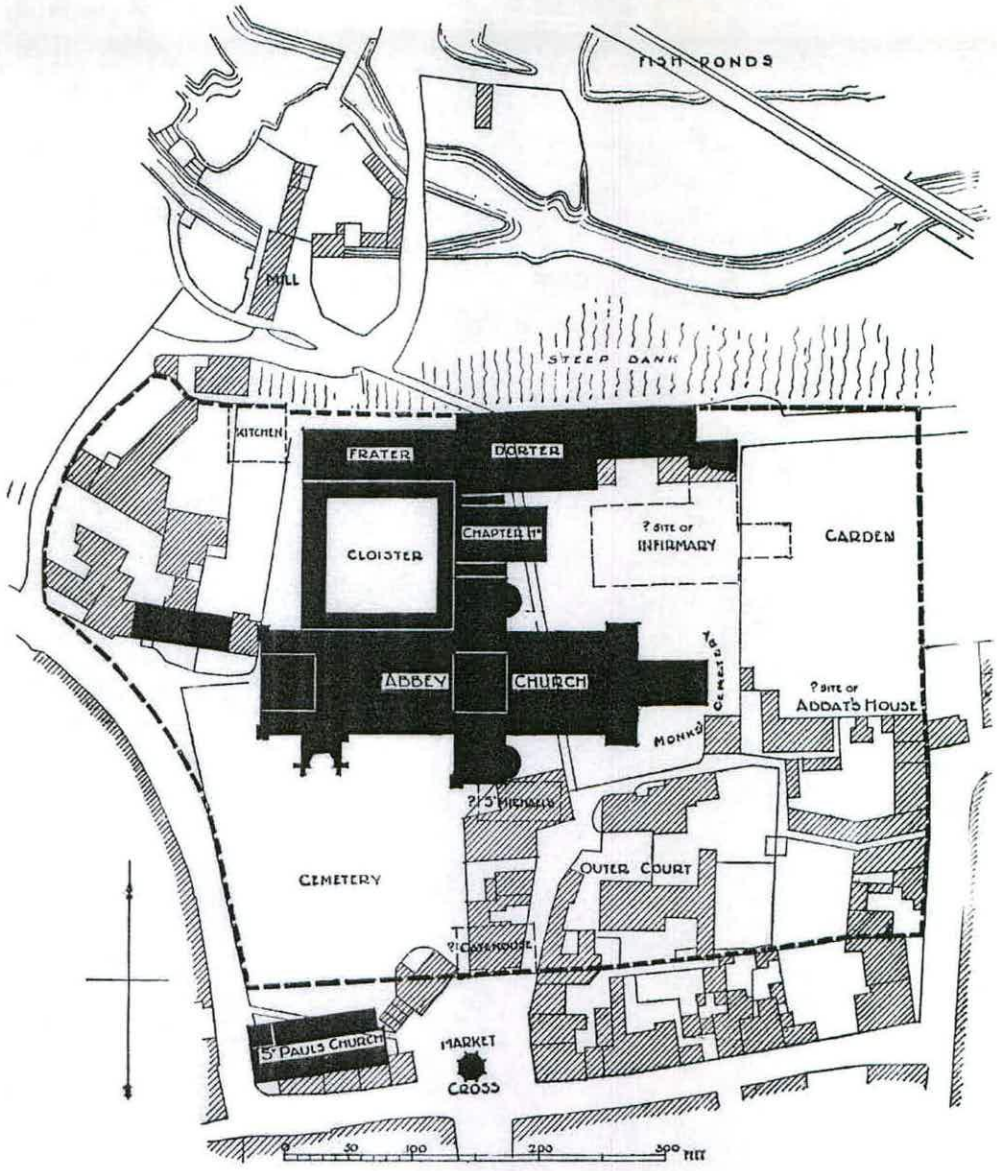


Fig. 25 Plan showing a conjectural reconstruction of the abbey precinct at Malmesbury. (*Brakspear 1912–13*)

Fig. 26 The north-east crossing pier at Malmesbury, showing attached fragments of the twelfth-century presbytery elevation. The coupled shafts in the angle were presumably intended to take the diagonal rib of a vault.

Fig. 27 The crossing seen from the south-east. The west arch was blocked up following the suppression in 1539; the east and south arches are thought to have collapsed in 1660. A comparatively low Norman lantern was modified in the fourteenth century, with the tower apparently raised and a spire introduced.

Fig. 28 Detail of south face of the north-east crossing pier, showing recessed twin shafts. Though part of the design aesthetic, the shafts were presumably recessed in this somewhat unusual way to accommodate the back of the monastic choir stalls.

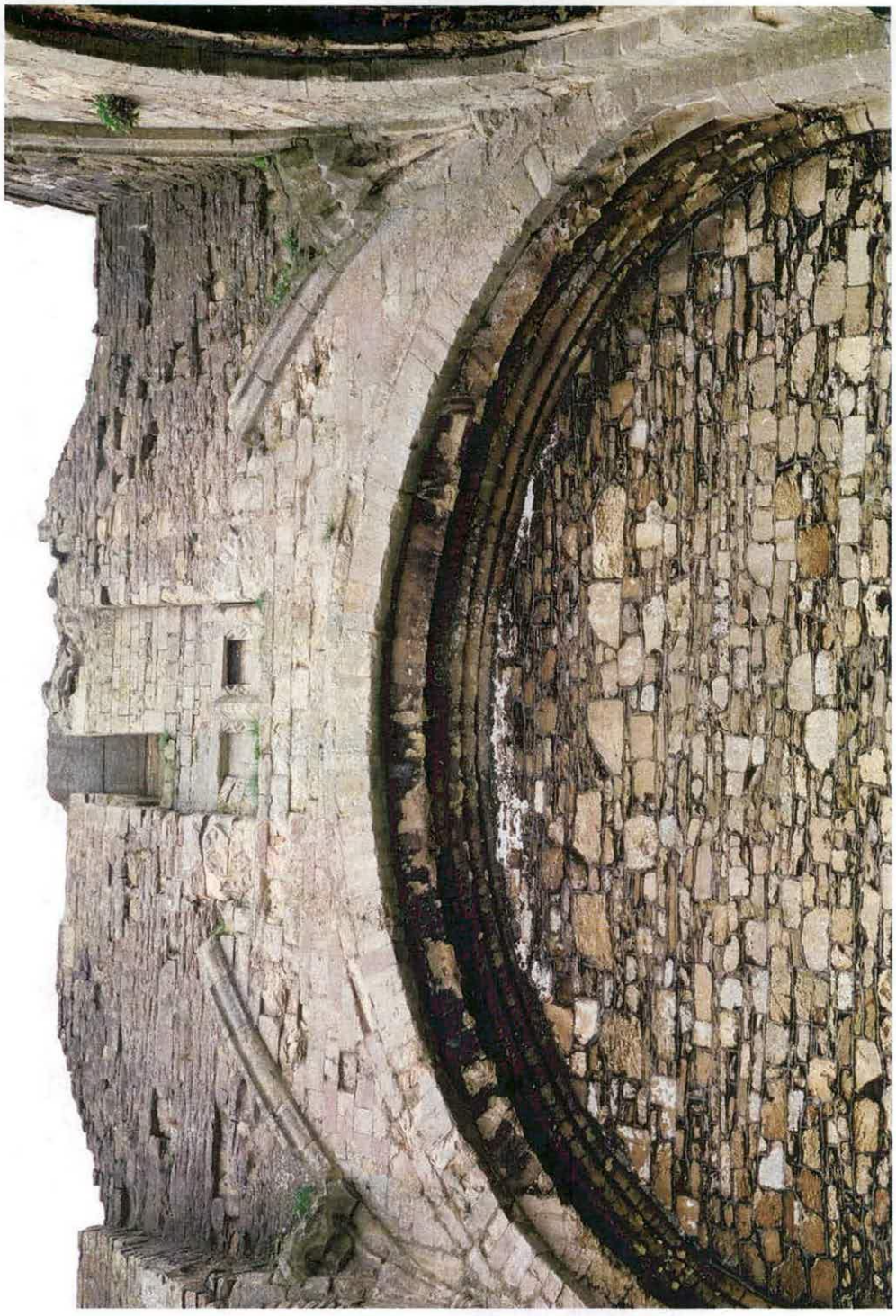


Fig. 29 Detail of the west crossing arch, showing the inner face of the twelfth-century lantern from the east. An open arcade ran in front of a wall-passage on each side. This arcade had front piers ornamented with beaded lozenges, fragments of which may be seen at the centre of this view. The wall ribs and vault spiringers in the angles date from the fourteenth-century remodelling.

Fig. 30 The south transept, looking west, towards the inner face of the west wall. The blockings in the north (right) bay formerly opened to the nave aisle and triforium gallery. It is suggested that the wider southern bay allowed for a transept chapel opening from the east side.

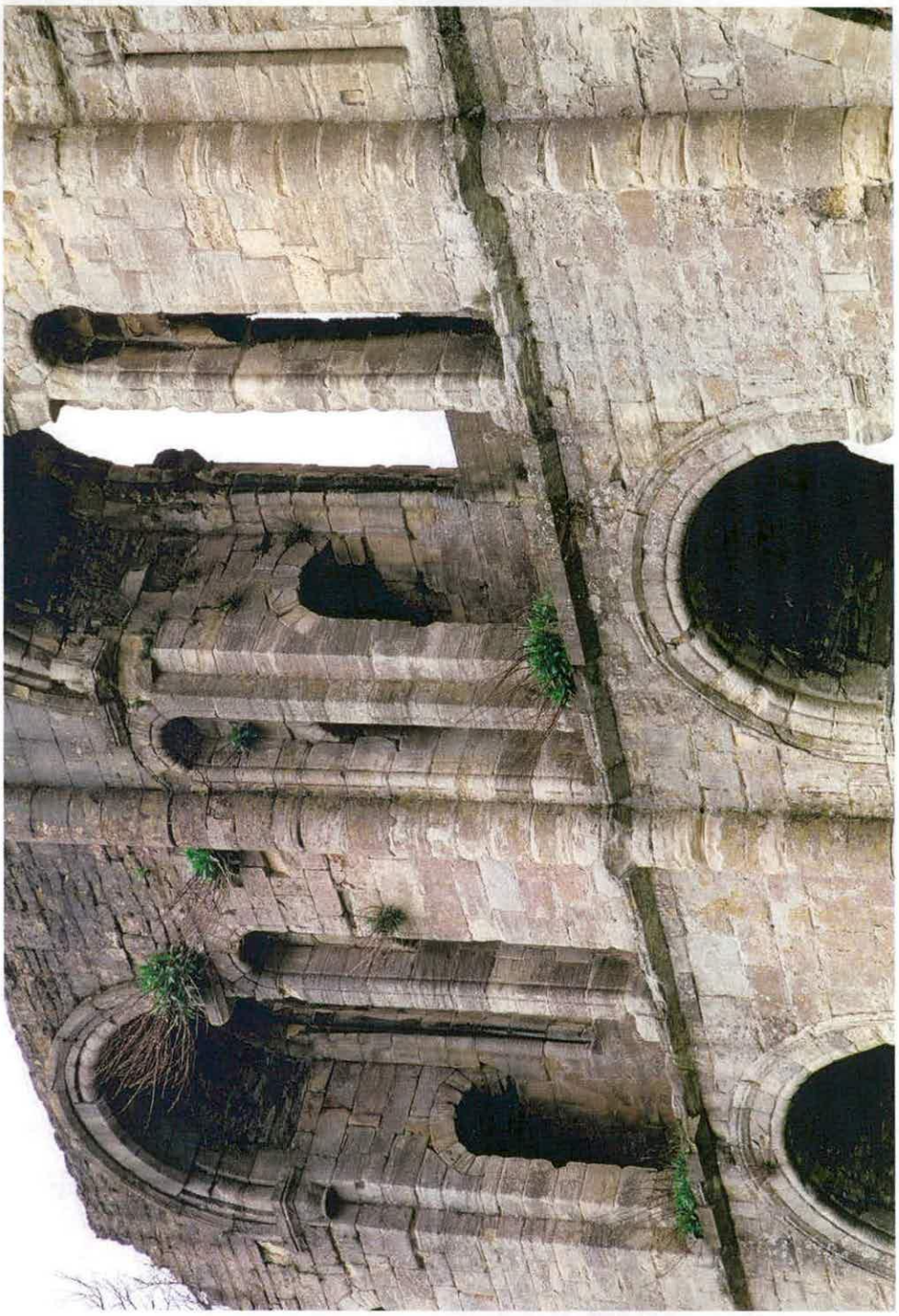


Fig. 31 Detail of the triforium-stage windows in the south transept, showing the triple-arched 'screen' front and wall-passage.

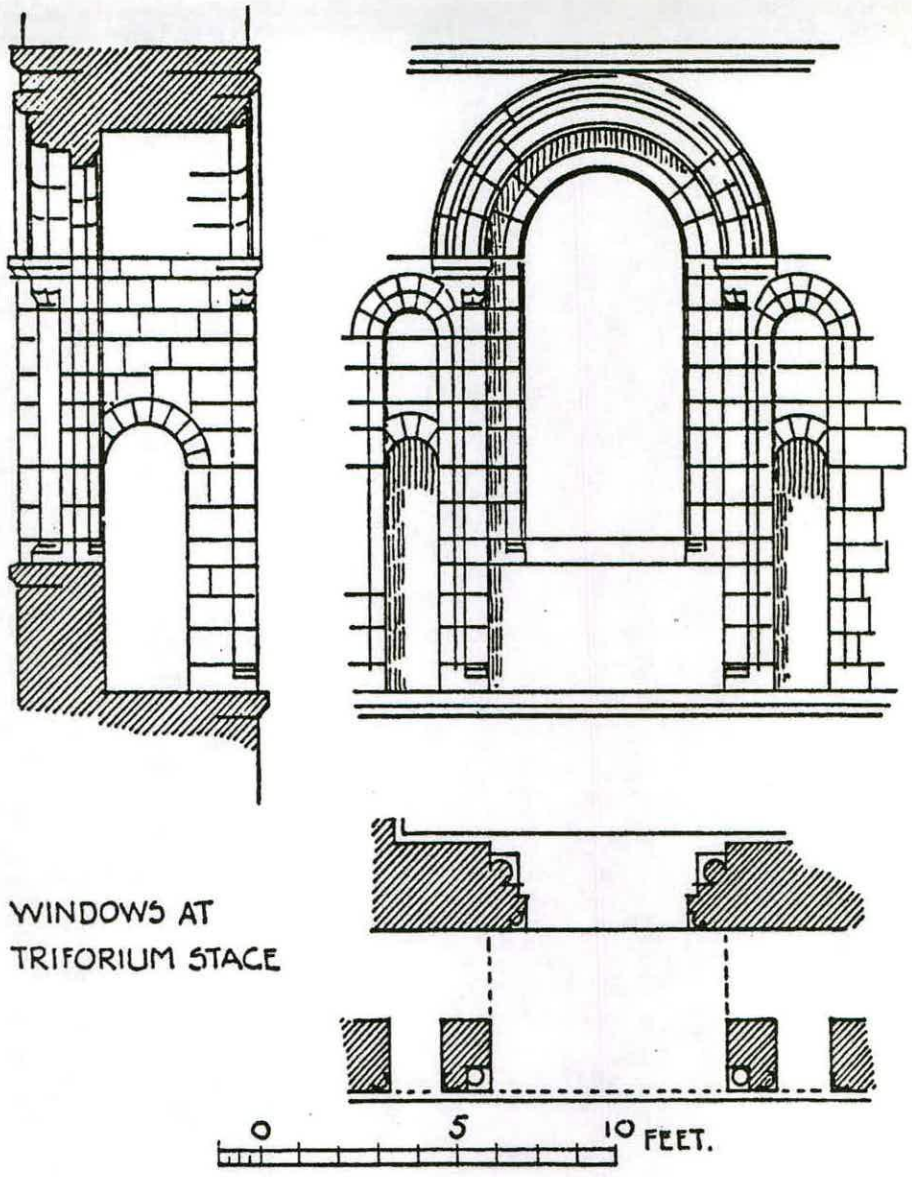


Fig. 32 Elevation and section drawings of one of the south transept windows, showing the triple-arch arrangement and wall-passage.
(*After Brakspear 1931*)

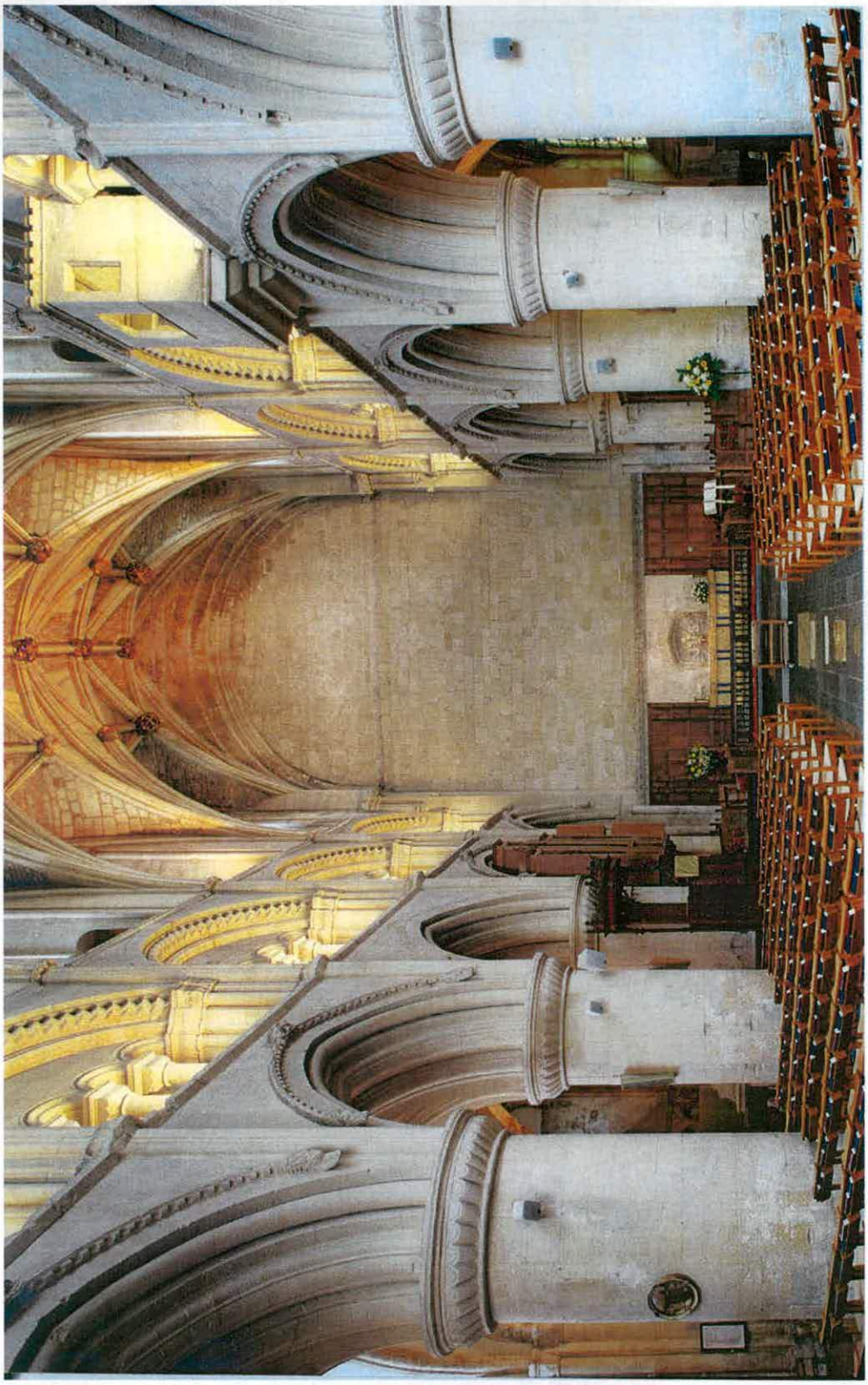


Fig. 33 General view of the nave from the west, showing the five eastern bays. The pointed arcades sit on stout columnar piers, with multi-scalloped capitals and circular abaci. Above, the triforium gallery retains its twelfth-century form, though the clerestory was much transformed in the early fourteenth century. The Norman nave was probably covered with a flat wooden ceiling. The stone vault was introduced in the 1330s.

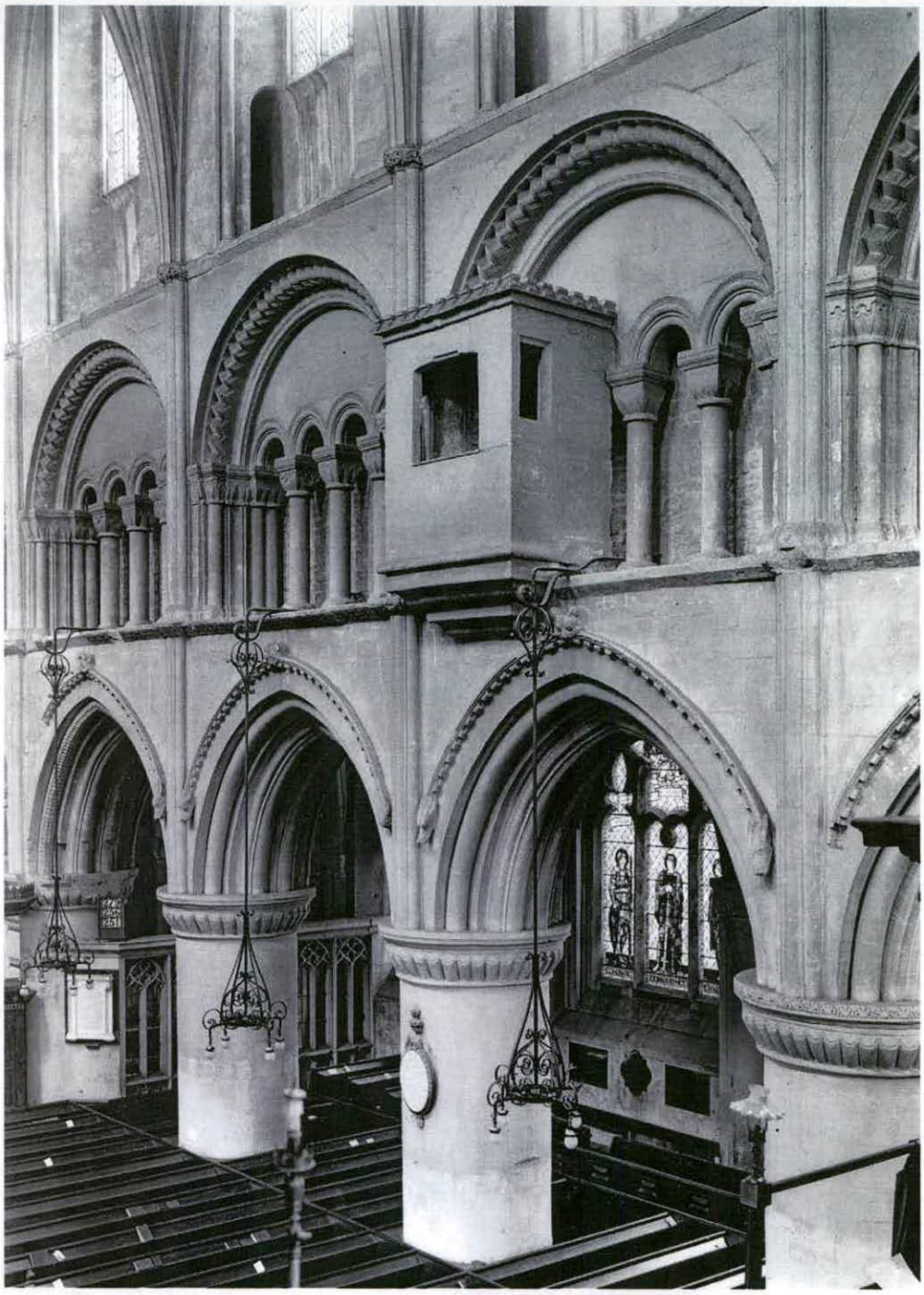


Fig. 34 An early twentieth-century view of the nave south arcade, looking east. The photograph pre-dates Harold Brakspear's restorations of 1928–34.
(*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

Fig. 35 General view of the nave south arcade, looking east.

