

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

**Cambridge Antiquarian Society,**

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WITH

**Communications**

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXI.

BEING No. 1 OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.



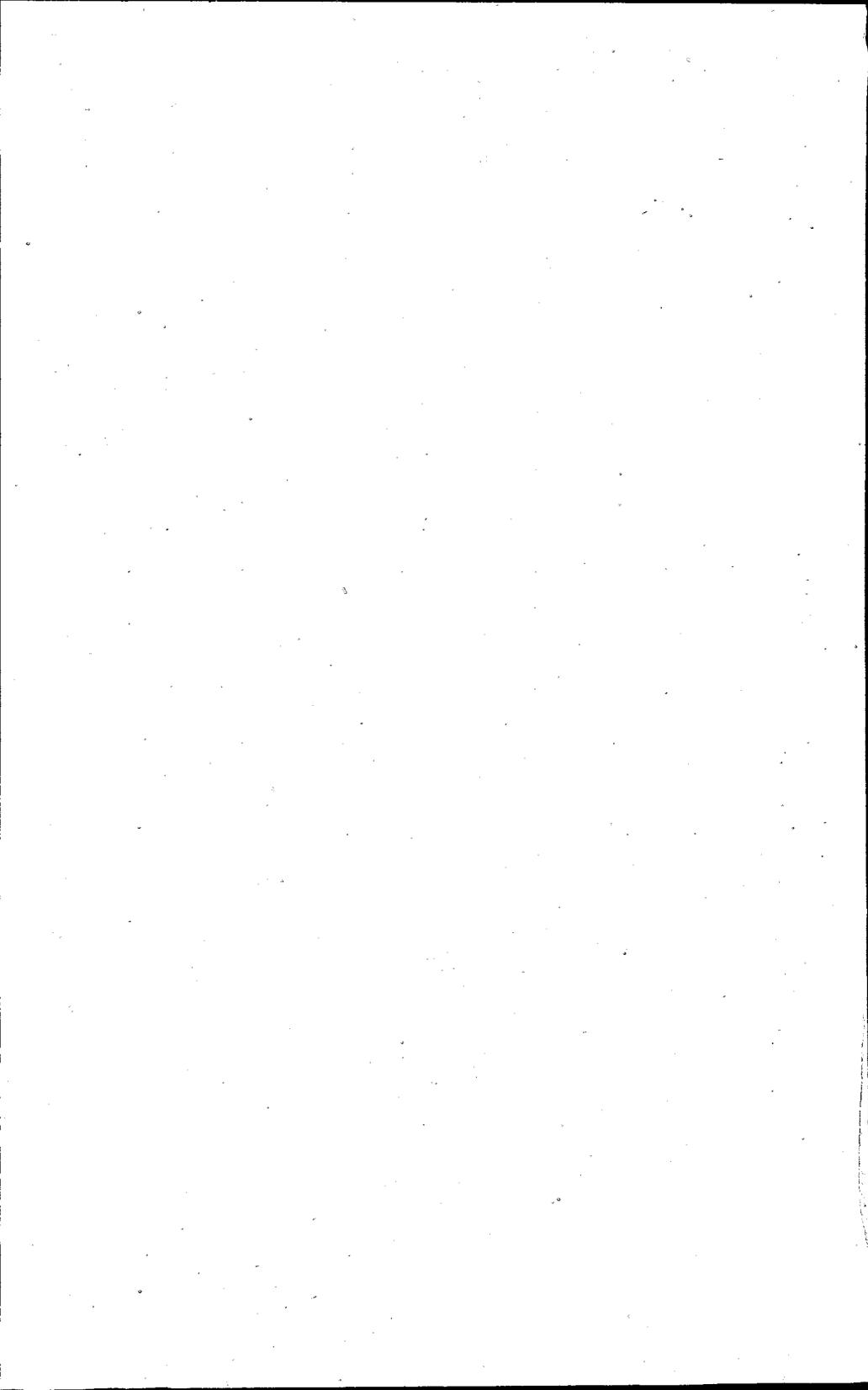
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Professor MIDDLETON made the following communication :

NOTES ON TWO CHASUBLES FROM THE CHAPEL AT  
SAWSTON HALL.

THE two Chasubles from the Chapel of Sawston Hall, which are exhibited this evening through the kindness of the Rev. Canon Scott, though themselves of