Fig. 36 General view of the nave north arcade, looking east.

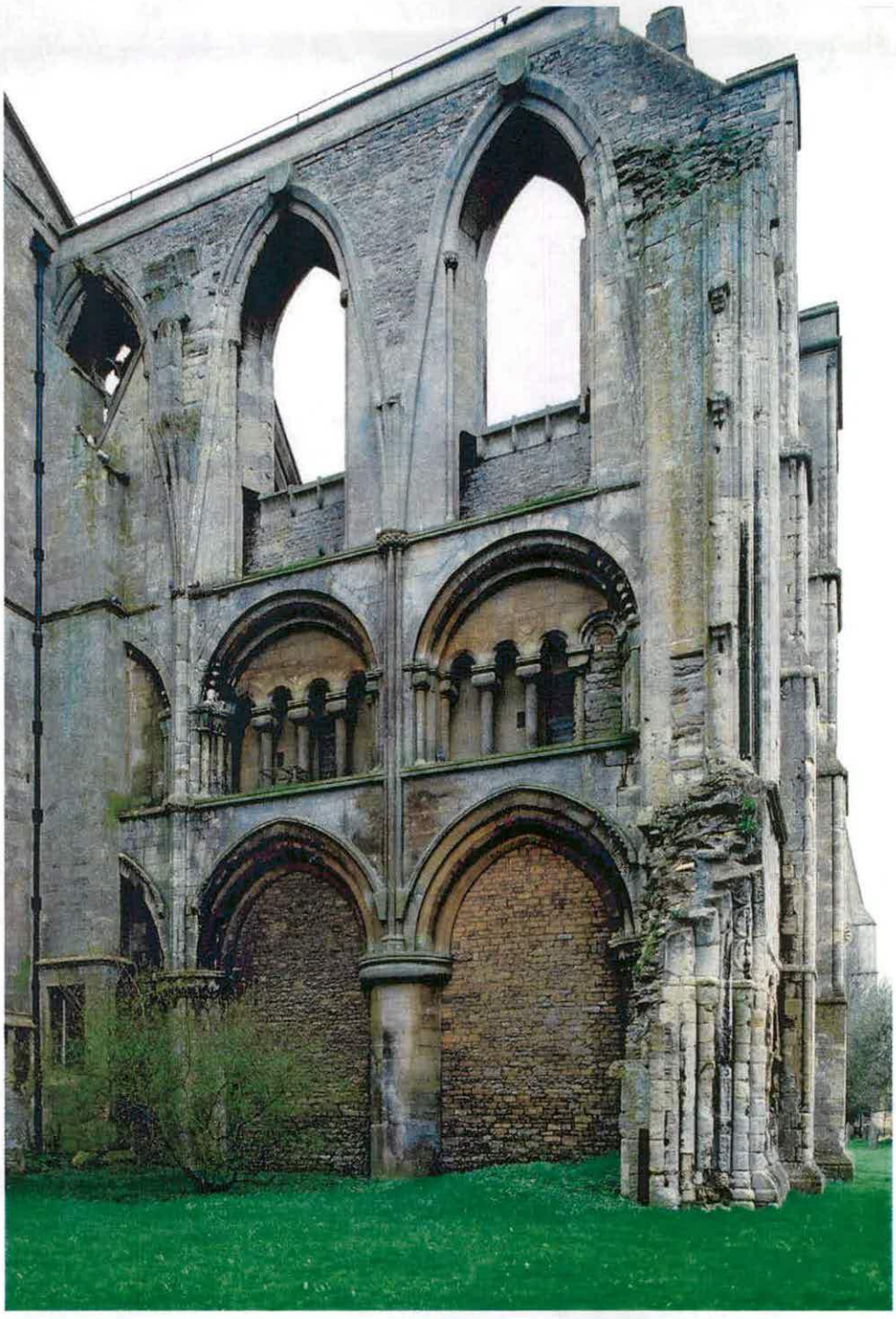


Fig. 37 The three restored southern bays at the west end of the nave. The late-medieval tower which stood above these end bays may have collapsed soon after the suppression, and the west façade was reduced to its present state in the late seventeenth century. The south arcade was restored by Harold Brakspear in 1901–03/04.

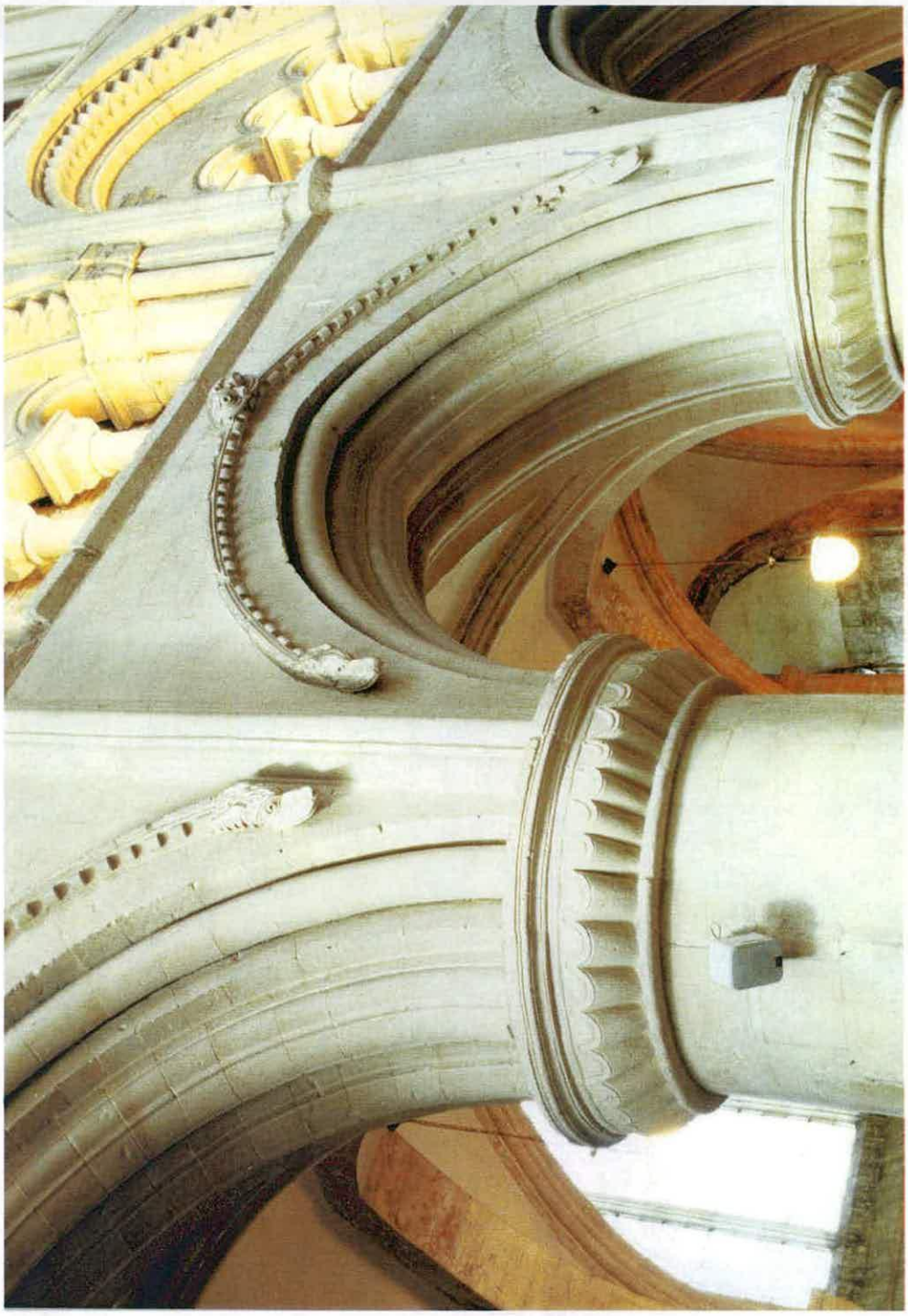


Fig. 38 Detail of the nave arcade capitals and billeted label mould over the arcade Bays. The label terminates with distinctive animal head-stops, with a grotesque mask biting the apex.

Fig. 39 An early twentieth-century (pre-1928) view looking across the nave from the south aisle, towards the two easternmost bays of the north arcade. Note the geometric ornament to the mid-order roll of the arcades in these bays, a feature echoed in the same two bays on the south side. The north aisle screen can also be seen in this view.
(*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

Fig. 40 General view along the south aisle of the nave, looking east. The rib vaults formed part of the initial design, and may well be among the earliest examples in the country.

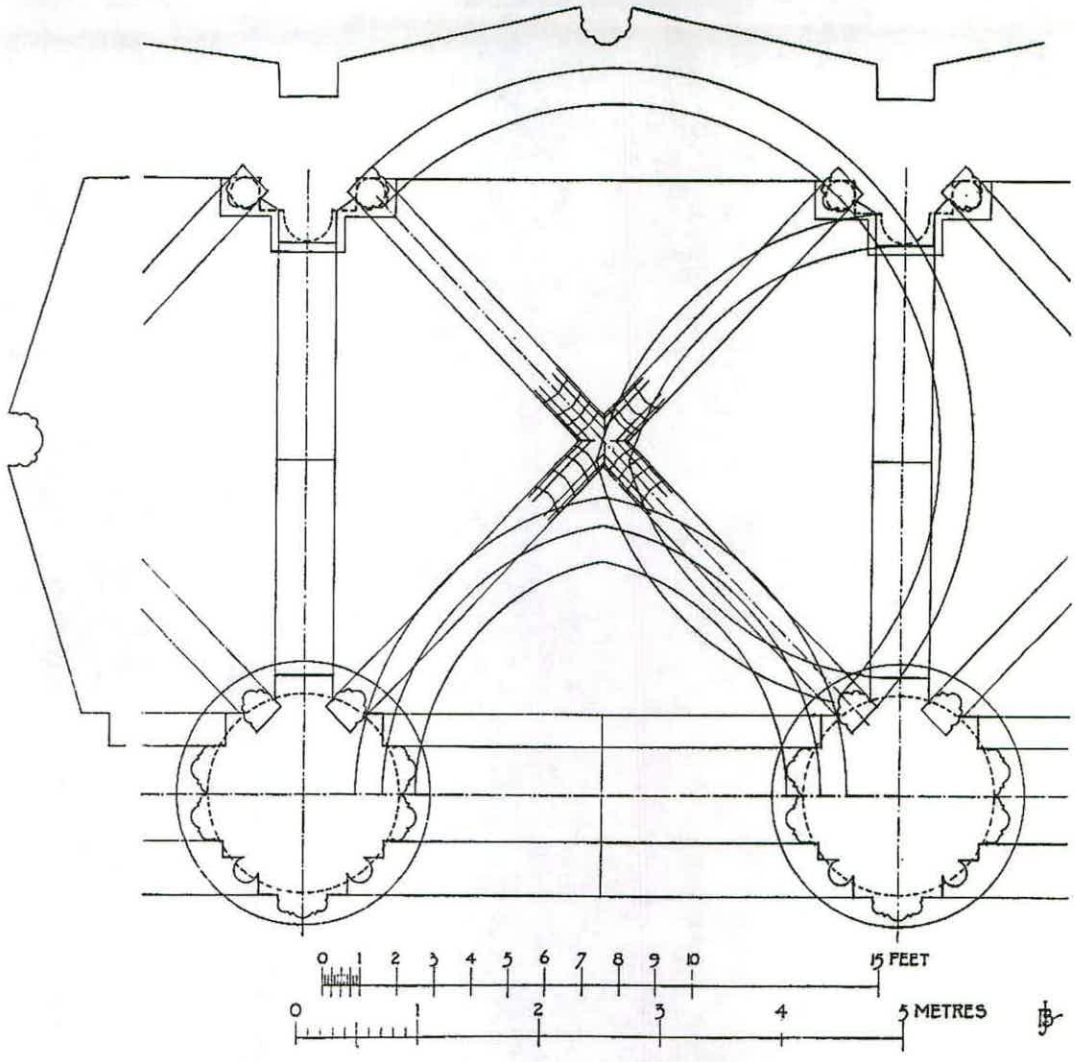


Fig. 41 Diagram to show the vault construction in nave aisles.
(*After Bilson 1898*)

Fig. 42 Exterior of the east processional doorway in the north aisle of the nave. The twelfth-century head survives, with a smaller fifteenth-century doorway below.

Fig. 43 The outer face of the west wall of the south transept, showing interlacing dado arcade.

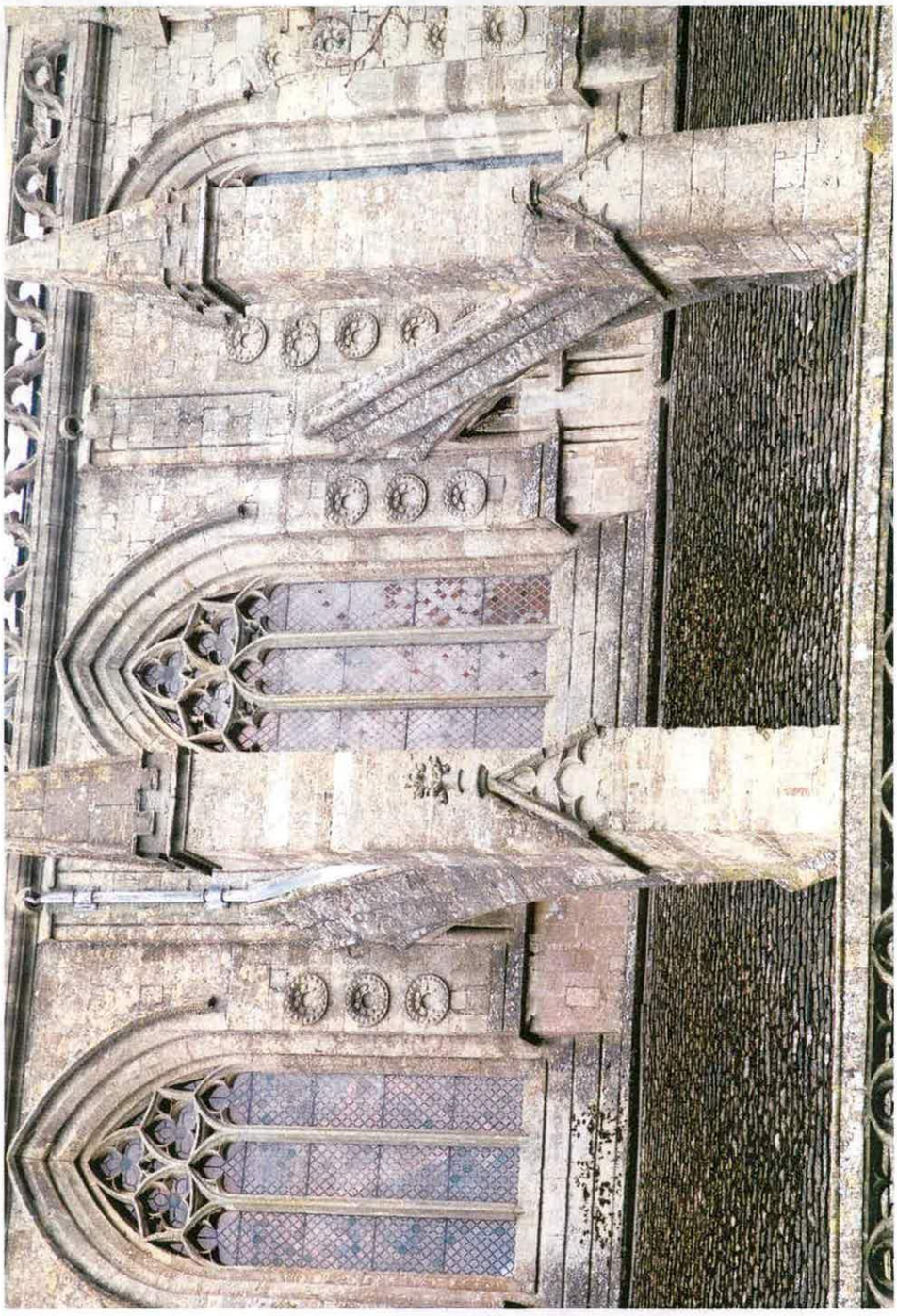


Fig. 44 Detail of the three eastern clerestory windows in the south side of the nave, showing twelfth-century paterae. The windows were transformed in the early fourteenth century.

Fig. 45 General view of the north side of the nave, across the former cloister garth.

Fig. 46 General view of the surviving elements of the west screen façade.

Fig. 47 Detail of the arcading on surviving southern end of the west screen façade.

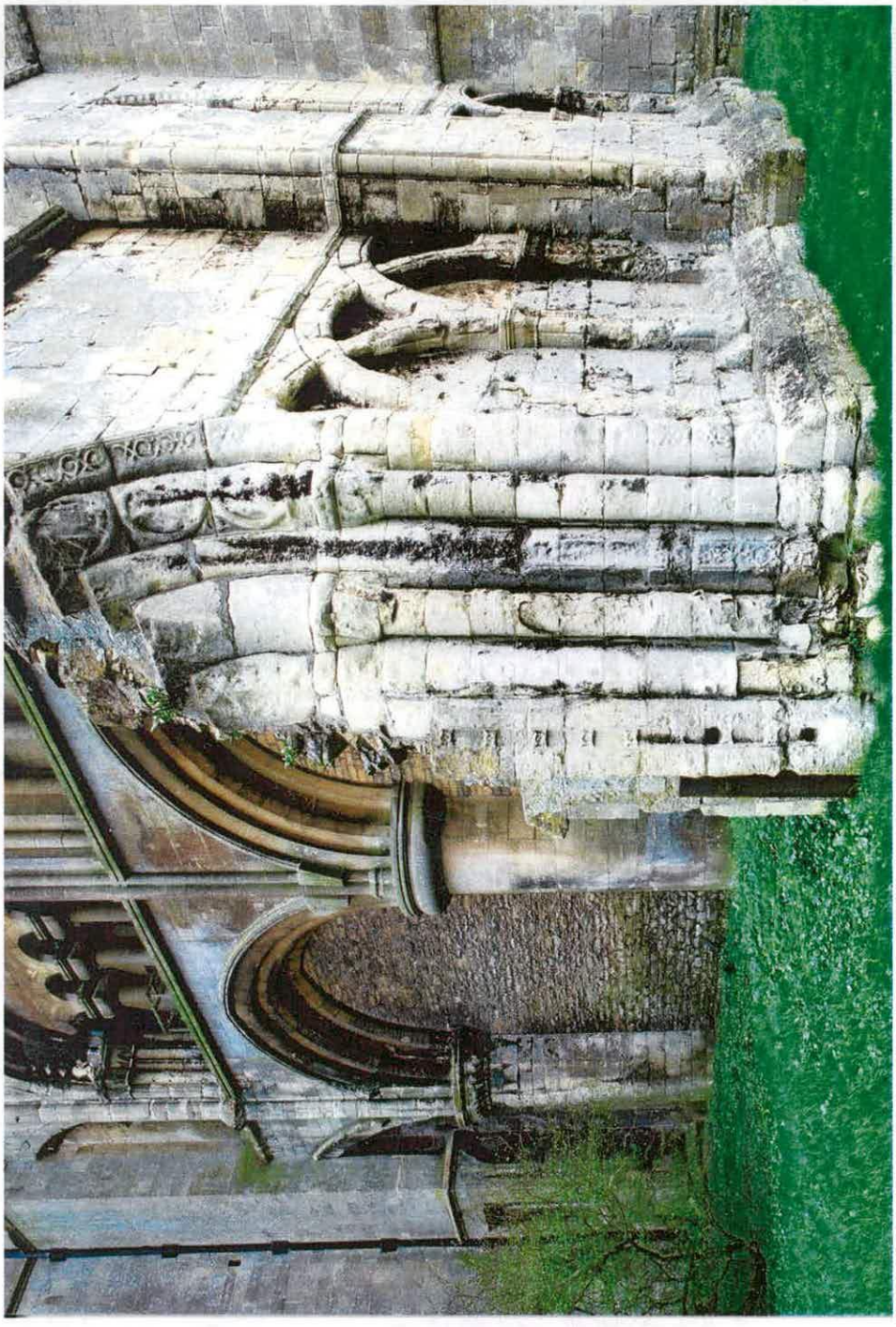


Fig. 48 Detail of the surviving southern jamb of the doorway in the west façade. The second order appears to have been decorated with iconographical scenes set in medallions, as on the south porch.

Fig. 49 The south porch, inner doorway, tympanum. It has recently been argued that the figure of Christ enclosed in a mandorla, held by two flying angels, is part of an Ascension scene, and should be read with the apostle side panels in the porch.

Fig. 50 The south porch, east side tympanum: six apostles with St Paul (left).

Fig. 51 The south porch, west side tympanum: six apostles with St Peter (right).

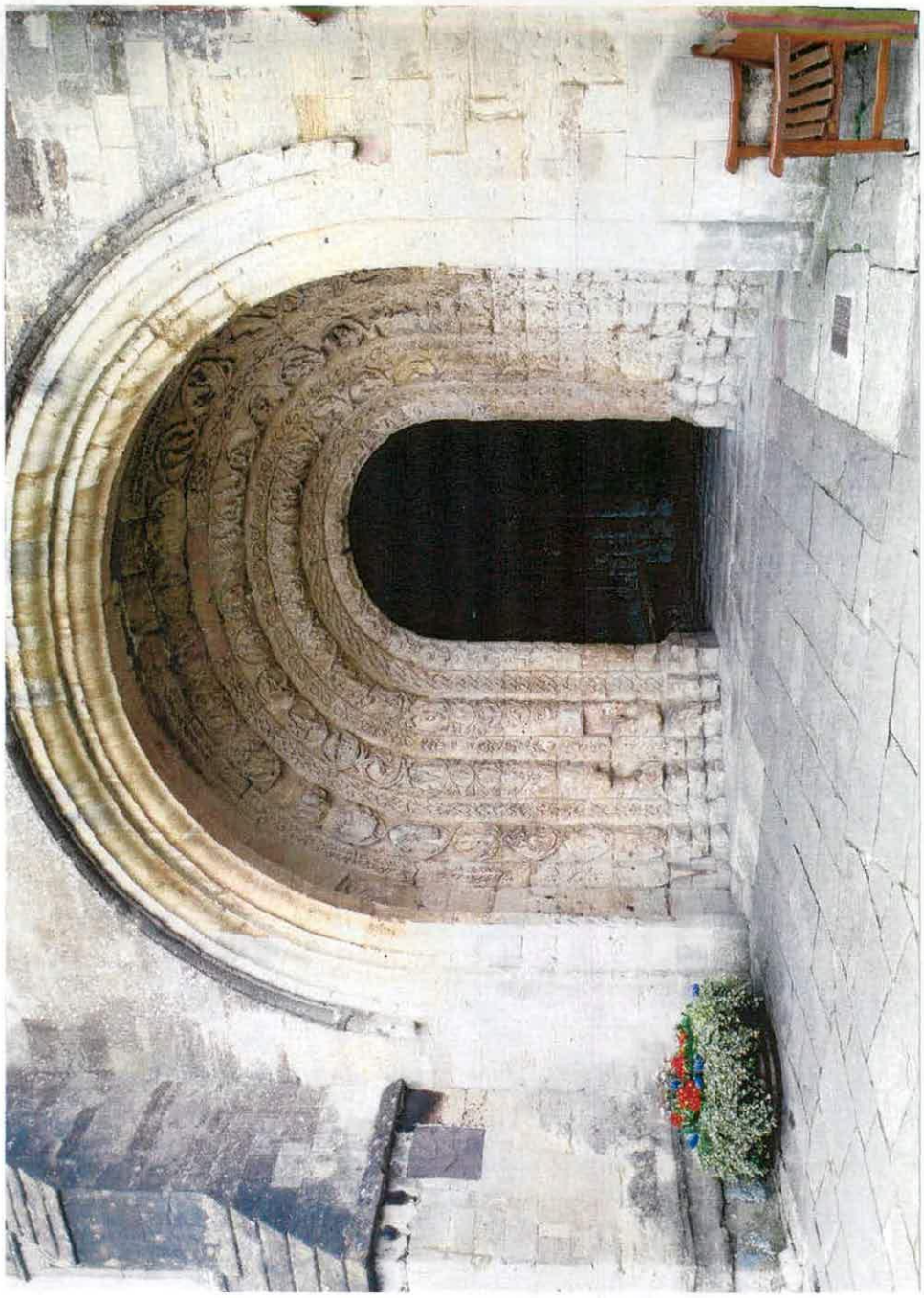
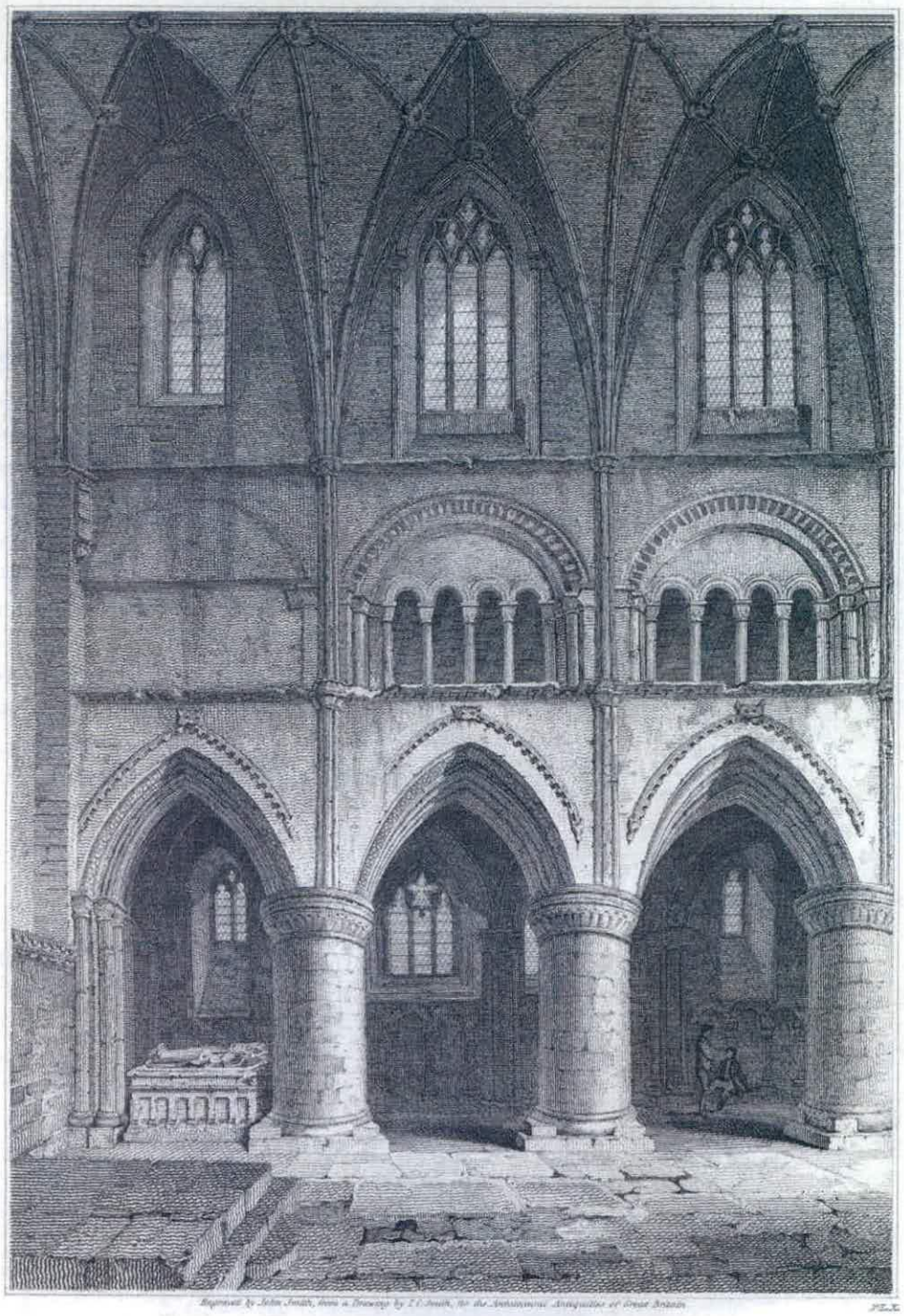


Fig. 52 The outer doorway of the south porch. Three of the continuous order rolls are adorned with iconographical scenes set in shallow medallions, representing scenes from both the Old and New Testaments. The interspersing orders carry trailing bands of foliage or geometric ornament.



Engraved by John Smith, from a Drawing by T.C. Smith, for the Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain

INTERIOR of
MALMSBURY ABBEY CHURCH,
Wiltshire.

To Wm PORDEN Esqr Architect. F.A.S. who has displayed much Taste & Skill in the design & construction of Eaton Hall, Cheshire, &c this Plate is respectfully inscribed by The Author

London, Published March 1st 1807, by Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, Paternoster Row, J. Taylor, High Holborn, and J. Britton, Tavistock Place

Fig. 53 Drawing of the nave south arcade, 1807, showing the fourteenth-century blocking of the first bay of the triforium gallery. The south aisle screen cannot be seen in this illustration, though it is certainly shown on the plan from the same source (fig. 16). (*From Britton 1807–20*)

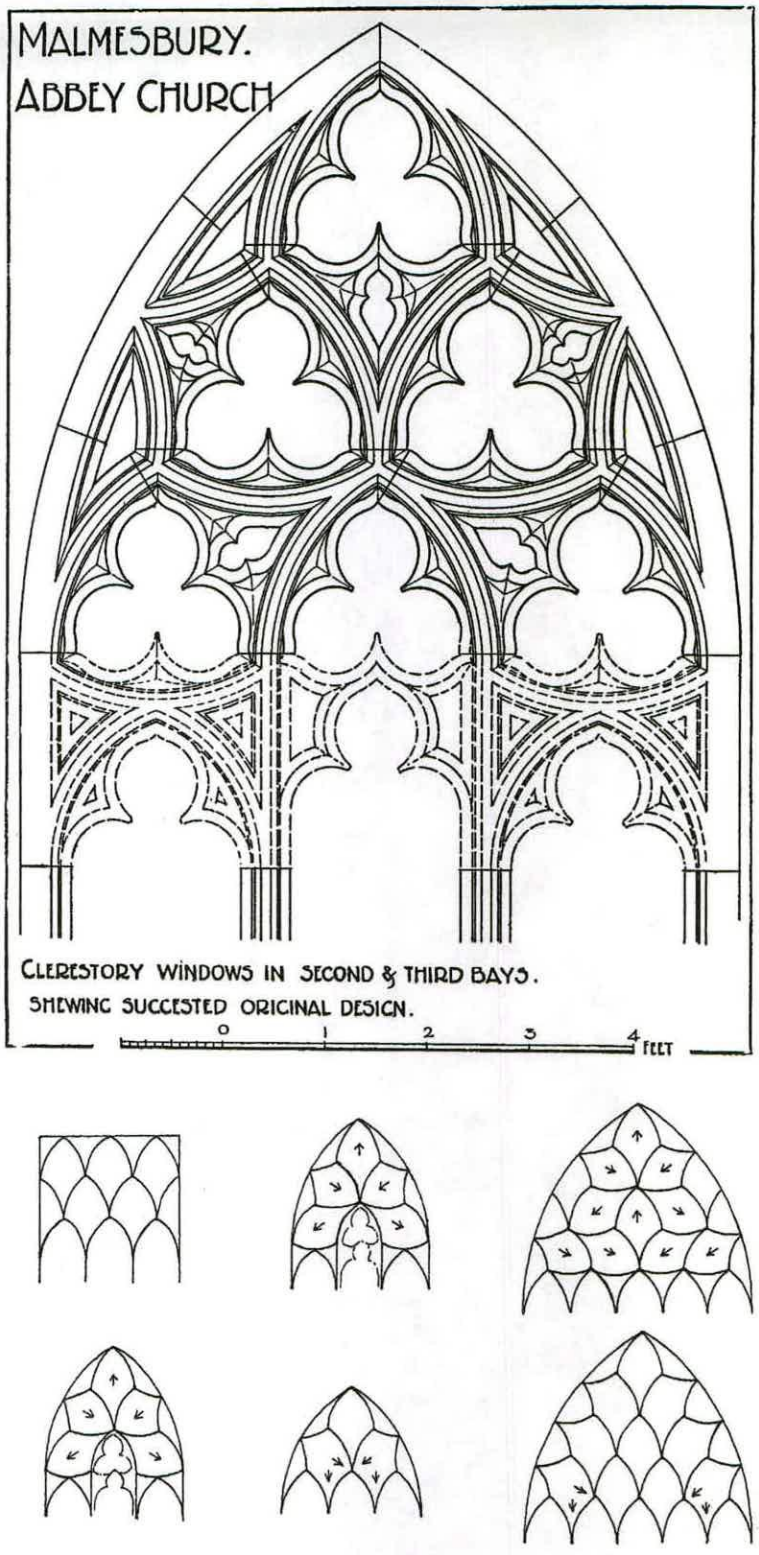


Fig. 54 Tracery patterns in the fourteenth-century clerestory windows of the nave. Top illustration showing the restored original pattern in bays two and three. Bottom illustrations for comparative purposes. Clockwise: Exeter, bishop's throne; Exeter, north transept; Exeter, nave clerestory; Wells, Lady Chapel; Malmesbury, bay four onwards; Malmesbury, bays two and three.
(*Malmesbury after Brakspear 1912–13; comparative drawings after Morris 1991*)

Fig. 55 The two large windows inserted into bays two and three of the south aisle during the fourteenth-century remodelling of the nave.

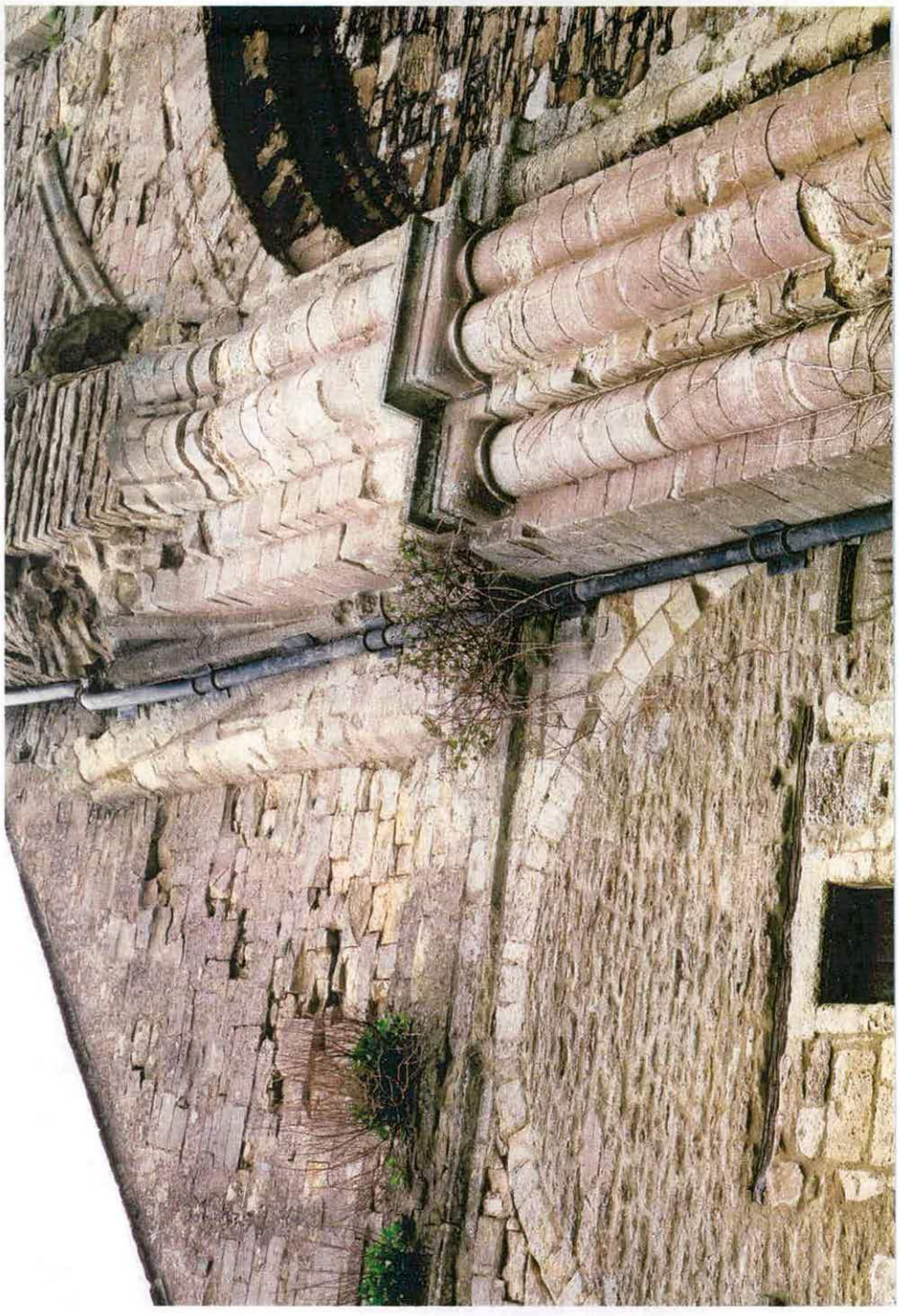


Fig. 56 Jamb of a fourteenth-century clerestory window and vault ribs in the south transept.

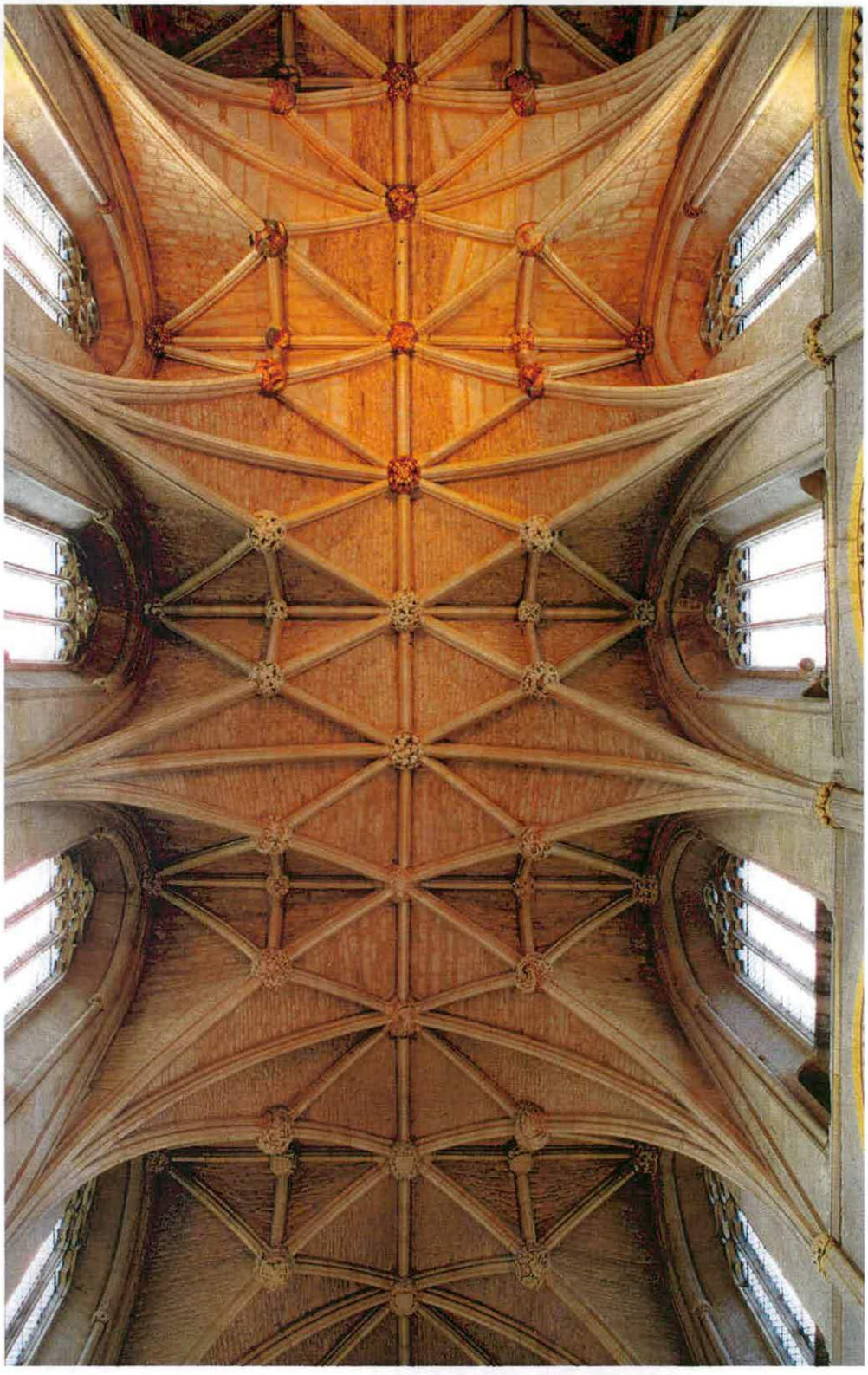


Fig. 57 The early fourteenth-century lierne vault in the nave, with east to the top.

Fig. 58 The south porch, remodelled in the early fourteenth-century

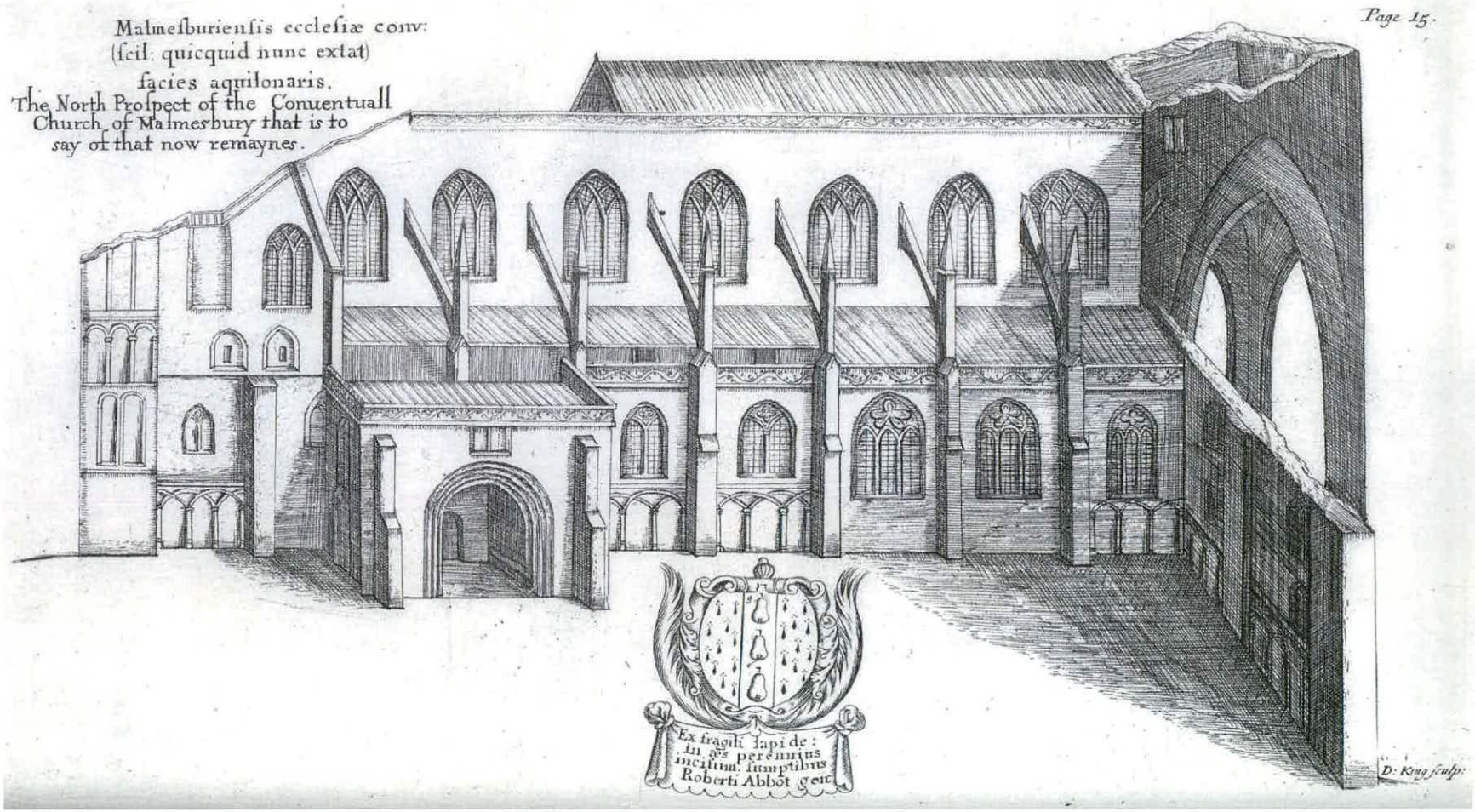


Fig. 59 A drawing of Malmesbury Abbey in 1655, from the first edition of William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*.

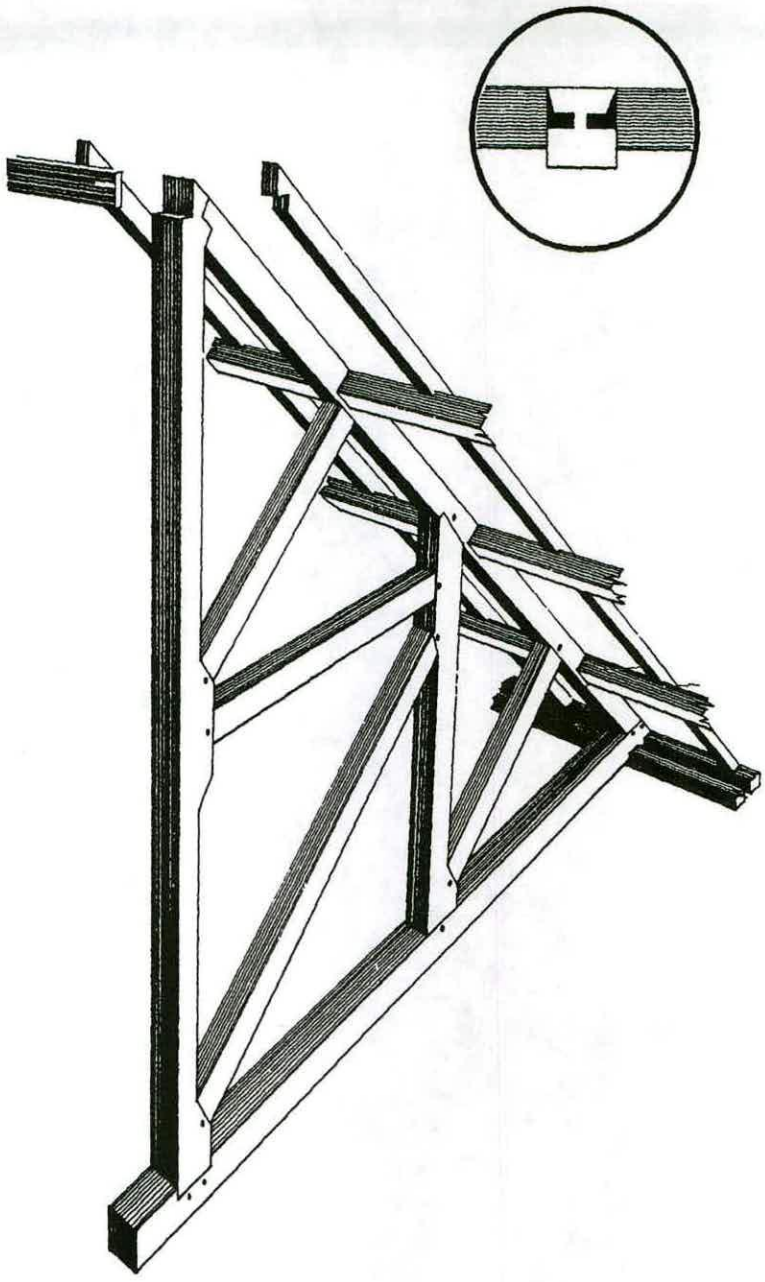


Fig. 60 A drawing of one of the roof trusses in the south triforium gallery, probably mid-sixteenth century
(*After Hewett 1980*)

Fig. 61 The west wall of the nave, introduced following the collapse of the west tower. The window tracery was introduced in the restoration of the church by Henry Goodridge, 1822–23.

Fig. 62 A watercolour of the interior of Malmesbury Abbey *c.* 1810, looking west. It shows the church filled with box pews, before the restoration of the early 1820s.
(*Malmesbury Abbey*)

Fig. 63 An engraving of Malmesbury Abbey in 1732, by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck.

Fig. 64 Engraving of the west end of Malmesbury Abbey in 1780, by Thomas Hearne.
(© *Trowbridge Local Studies Library*)

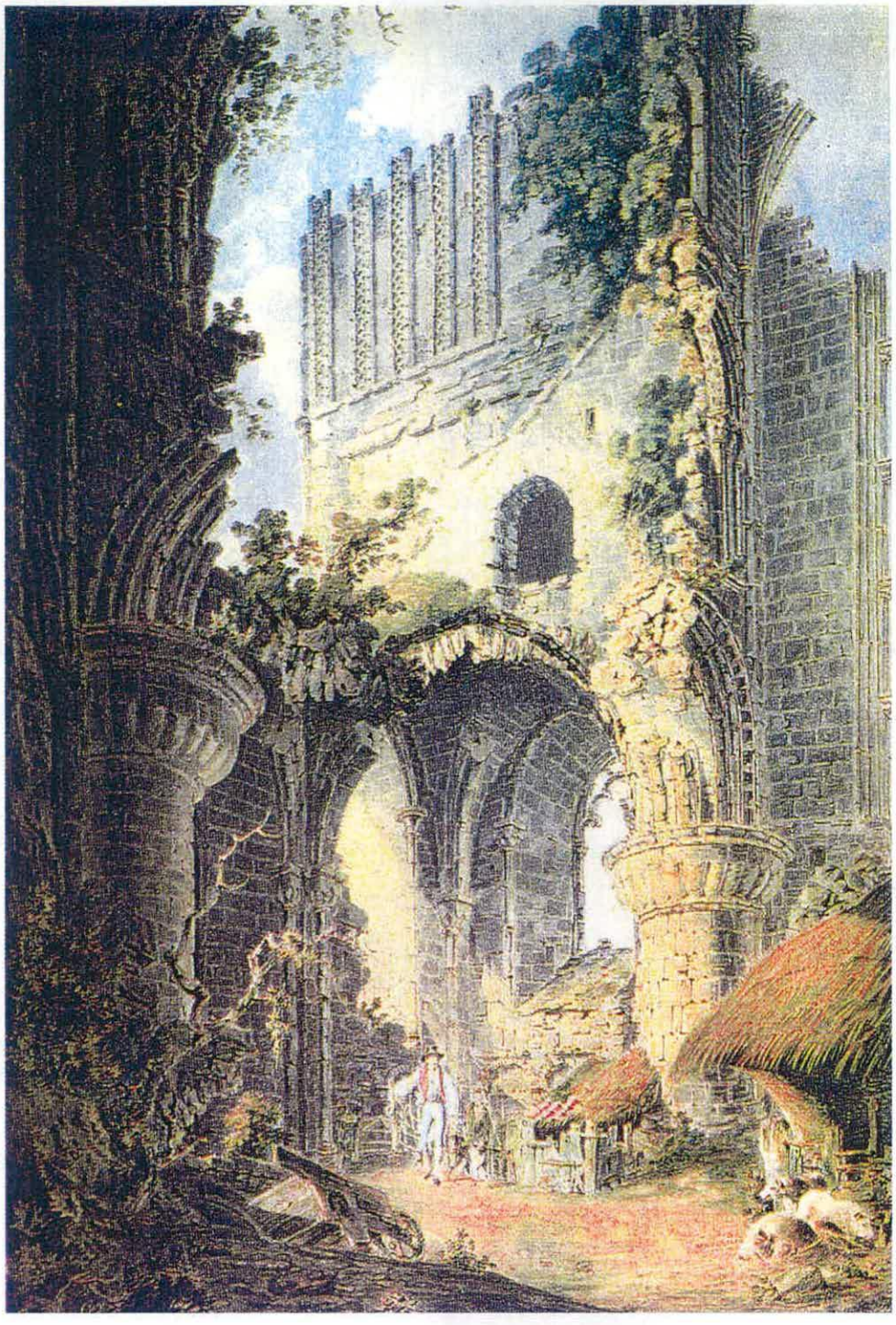


Fig. 65 Watercolour of the ruinous west end of Malmesbury Abbey by J. M. W. Turner, about 1791–92.
(© *Copyright Norwich Castle Museum*)

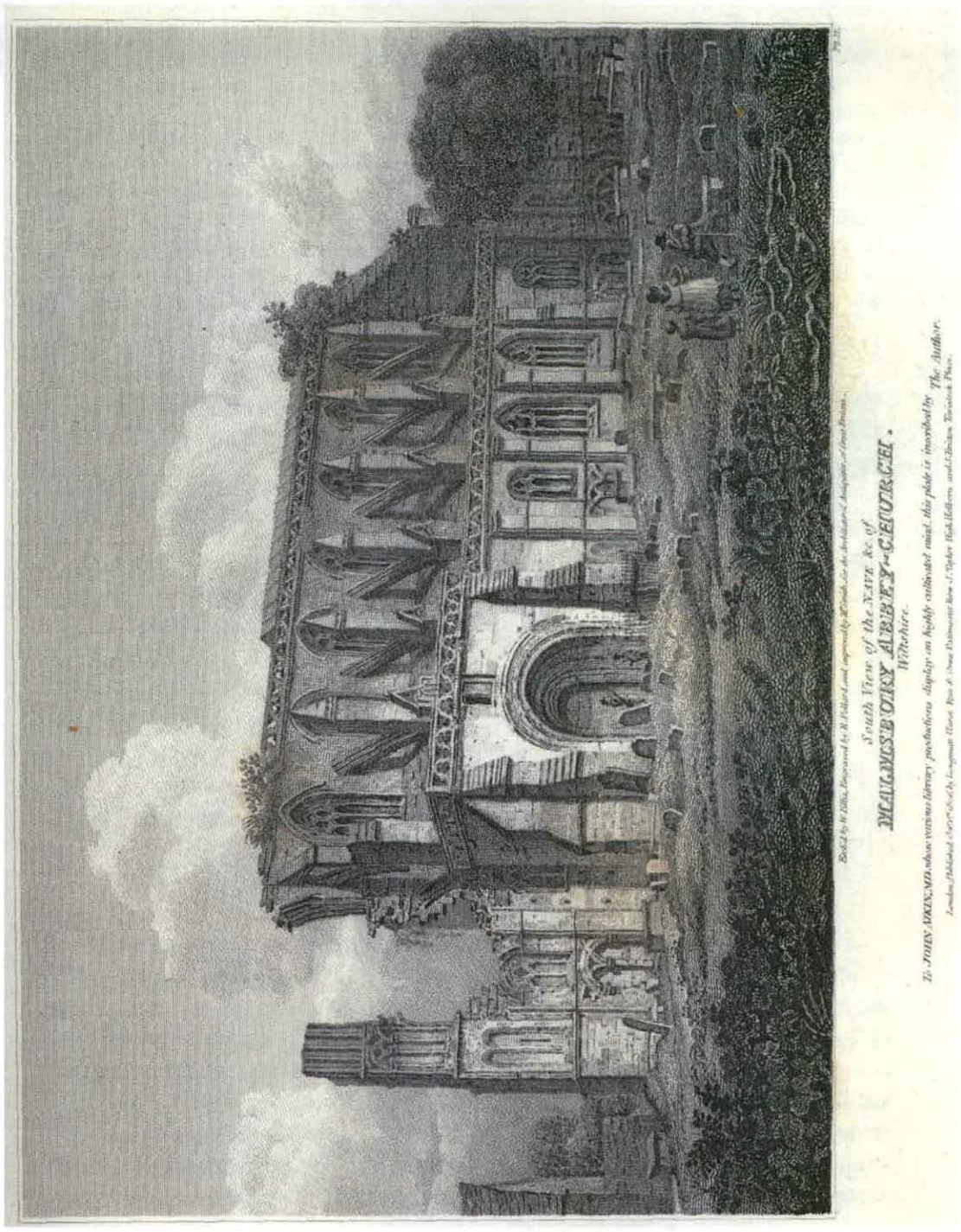


Fig. 66 Engraving of Malmesbury Abbey from the south, published by John Britton, 1807. (*Britton 1807–10, I*)

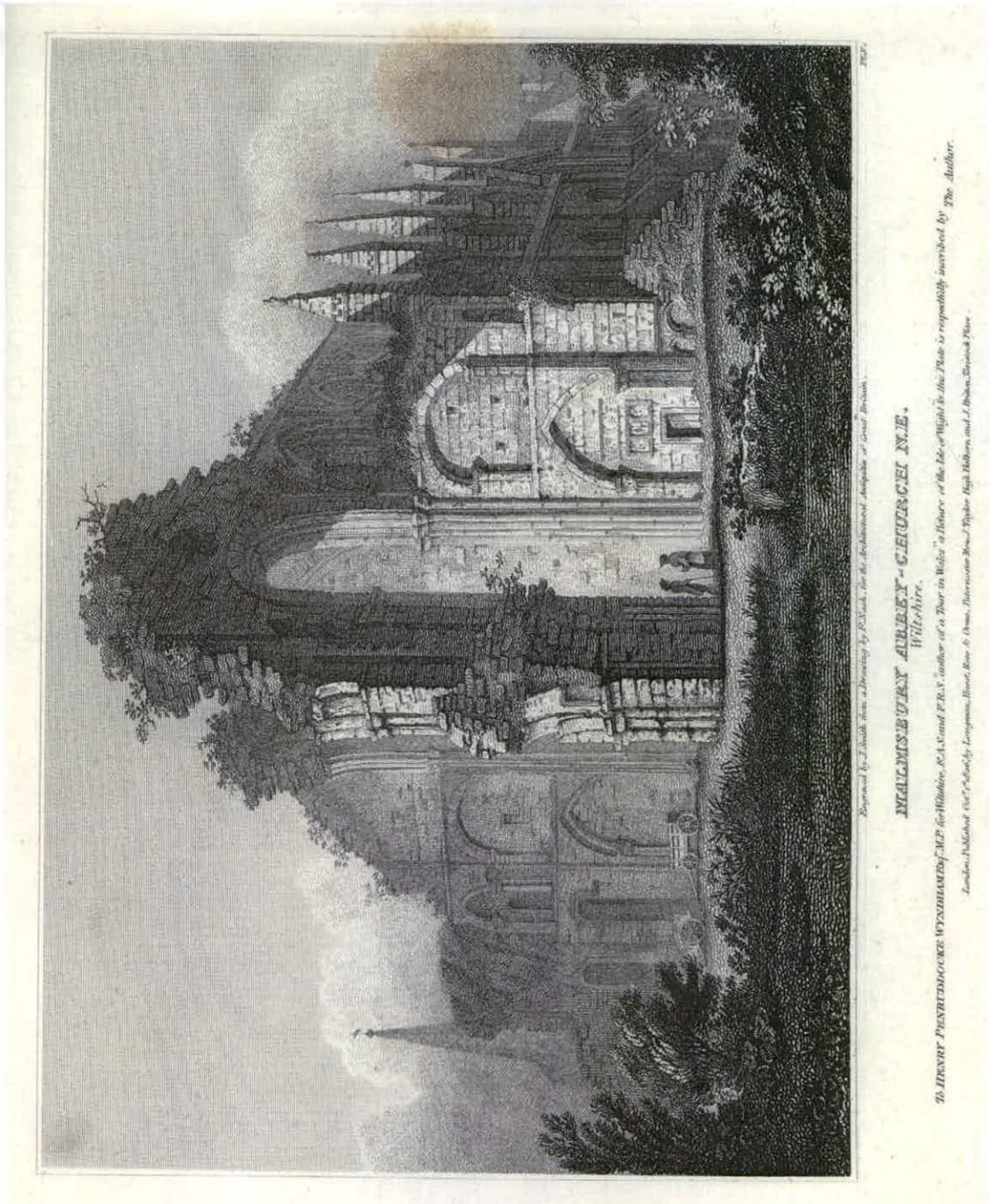


Fig. 67 Engraving of Malmesbury Abbey from the north-east, published by John Britton, 1807.
(*Britton 1807–10, I*)

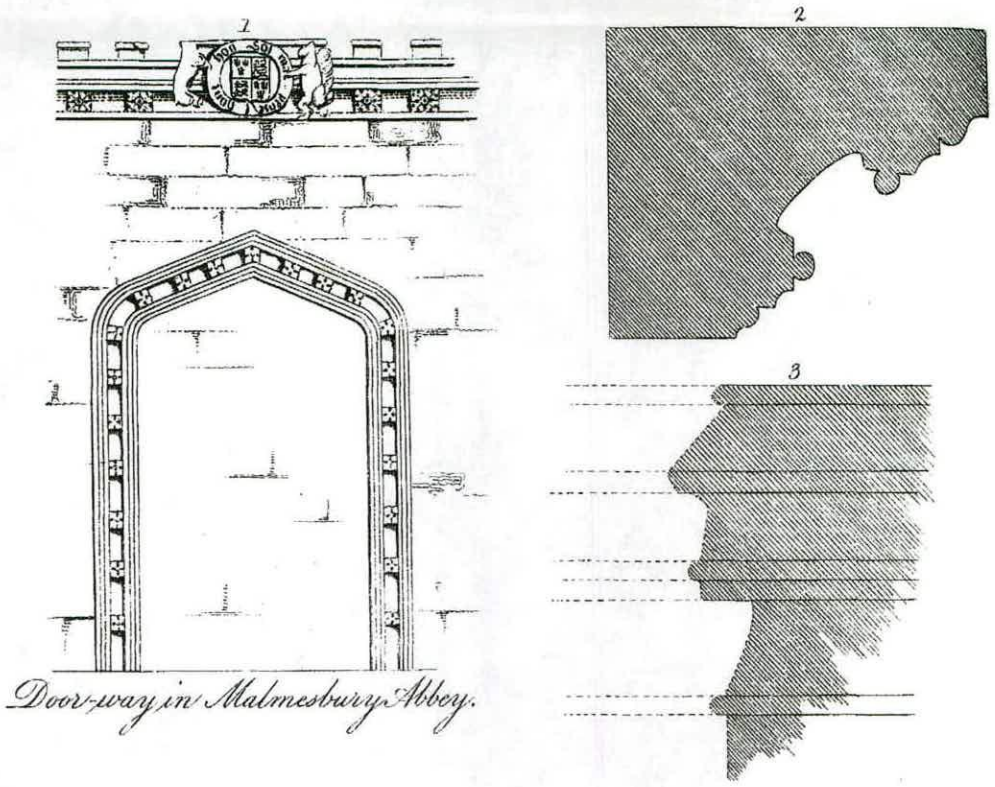


Fig. 68 Drawing of the doorway at the centre of the screen at the east end of the nave, uncovered in the early 1820s.
(*Gentleman's Magazine, 1824*)

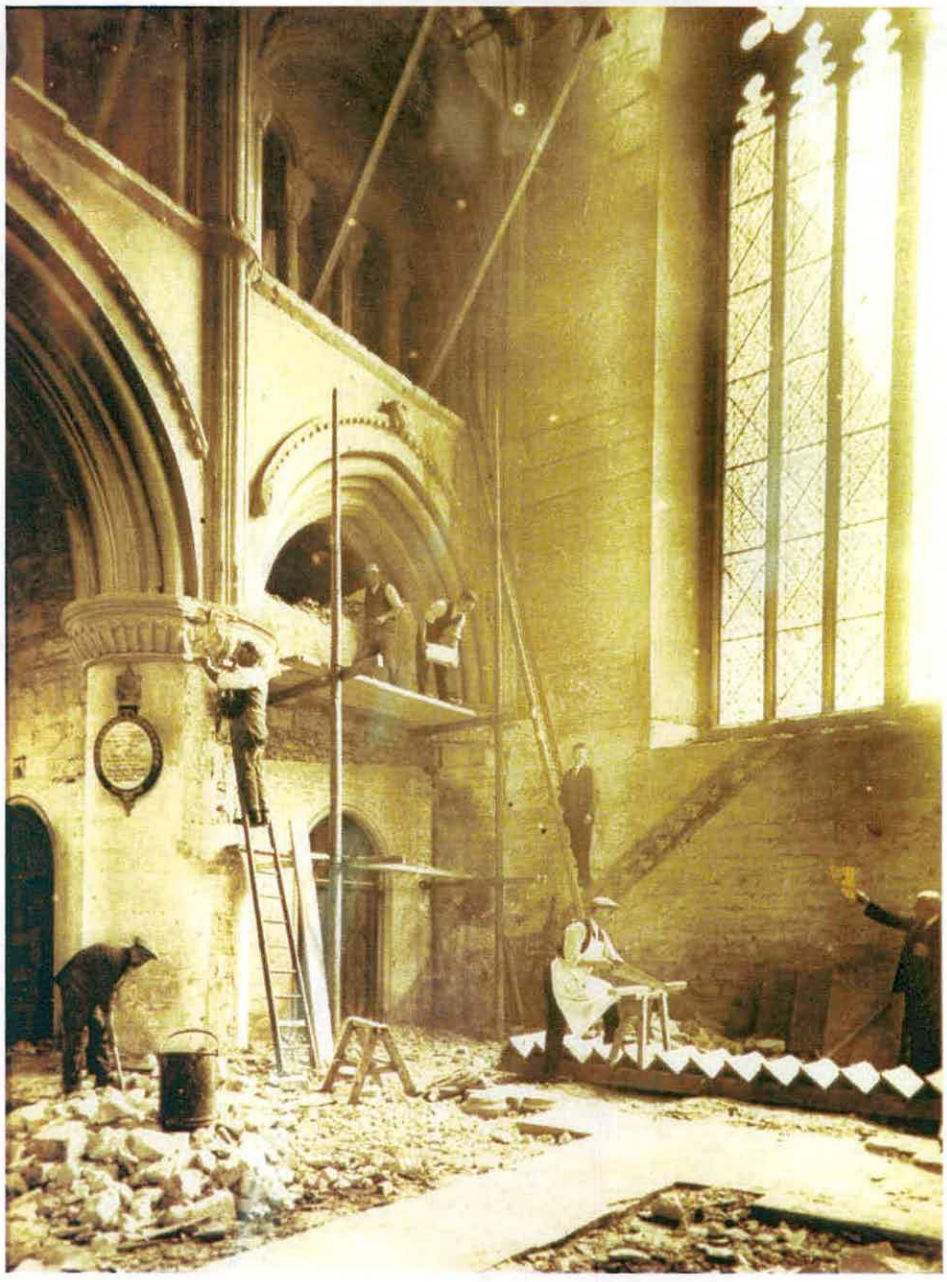


Fig. 69 Photograph of the south-west corner of the nave, taken during Harold Brakspear's phase of restoration, 1928–34.
(*Malmesbury Abbey*)

Fig. 70 General view across the former cloister garth, looking north-east.

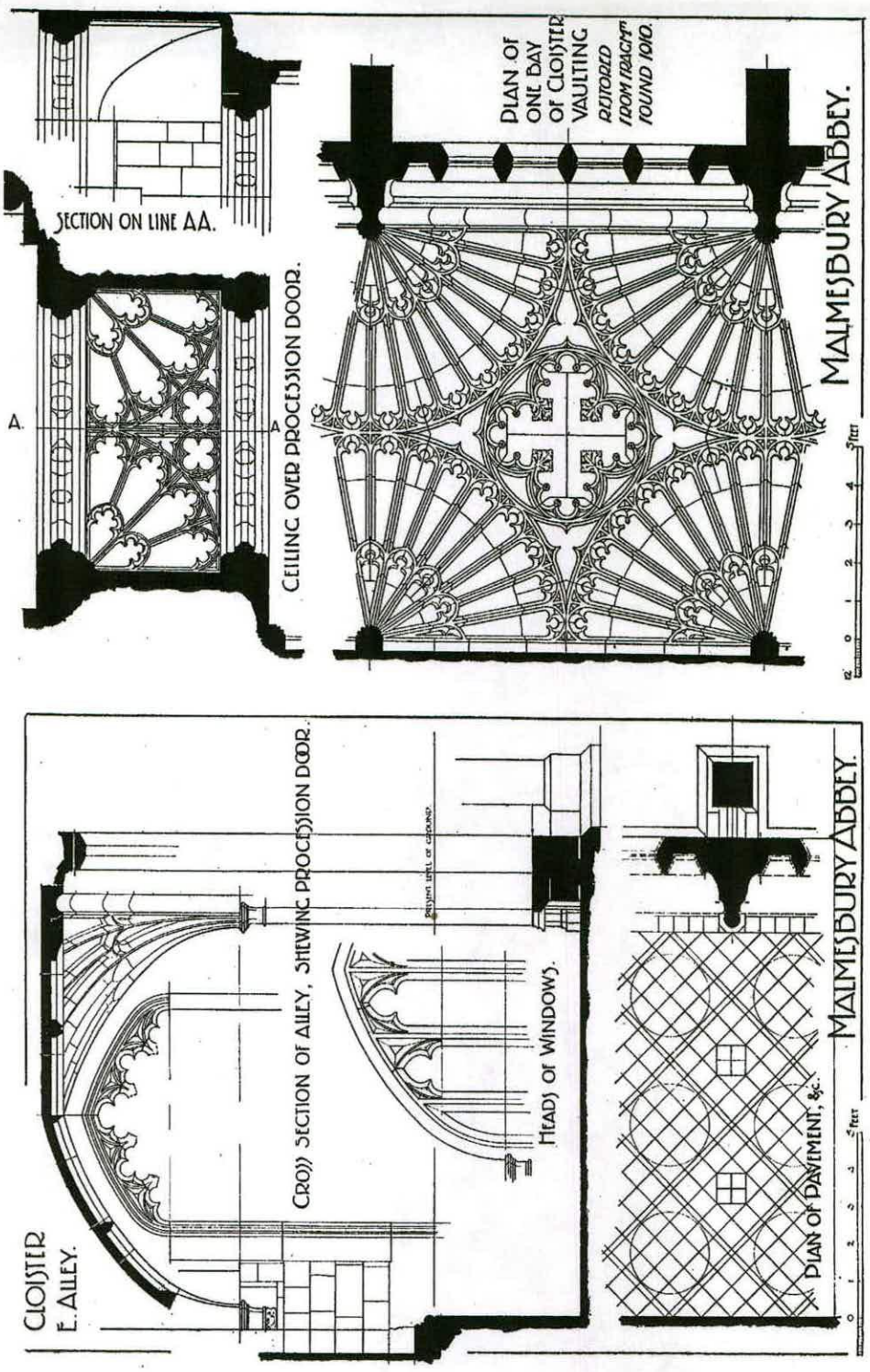


Fig. 71 Sections and plans of the fifteenth-century cloister alleys, restored from fragments found during excavations in 1910.
(*After Brakspear, 1912–13*)

Fig. 72 The Old Bell Hotel, west of the church, which possibly incorporates fabric from the abbey's principal guest lodging.

Fig. 73 Abbey House, north-east of the church. Though built over a thirteenth-century monastic undercroft, the present house is thought to have been built in the late sixteenth century, probably by Sir James Stumpe.

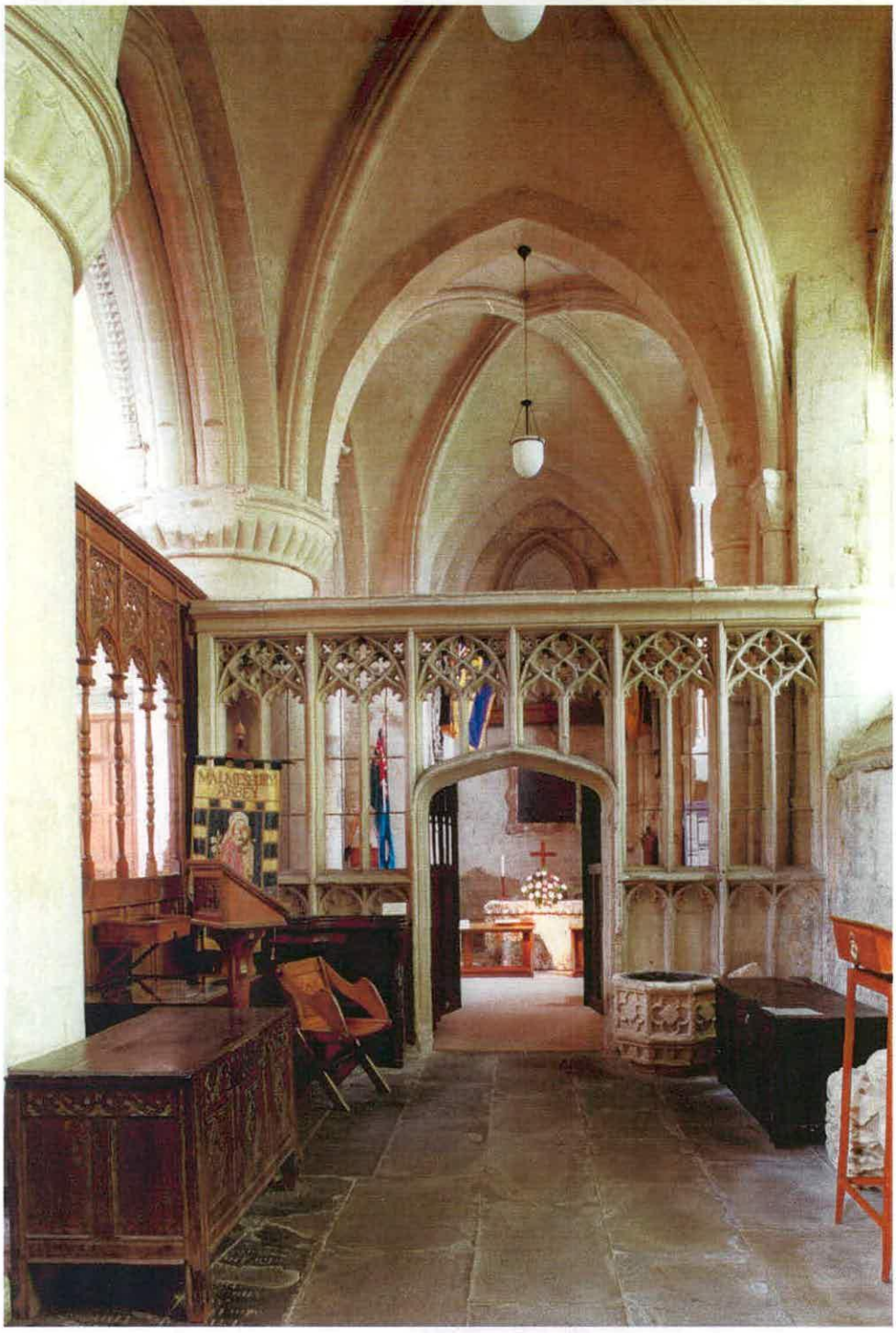


Fig. 74 The south aisle screen, seen from several bays to the west.

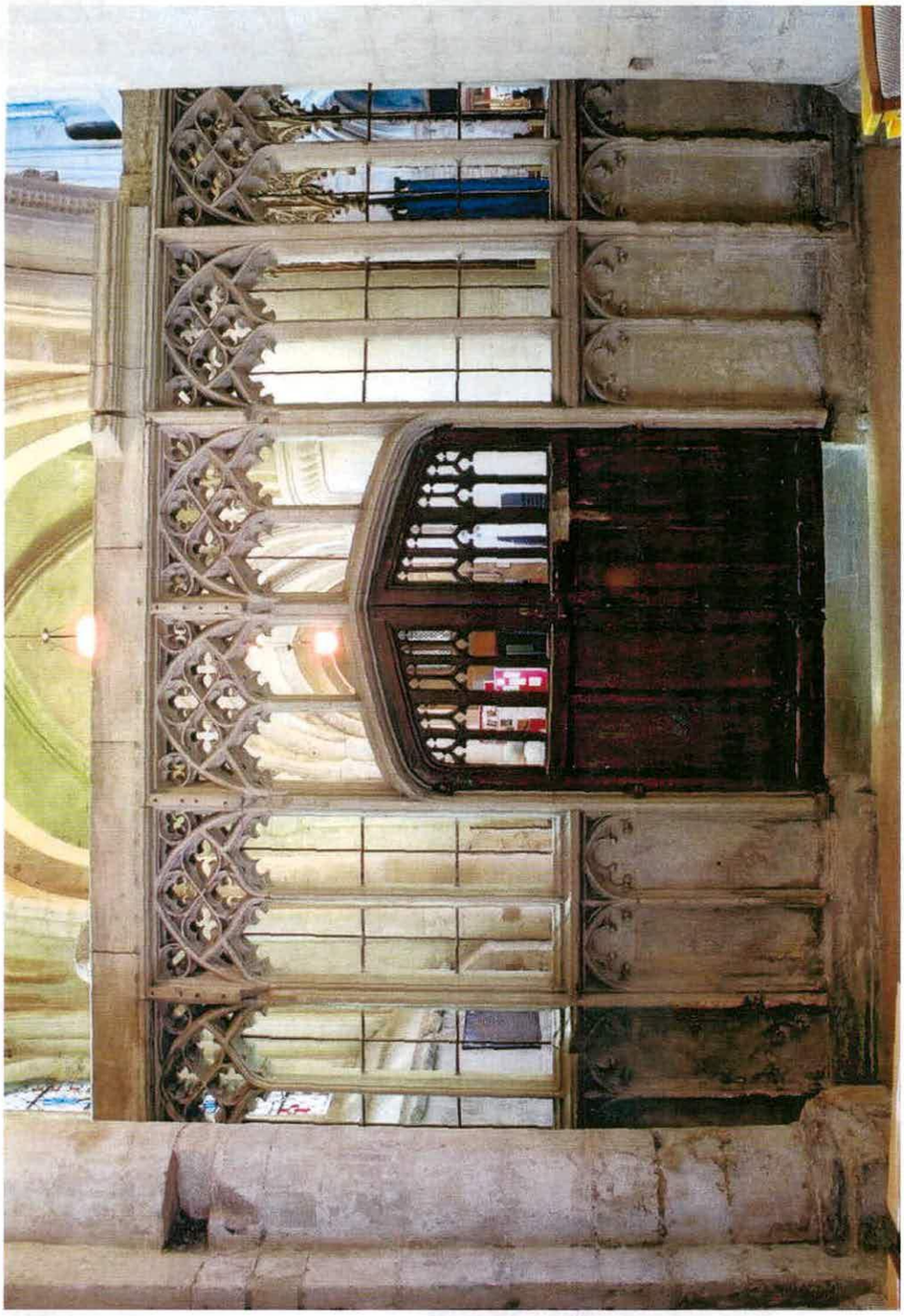


Fig. 75 The south aisle screen seen from the east.

Fig. 76 Historic view of the south aisle screen seen from the west.

Fig. 77 The north aisle screen viewed from the west, an historic (pre-1928) view.
(*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

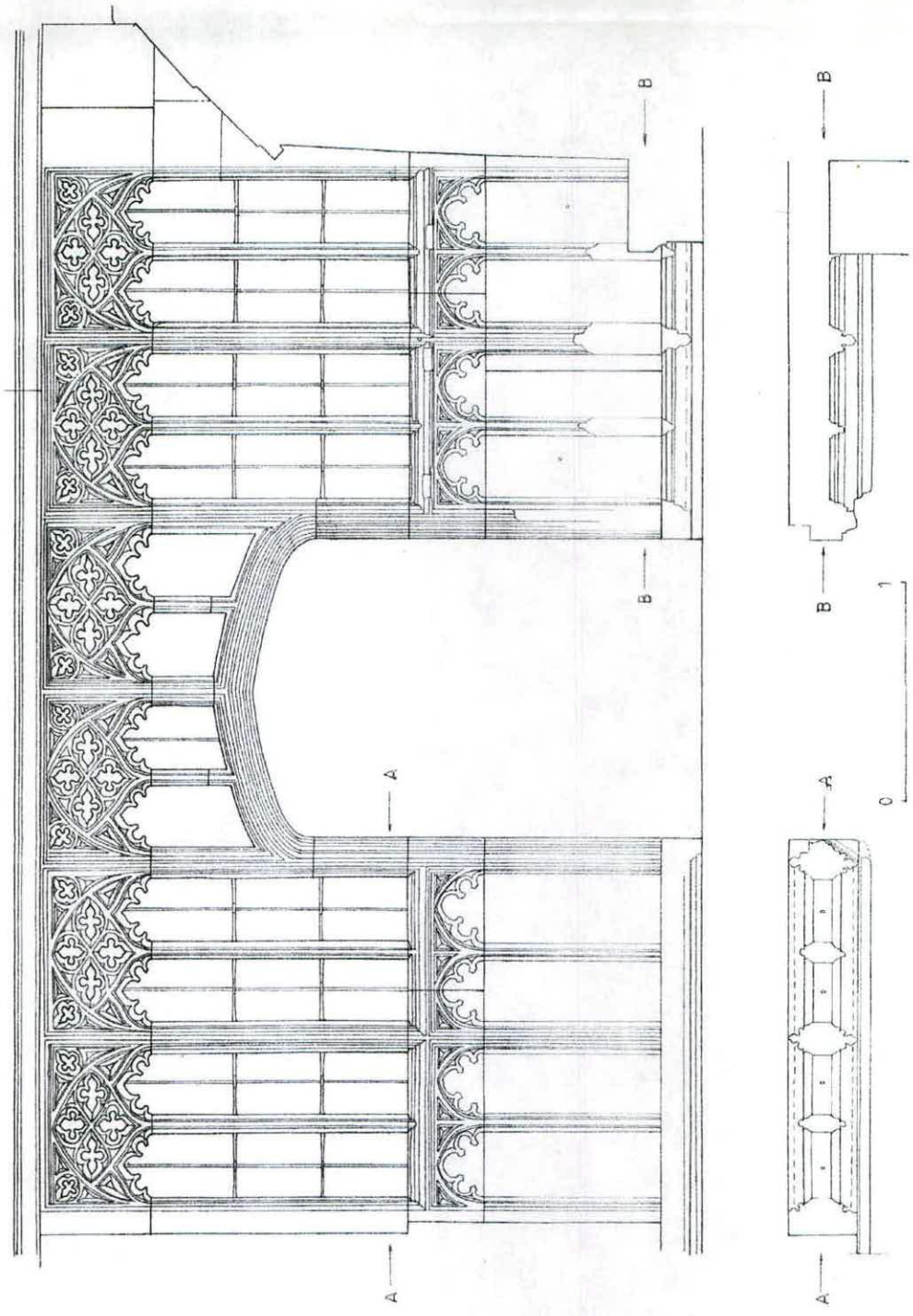


Fig. 78. Drawn elevation of the west façade of the south aisle screen,
by Jerry Sampson, December 2001.
(*Caroe & Partners*)

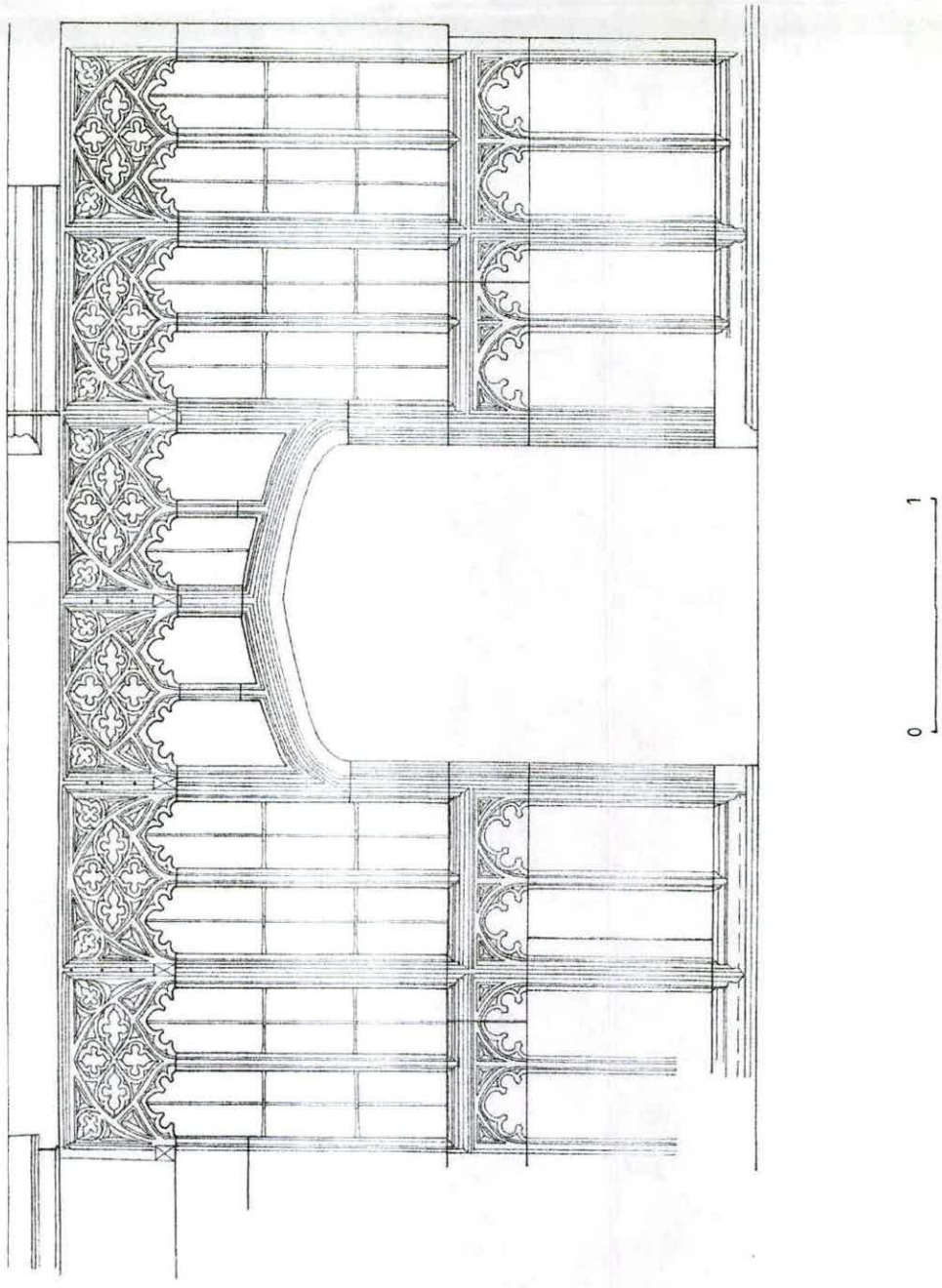


Fig. 79. Drawn elevation of the east façade of the south aisle screen,
by Jerry Sampson, December 2001.
(*Caroe & Partners*)

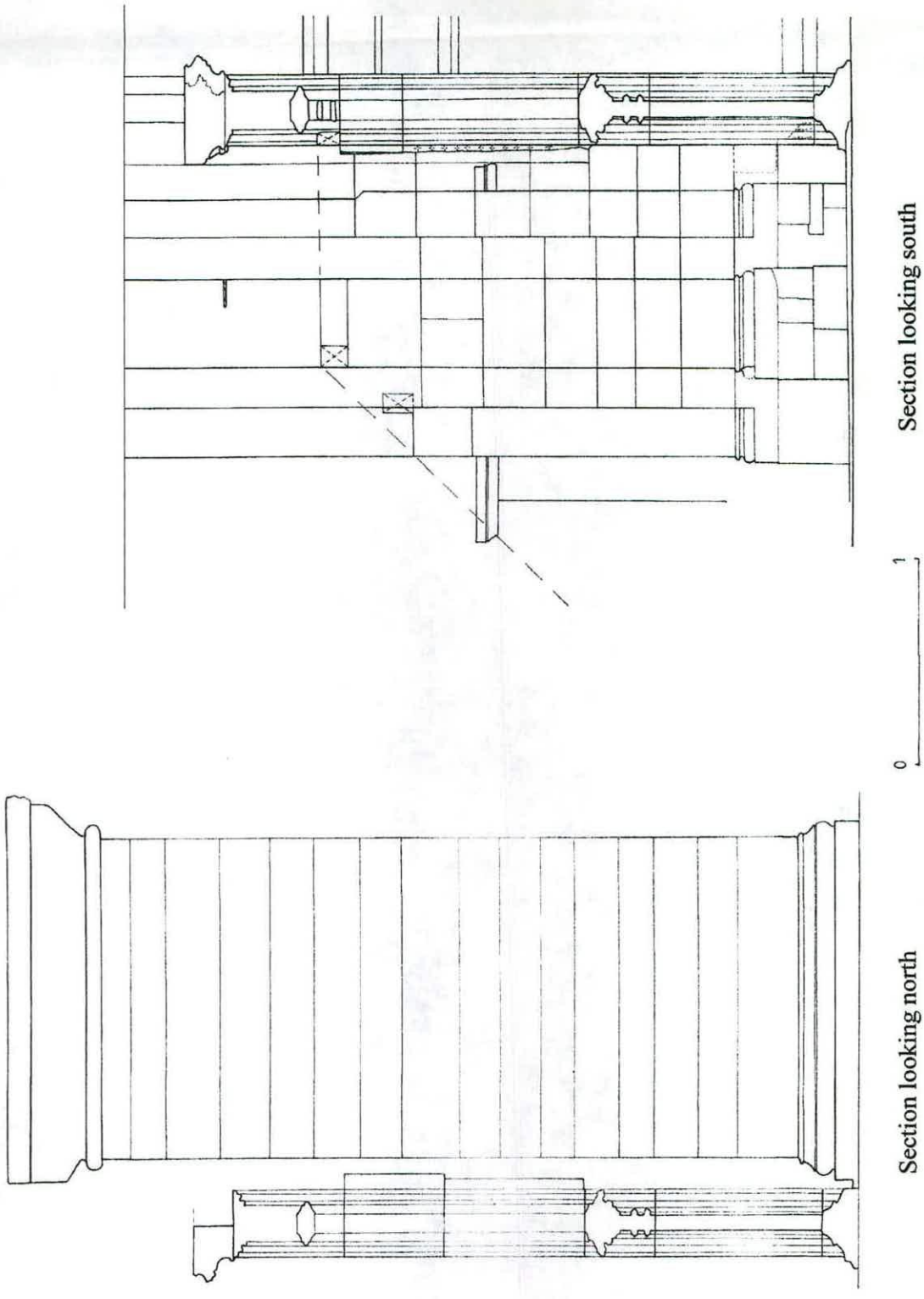


Fig. 80 Drawn sections of the south aisle screen, looking north and south, by Jerry Sampson, December 2001.
(*Caroe & Partners*)

Fig. 81 Detail of the south aisle screen showing the door jamb and plinth.

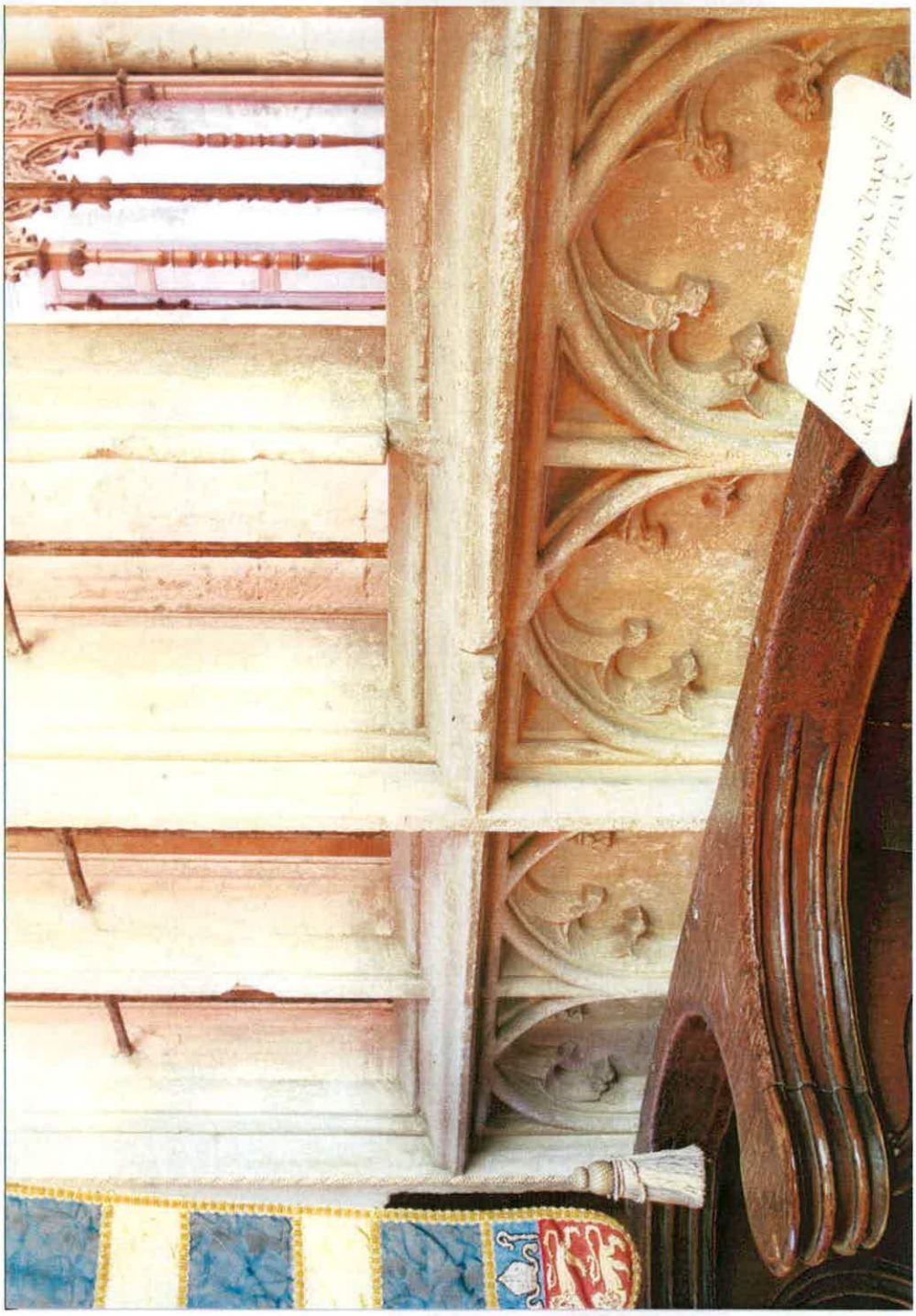


Fig. 8280 Detail of the west face of the south aisle screen, northern half showing heads of lower panelling.

Fig. 83 Detail of the east face of the south aisle screen.
(*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

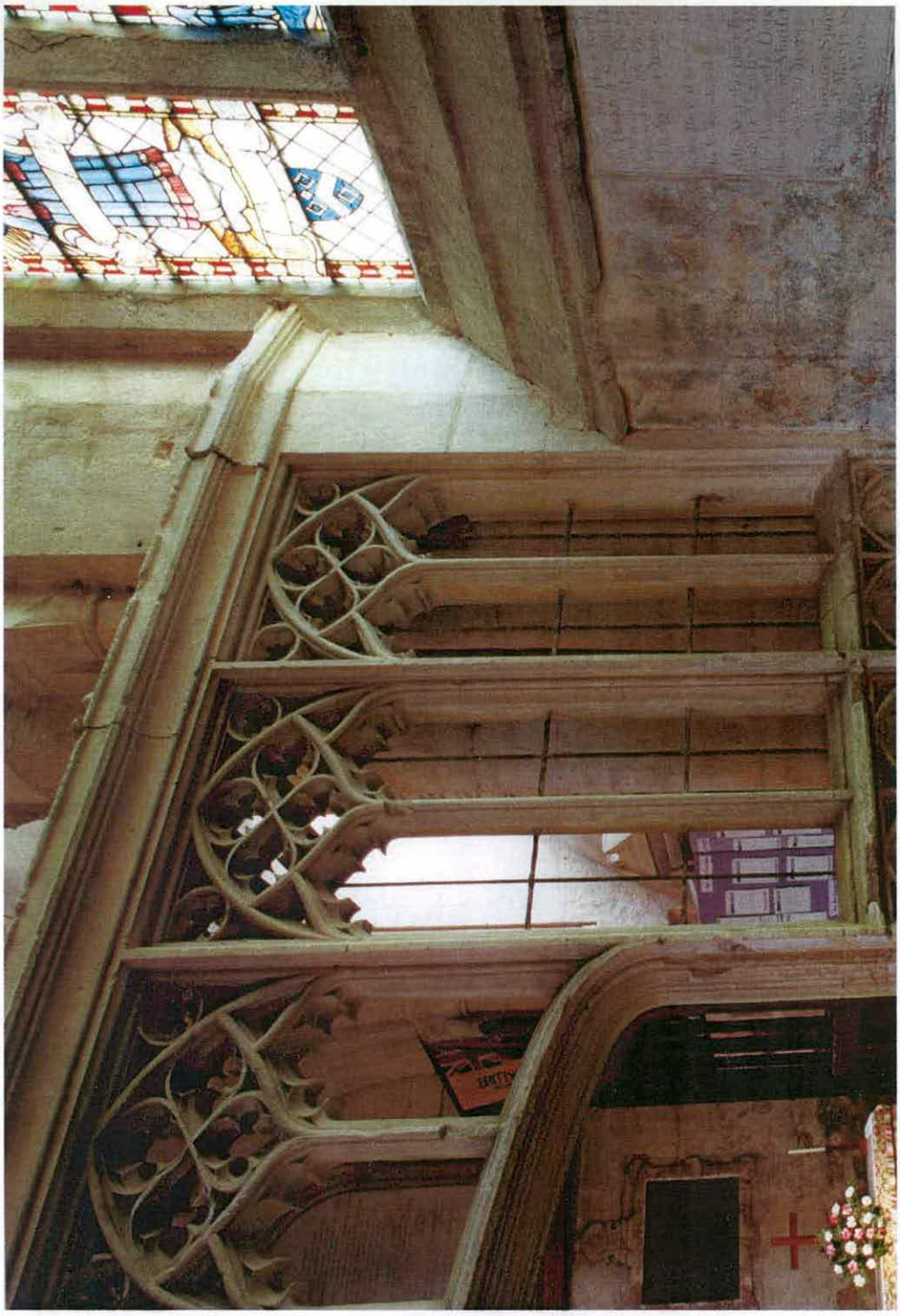


Fig. 84 South aisle screen, showing junction with window splay.

Fig. 85 South aisle screen from above, south end.

Fig. 86 South aisle screen from above, present termination of north end.

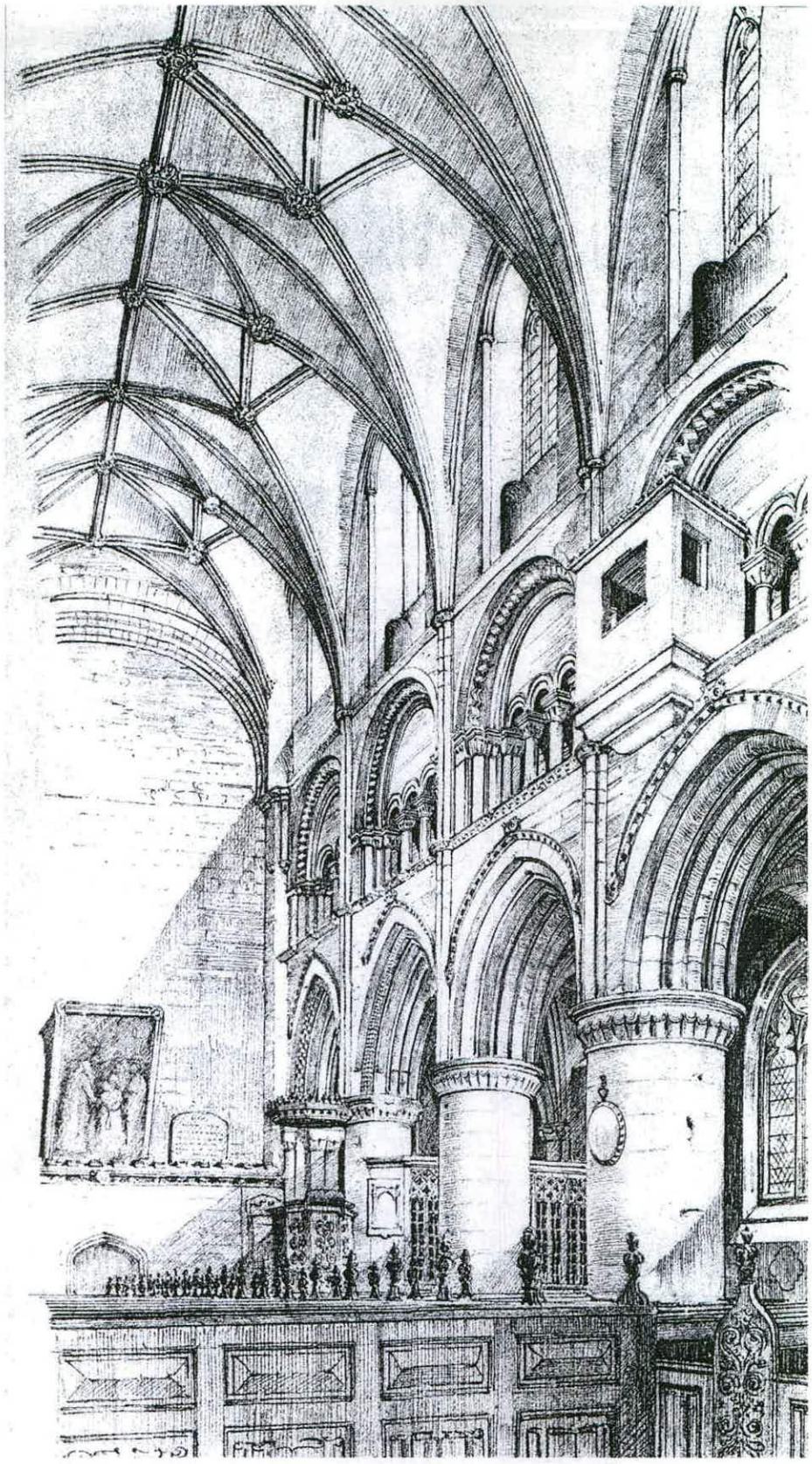


Fig. 87 Drawing of the south arcade, looking south-east, 1895, showing the south aisle screen and its original junction with the pier.
(*The Builder, 68, 1895*)

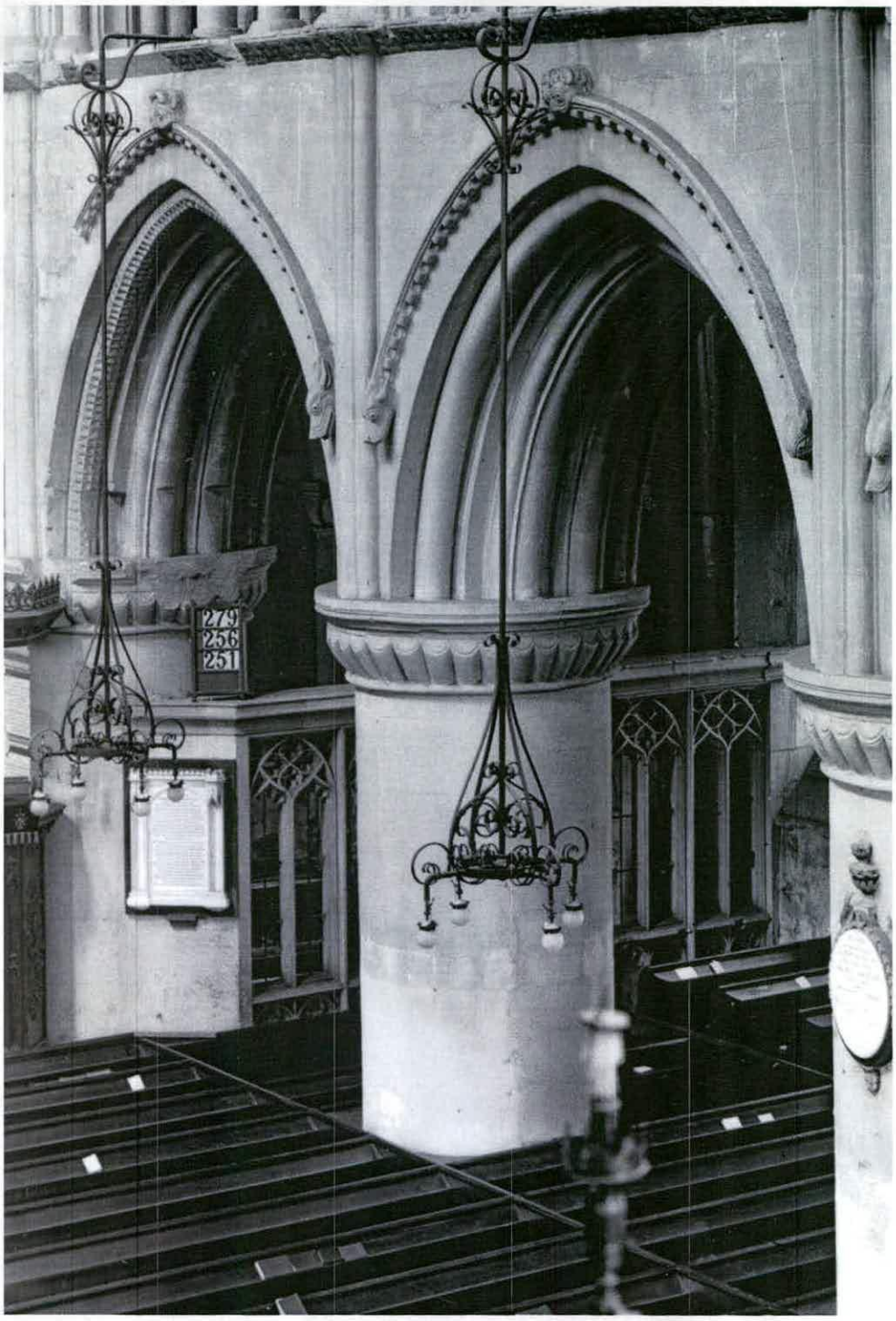


Fig. 88 Historic (pre-1928) view of the south aisle screen and east bays of the arcade. The photograph shows the junction of the north end of the screen with the nave pier. (*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

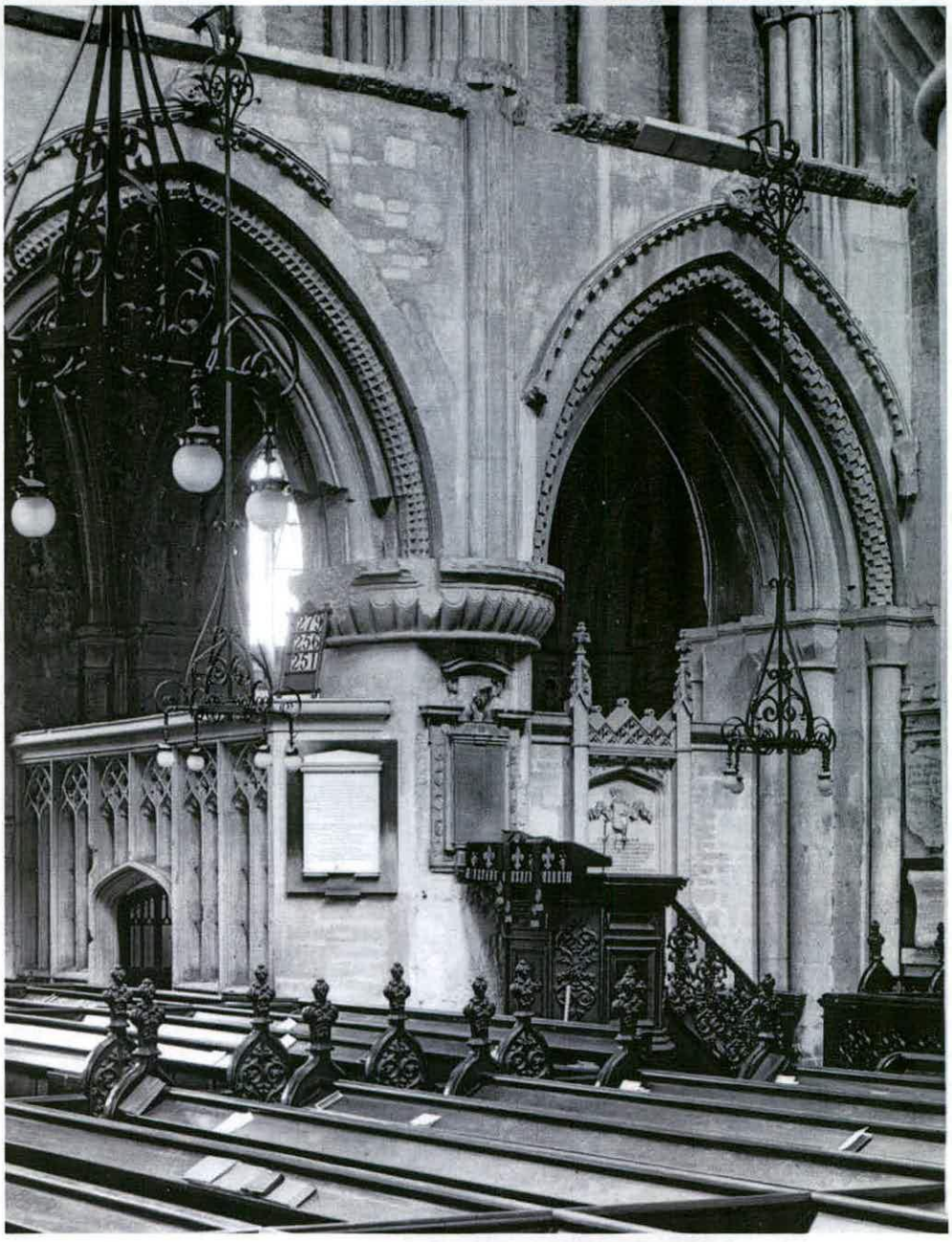


Fig. 89 Historic (pre-1928) view of the north aisle screen and east bays of arcade. The photograph (an enlarged copy of fig. 39) shows the junction of the screen with the first pier. (*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

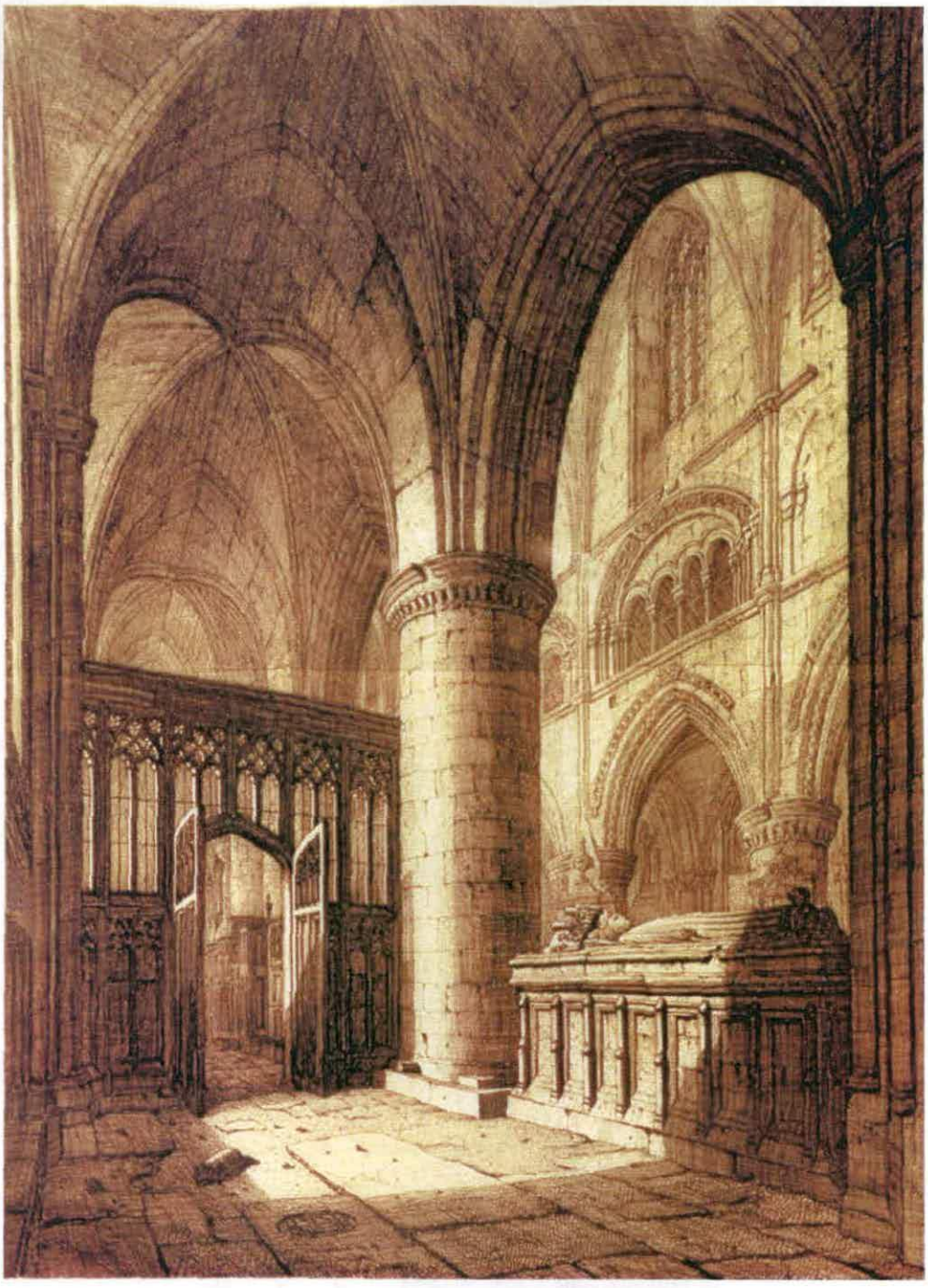


Fig. 90 Drawing of the interior of Malmesbury Abbey by John Coney, 1816, showing the south aisle screen from the east.
(*Malmesbury Abbey*)

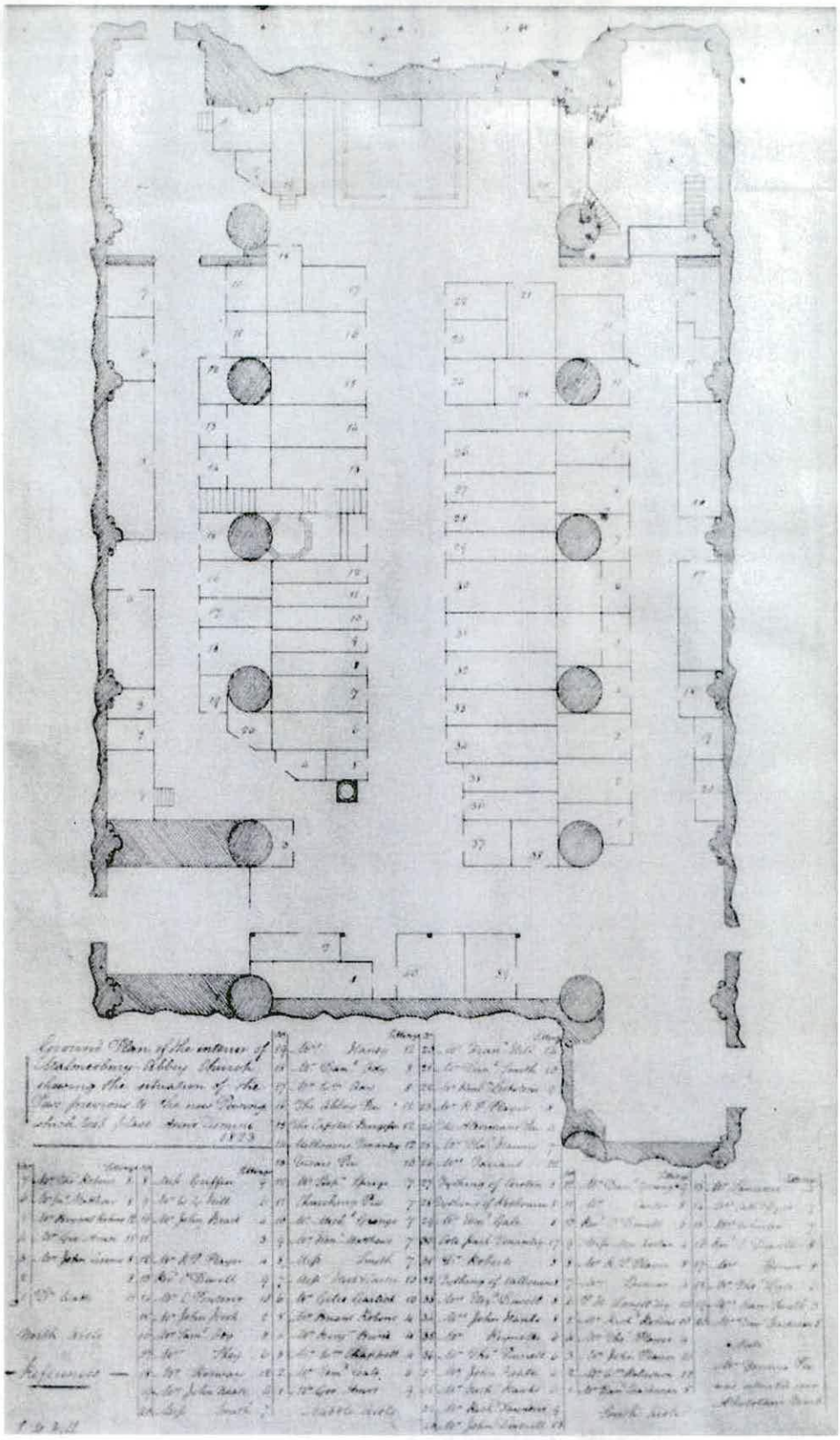


Fig. 91 Ground plan of Malmesbury Abbey by J. H. Webb, 1823, showing the arrangement of pews prior to conservation and reordering works by Henry Goodridge. (*Malmesbury Abbey*)

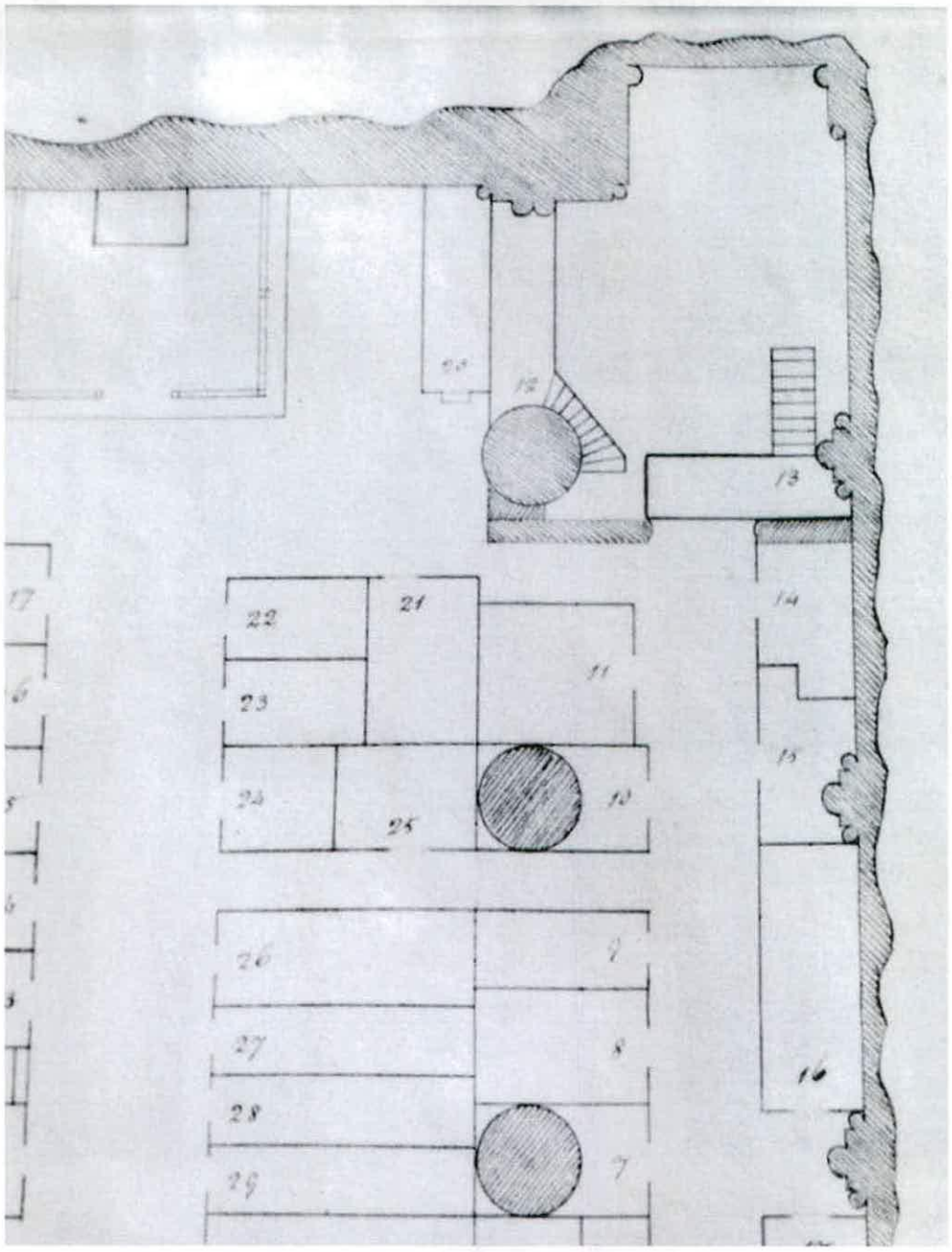


Fig. 92 A detail of the pew plan by J. H. Webb (fig. 89), showing the south-east corner of the church around the south aisle screen.
(*Malmesbury Abbey*)

Fig. 93 East face of the south aisle screen, looking south, showing the cutback cornice, drillings, and the cuts for an inserted beam.

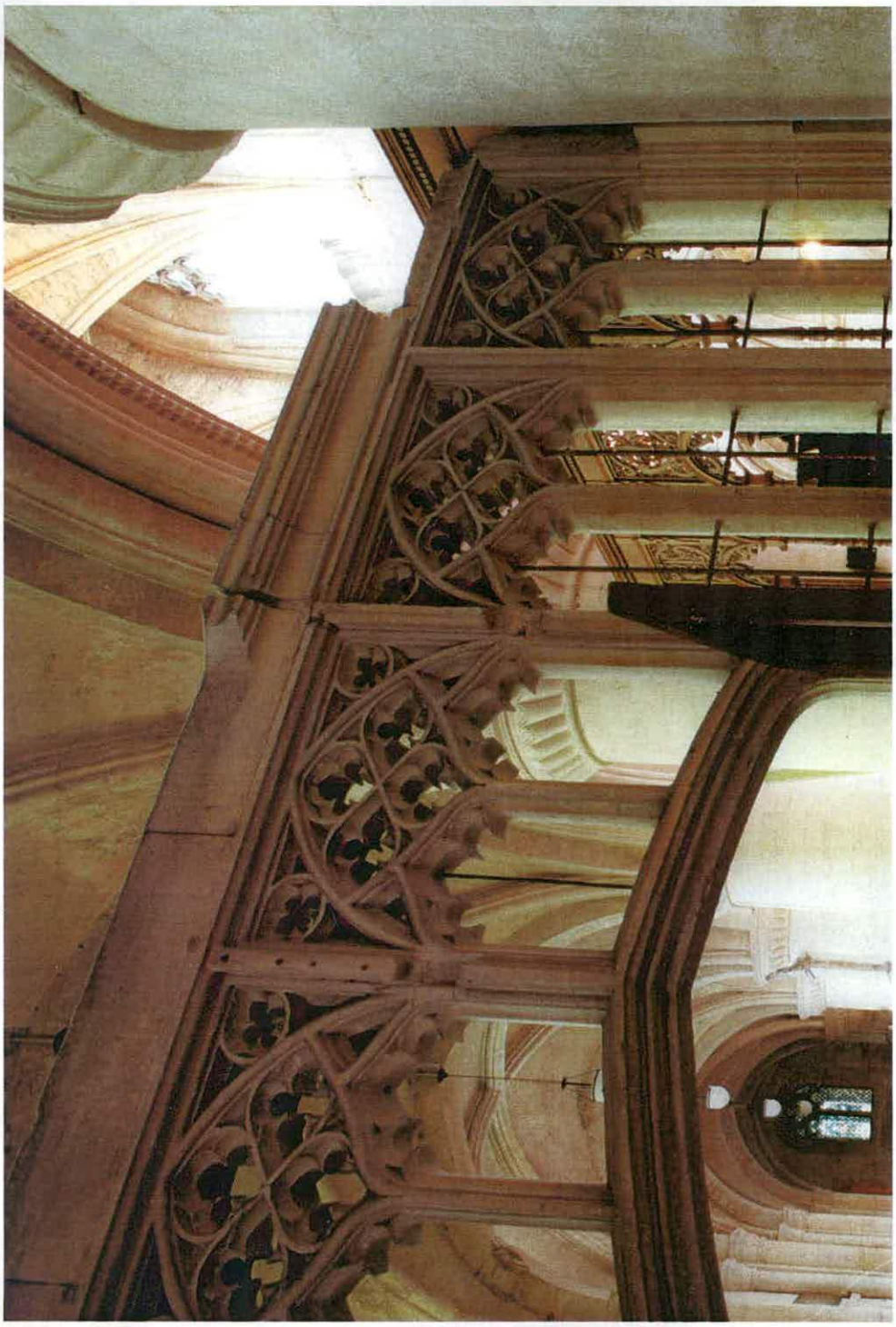


Fig. 94 East face of the south aisle screen, looking north, with surviving section of the projecting cornice moulding.

Fig. 95 The east face of the south aisle screen and the south wall of the south aisle. The line of the eighteenth-century stair to a raised pew can just be seen.

Fig. 96 The two eastern bays in the south arcade, to highlight masonry scars in line with the south aisle screen.

Fig. 97 The two eastern bays of the north arcade, to highlight masonry scars in line with the south aisle screen.

Fig. 98 General view of the former choir screen, beneath the west crossing arch. It probably dates from the early sixteenth century.

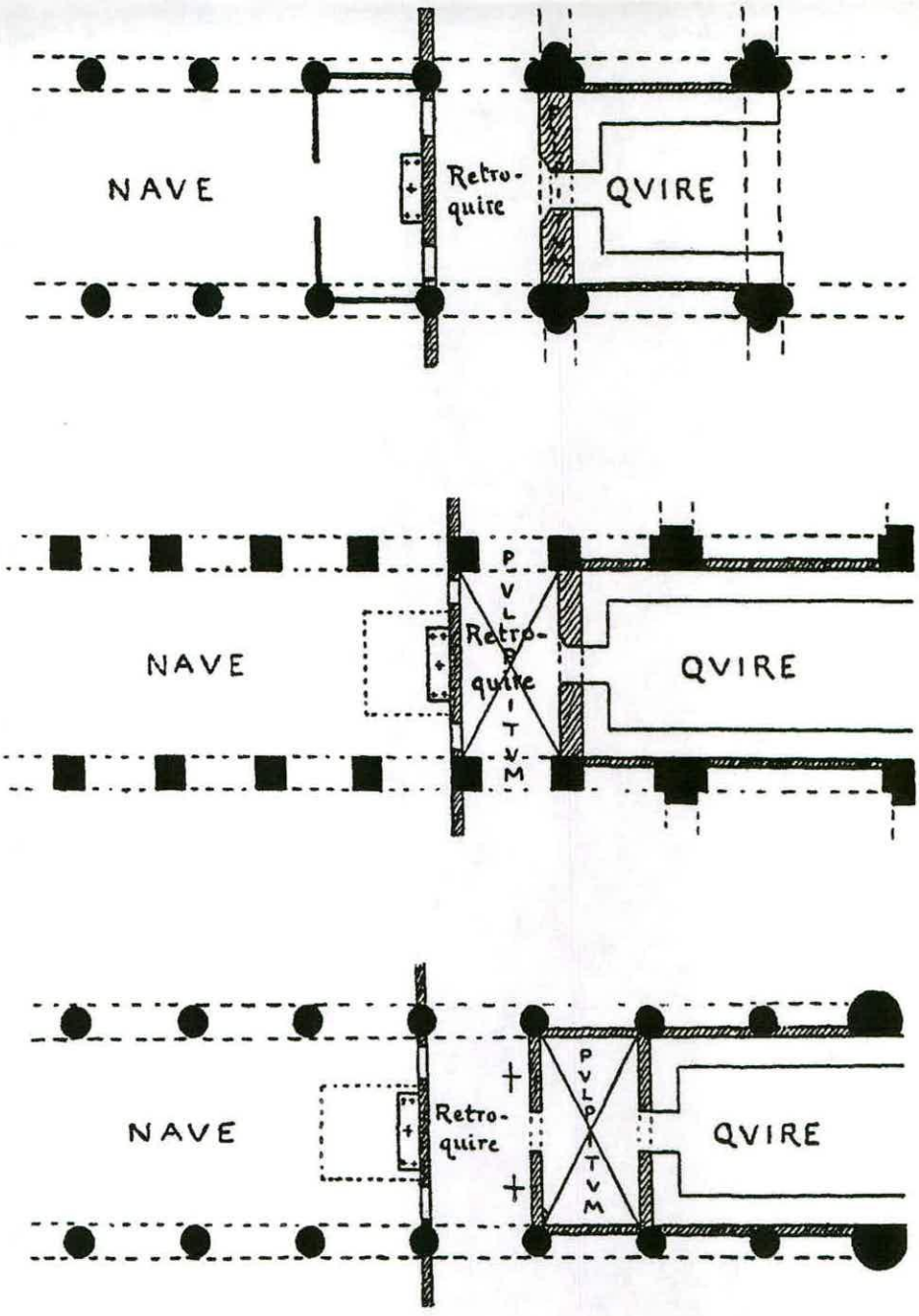


Fig. 99 Sketches to show the 'standard' arrangements of choir screens and rood screens in English monastic churches: top, the Durham model; middle, the Ely model; bottom, the St Augustine's, Canterbury model.
(*After Hope 1916–17*)

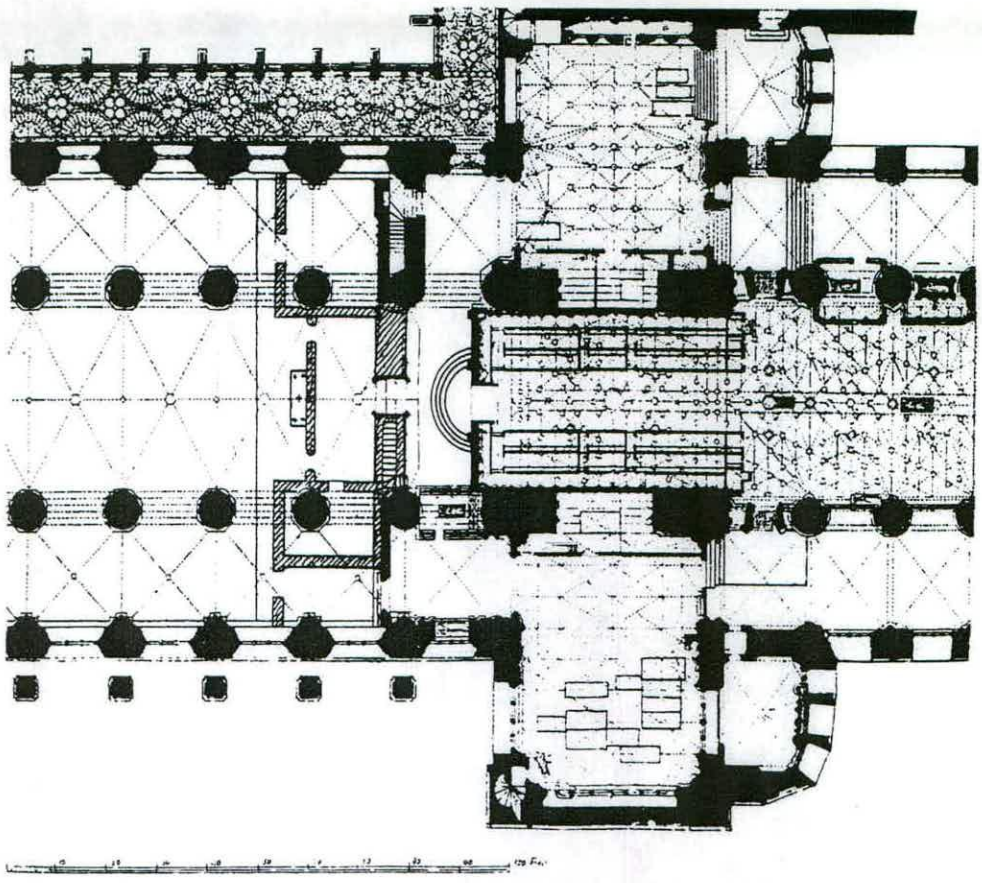


Fig. 100 St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester reconstruction of the fourteenth-century choir screen and rood screen arrangement.
(*After Hope 1916–17*)

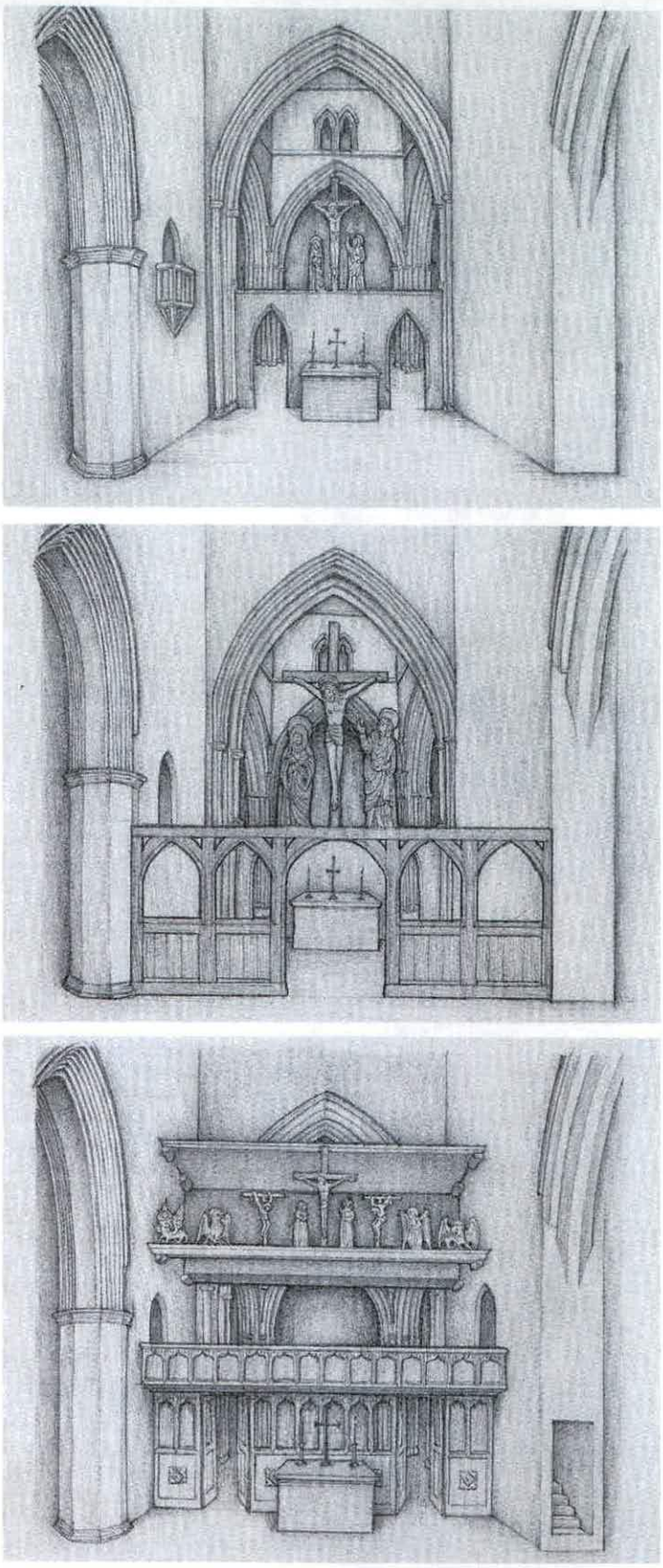


Fig. 101 St John's Priory, Brecon, showing suggested reconstruction of rood screen arrangements in three phases.
(© *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales*)

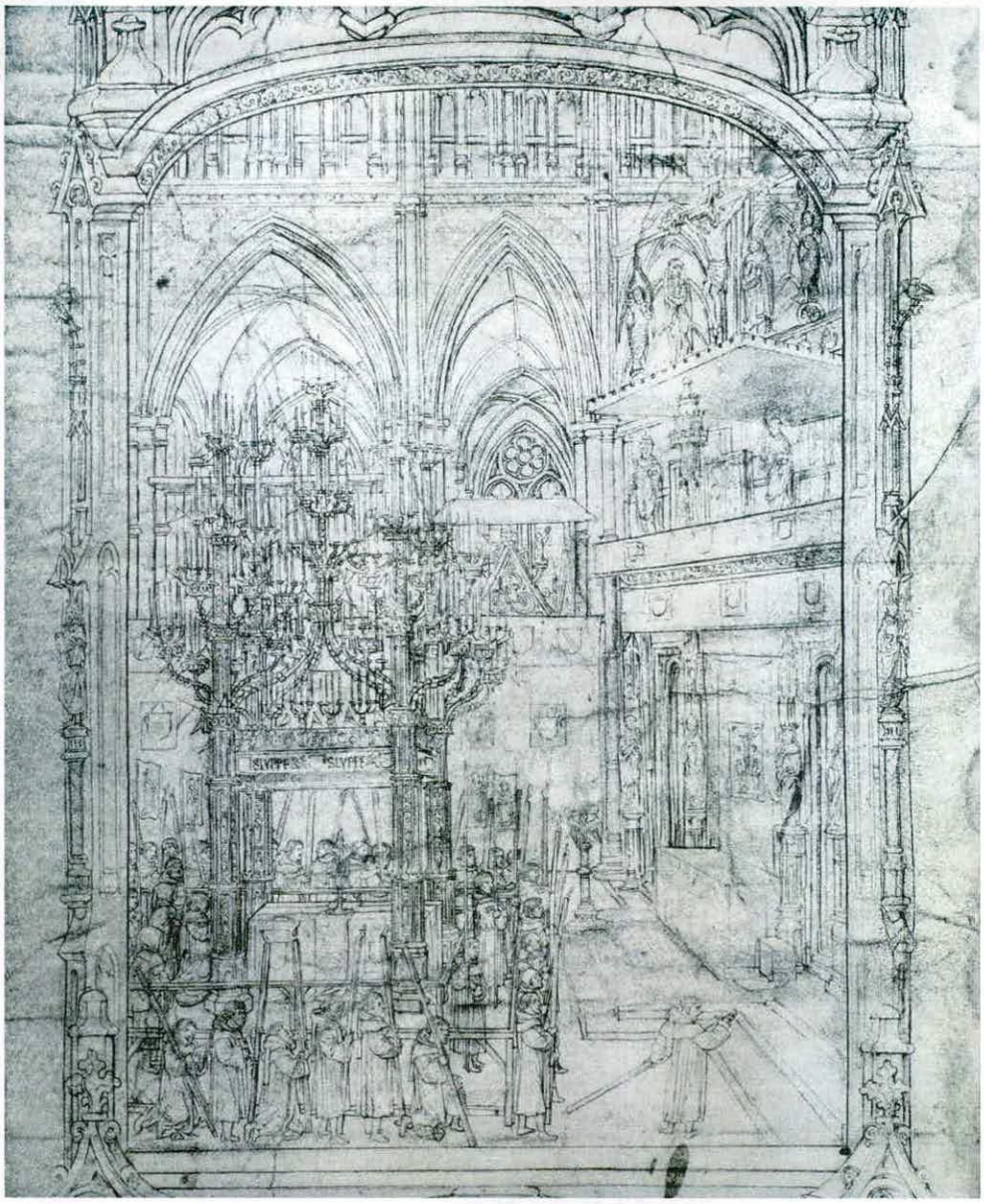


Fig. 102 Detail from the Obituary Roll of Abbot Islip (d. 1532), showing catafalque before the high altar screen at Westminster Abbey.
(*After Hope 1906; Society of Antiquaries*)

Fig. 103 Detail of the royal arms on the former choir screen.

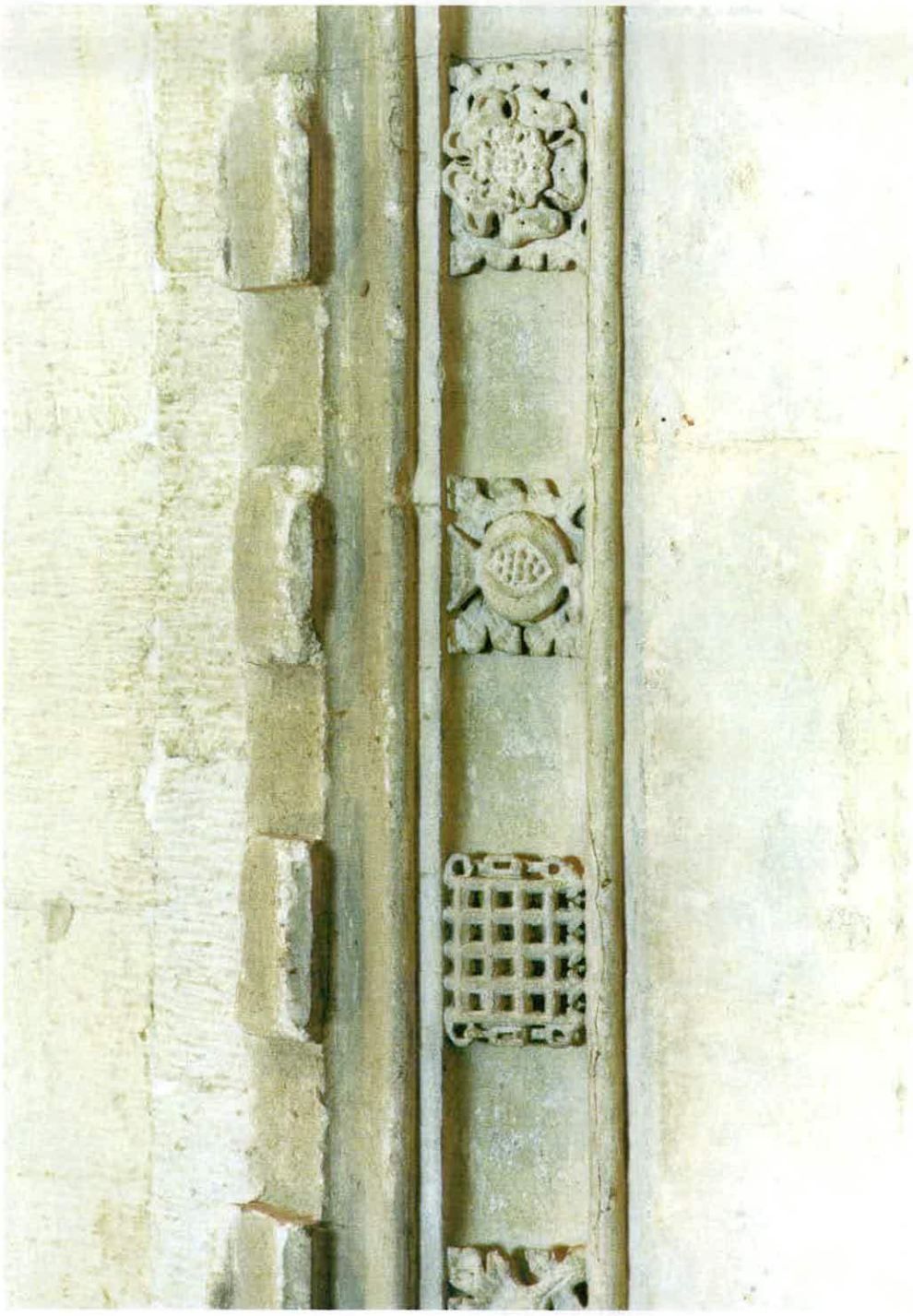


Fig. 104 Detail of badges on the supposed choir screen.

Fig. 105 The supposed choir screen from above, looking north.

Fig. 106 Detail of the first pier in the north arcade.

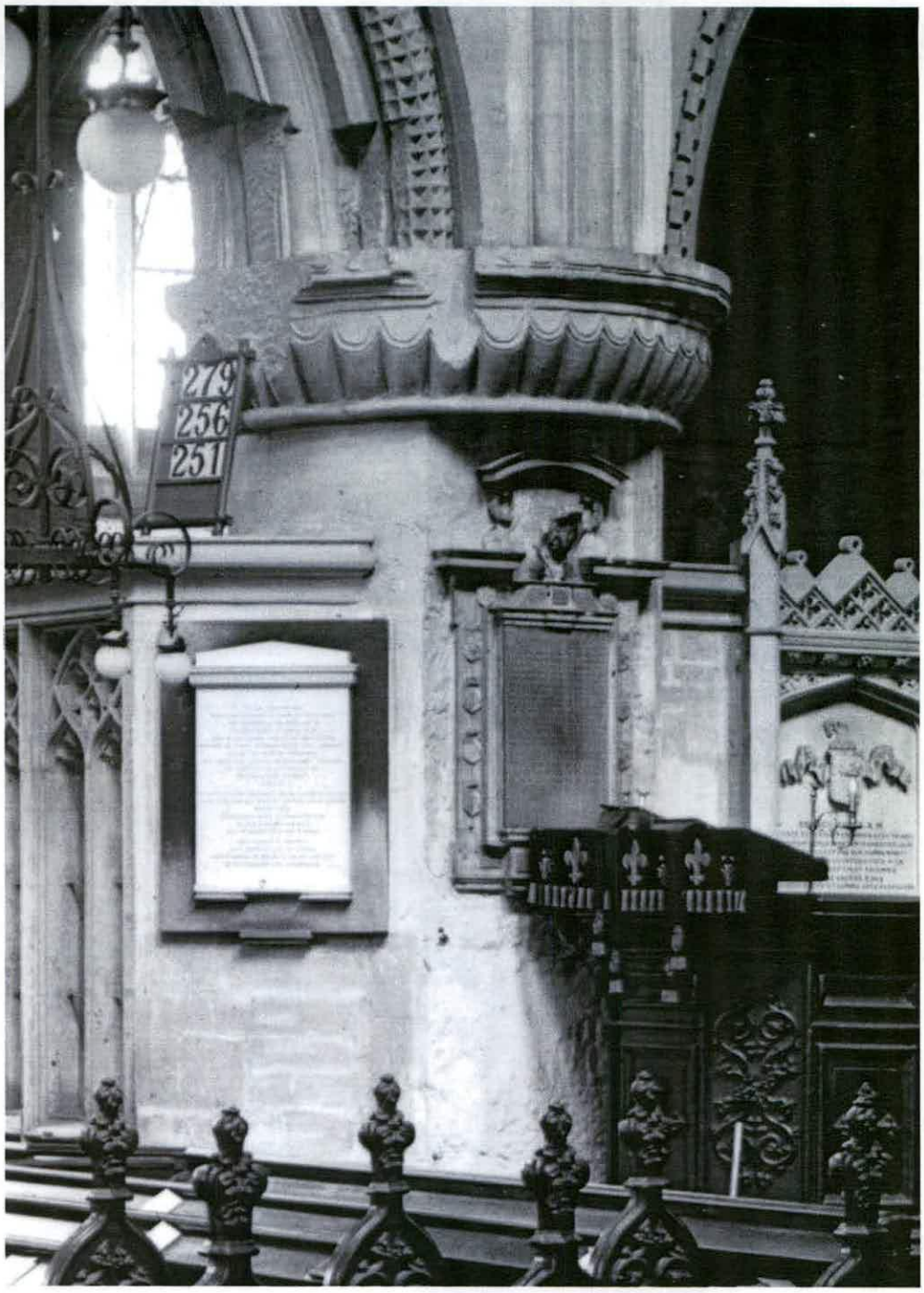


Fig. 107 Historic (pre-1928) view of the first (east) pier in the north arcade, detail to show cut-back face (enlargement of fig. 39)
(*English Heritage, National Monuments Record*)

Fig. 108 Speculative reconstruction to illustrate the significance of the late-medieval screens, view from west.
(*Richard Lea, English Heritage*)

Fig. 109 Speculative reconstruction to illustrate the significance of the late-medieval screens, view from the north-west.
(*Richard Lea, English Heritage*)

ANNEX 1
PARTICULARS OF GRANT (1544)

Assigned to Remain:

The late abbot's lodging and the new lodging adjoining, with kitchen, larder, buttery, pantry, and houses of office, with lodgings thereupon builded pertaining to the same. The abbot's stable, with the wool houses, the gate and houses over the same enclosing the quadrant of the said buildings, the barn at the Spytell gate and the outer gatehouse of the Basse court, priced at £40.

Appointed to be Razed and Sold:

The church with the cloister and chapel adjoining, £50; the dormitory with the chapter house, £5; the frater and library, £5; the farmery with the lodging adjoining, £13 6s 8d; the sextery end, 40s; the cellarer's chamber with the Sqyer chamber, the Saint Mary house with the chantry and convent kitchen with all the houses there, the guests' stable with houses adjoining and the steward's lodging, £40.

[*PRO, E 318/Box 20/1074. See, also, Brakspear 1912–13, 434; Youings 1971, 239–40*]

ANNEX 2
BUILDING AT MALMESBURY BY ABBOT WILLIAM OF COLERNE (1260–96)

'Next to the abbot's garden he built a great fair hall covered with stone, with a lesser hall towards the gable of the same hall, and of the house which was previously the hall he made an ordinary chamber. And against the same hall he caused to be made a kitchen, and of the larder he rebuilt the walls and strengthened the beams, and covered it in stone.

And the same abbot came to terms with Ralph de Porta and the wife of Thurstan le Brasur for their messuages and curtilages lying next to the abbey garden and in their place made a vineyard enclosed with a stone wall. And he caused vineyards and orchards to be planted in the abbey garden.

He made also from the market a certain place for a carpentry shop and endorsed it with a stone wall. By this carpentry shop he also made two houses.

He made also an infirmary of beams and arches, and repaired the walls somewhat and roofed it in stone.

Then he had the dormitory pulled down to the walls and upon those walls in both directions made rampart walks, and with new timber and existing beams restored it and roofed in stone.

He caused the chapter house as far as the walls to be removed and again put up the whole with new timber and covered with stone and alures in the circuit of the chapter house.

Then in the wall of the hospice he had three windows made.

Then he made a granary next to the mill and the building which had been the granary he added to the storeroom.

He had the old brewhouse rased to the ground and rebuilt with new walls and new timbers.

On the west side of the brewhouse however he made a house for keeping horses for the 'long' carts. He built it anew and roofed it in stone.

From the prison to the sacristan's stable he made a house, part for the poor and part for stabling horses.

Next to the stable of the hospice he made a house for keeping horses.

And he built a mill.

And a chapel to St Aldhelm in the garden.

And three ovens next to the kitchen of the convent.

And he built the vault of the abbot's chamber.

And he built the infirmary from the foundations'.

[Registrum, *II, 365–66; Brakspear 1912–13, 433; Brakspear 1913–14, 494–95*]

ANNEX 3
BRAKSPEAR'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SCREENS AT MALMESBURY

'Under the western arch of the crossing is a solid stone screen, capped by a cornice bearing the badges of Henry VII with the royal arms in the middle over a doorway which led into the quire.

The quire was beneath the crossing and one bay of the presbytery, and the stalls had canopies which were supported at the backs by a beam let into the crossing piers.

Just in front of the first pair of pillars in the nave was an openwork stone screen across the full width of the church, and the portions of the aisles still remain. Between this screen and that already described was a loft or gallery known as the *pulpitum* — [gained by a wooden stair from the south aisle and a narrow gangway at the back of the screen, the notches for which are still quite clear. The main arches of the arcade are cut away to give passage on to the middle part of the loft. Norwich Cathedral had a *pulpitum* of similar character. The loft carried by two light screens was very general in Cistercian churches but with the Benedictines it was generally placed on a solid wall containing vices with the quire door in the midst] — from which the gospels and epistles were sung on holy days, and it generally held a pair of organs for the quire services.

At the third pair of pillars was another cross screen, above which was the beam to carry the great rood. In front of this was the nave altar, with a doorway in the screen on either side. In the triforium just above is a stone box-like projection, which was apparently built to hold the organs for the nave altar services, and not, as usually supposed, to contain a patient watcher, who could see little or nothing beyond a detailed elevation of the nave wall opposite.

The fourth bay of the aisles on both sides was parted off by screens to form chapels flanking the nave altar [the cuts for which still remain].

Between the rood-screen and the *pulpitum* was a space called the *retro-quire*, where at Durham were seats "where men dyd sytt to rest theme selves on & say their praiers and here devyne service"'.

[*This follows the account given in Brakspear 1912–13, 422, 424, but with the additions in square brackets taken from his marginally expanded version of the paper: Brakspear 1913–14, 485–86. The Durham account is from* Rites of Durham, *34*]

ANNEX 4
VALLANCE'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SCREENS AT MALMESBURY

'The stone pulpitum was situated at the western crossing, where its wall-front stands, with a post-Reformation blank wall, built up above it and filling all the space of the crown of the arch, to form the eastern limit of what remains of the ancient church. The pulpitum front is approximately 31 ft. long by 11 ft 3 in. in height from the present nave floor-level. Along the top of the pulpitum runs a cornice, 1 ft. 2½ in. deep, in fairly good condition. The topmost edge is embattled, with a series of horizontal mouldings underneath, among which is a cavetto containing twenty-eight square paterae and other sculptured ornaments. These are as follow, from north to south:

> (1) A demi-sea-horse on a shield. (2) Lion passant. (3) Stafford knot on shield. (4) Greyhound courant. (5) Dragon passant. (6) Lion passant guardant. (7) Pomegranate. (8) Tudor Rose. (9 and 10) Leafage. (11) Portcullis. (12) Pomegranate. (13) Tudor Rose. (14) Royal arms of Henry VII with supporters. (15) Tudor Rose. (16) Pomegranate. (17) Stafford knot on leaves. (18) Demi-sea-horse. (19) Leafage. (20) A rudder, for Willoughby, Lord Broke. (21 and 22) Two rabbits or hares, affronted. (23) Hound or talbot. (24) Wolf or fox. (25) Dragon passant. (26) Hare retroguardant. (27 and 28) Leafage ornaments.

The arms of Henry VII, projecting in the middle, together with the introduction of the pomegranate, the badge of the Spanish royal house, shows that this part of the work must have been executed between the years 1501 and 1533, the date of Henry VIII's final repudiation of his wife, Catherine of Aragon.

The former entrance to the quire remains in the middle of the pulpitum. Its opening, now walled up, was 4 ft. 2½ in. wide by 7 ft. 6 in. high, from the present nave floor to the crown of its four-centred arch. The door-frame is moulded, with Gothic paterae sculptured in the cavetto. Traces remain of a horizontal label or string-course, which crossed the screen front at the level of the springing of the arch of the door-head.

The west face of the pulpitum has at one time been painted with conventional designs and black-letter inscriptions, all of which have become too much worn to be deciphered. The whole of the pulpitum front, from the cornice downward to the floor, is now concealed by modern curtains.

"Just in front of the first pair of pillars" below the crossing "was an openwork screen" which extended in one unbroken line, 69 ft. long, "across the full width of the church. Between this screen and that already described," writes Sir Harold Brakspear, "was a loft called the pulpitum, gained by a wooden stair from the south aisle and a narrow gangway at the back of the screen, the notches for which are still quite clear. The main arches of the arcade are cut away to give passage on to the middle part of the loft ... Crossing the nave was another screen (the rood screen) which would have in front of it the nave altar and a doorway at either end. Above would stand the Great Rood ... The fourth bay of the aisles on both sides was parted off by screens (to form chapels flanking the nave altar), the cuts for which still remain".

The openwork screen above-named is not now complete. The middle portion, that which spanned the nave, has been destroyed, and there survive only the two end parts, crossing the north and south aisles of the nave respectively, and enclosing on the west the easternmost bay of either aisle. They are identical in design and there can be no doubt that originally they both belonged to a single screen. They are of late-fourteenth- or early-fifteenth-century work, and are both in fairly good condition. Both are of the same dimensions, measuring 16 ft. long by 10 ft. 6 in. high from the present level of the nave floor. Each screen consists of six rectangular compartments, centring at 2 ft. 7 in. the space of the two middle

compartments in either case being occupied by the doorway, which is 4 ft. 5½ in. wide by 6 ft. 4 in. high from the floor-level to the crown of its four-centred arch. The solid base below the fenestration is 3 ft. 10 in. high, each compartment being divided by a vertical moulding into two panels, with cinquefoil-cusped tracery in the head, springing at a height of 2 ft. 9 in. from the floor. Corresponding with the lower panels, each compartment of the fenestration is divided by a stone mullion into two lights; and each light is guarded by an iron stanchion and two saddle-bars. The openings are 4 ft. high from the cord-line of the late-Gothic tracery, which forms their head ornament. The folding doors are of oak, and of late-Gothic design.

Part of the label of the arch of the second bay of the nave has been cut away for the insertion of a wood-beam, which was a large one, situated high up, just below the string-course. In both arcades of the nave part of the capital, and also of the inner order of the arch immediately over the above-mentioned stone screens, has been cut away, apparently to accommodate the woodwork of a loft which was formerly attached to the top of the now vanished rood screen'.

[*Vallance 1947, 110–11. The paragraphs are ours. Vallance's description was based on a much earlier site visit, of July 1911. His quotes from Brakspear are taken from Brakspear 1913–14, 485–86*]

ANNEX 5
DESCRIPTION OF THE ROOD SCREEN AT DURHAM (1593)

'In the body of the churche betwixt two of the hiest pillors supportinge & holding up the west syde of the Lanterne over against the quere dore, ther was an alter called Jesus alter where Jhesus mess was song every fridaie thorowe out the whole yere. And of the backsyde of the saide alter ther was a faire high stone wall and at either end of the wall there was a dore which was lockt every night called the two Roode Dores for the prosession to goe furth and comme in at, and betwixt those two dores was Jhesus alter placed as is afforesaide, & at either ende of the alter was closed up with fyne wainscott like unto a porch adjoyninge to eyther roode dore ... and in the wainscott at the south end of the alter ther was four faire almeries ... and in the north end of thalter in the wainscot ther was a dore to come in to the said porch and a locke on yt to be lockt both daie and nighte: Also ther was standing on the alter against the wall aforesaid a most curiouse and fine table with two leves to open & clos againe all of the hole Passion of our Lord Jesus christ most richlye & curiously sett furth in most lyvelie coulors all like burninge gold ... The which table was alwaies lockt up but onely on principall daies. Also the fore part of the said porch from the utmoste corner of the porch to the other, ther was a dore with two brode leves to open from syde to syde, all of fyne joined & through carved worke. The hight of yt was sumthinge above a mans brest & in the highte of the said dore yt was all stricken full of Irone pikes yet no man shold clymme over ... Also there was in the hight of the said wall from piller to piller the whole storie and passion of our Lord wrowghte in stone most curiously and most fynely gilte, and also aboue the said storie & passion was all the whole storie & pictures of the twelve apostles verie artificiallye sett furth & verie fynelie gilte contening from the one piller to thother ... and on the hight above all thes foresaide storyes frome piller to piller was sett up a border very artificially wrowght in stone with mervelous fyne coulers verie curiouslie & excellent fynly gilt with branches & flowers ... the worke was so fynely & curiously wroughte in the said stone yt cold not be fynelyer wrowght in any kynde of other mettell, and also above the hight of all upon the waule did stand the most goodly & famous Roode that was in all this land, with the picture of Marie on thone syde, & the picture of Johne on thother, with two splendent & glisteringe archangels one on thone syde of Mary, & the other of the other syde of Johne, so what for the fairness of the wall the staitlynes of the pictures & the lyvelyhoode of the paynting it was thowght to be one of the goodliest monuments in that church.

Also on the backsyde of the said Rood before the queir dore there was a Loft, & in the south end of the said loft the clock dyd stand, & in under the said loft by the wall there was a long forme which dyd reche from the one Roode dore to the other, where men dyd sytt to rest theme selves on & say their praiers & here devyne service'.

[*Taken from* Rites of Durham, *32–34; Also transcribed in Hope 1916–17, 72–73*]

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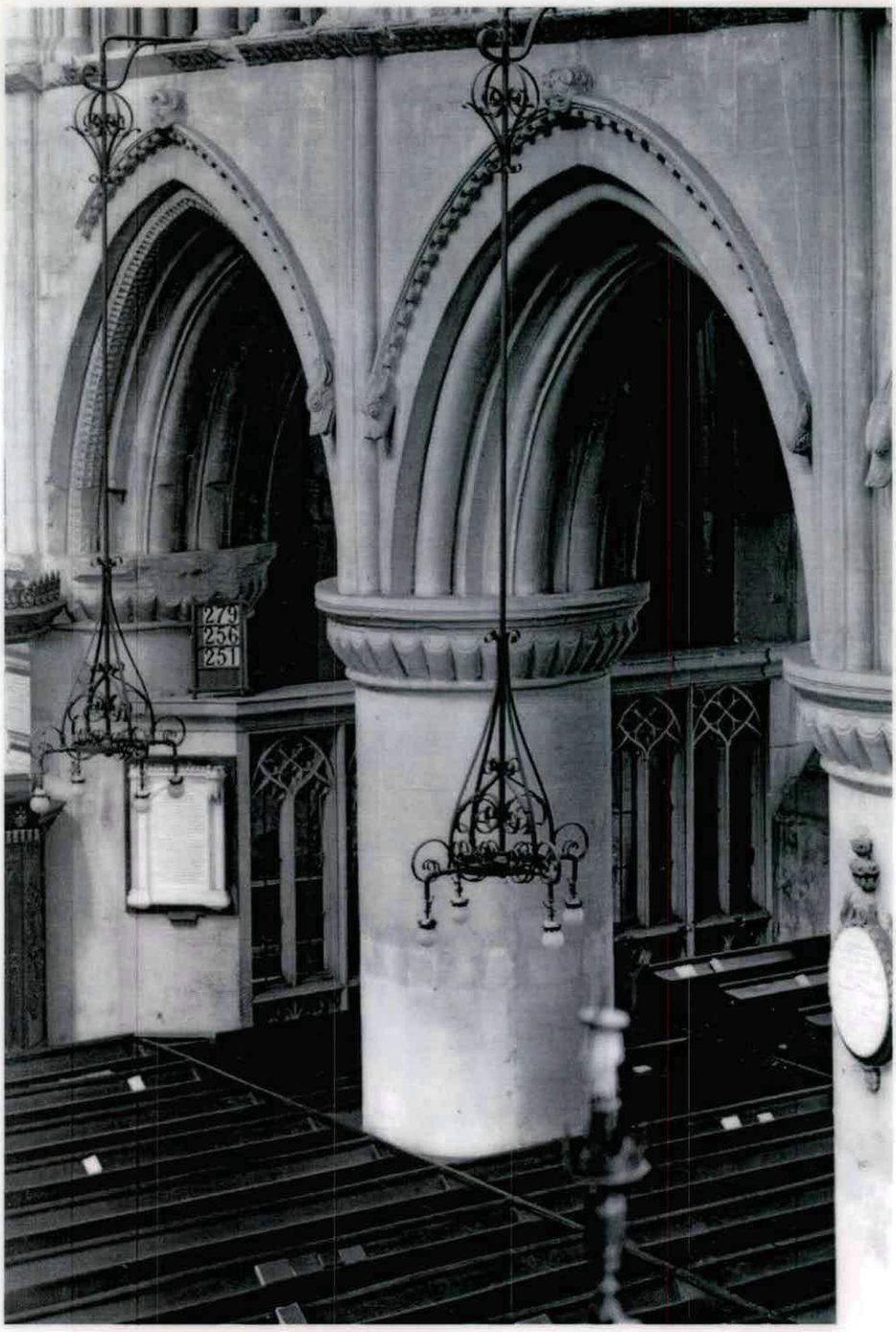

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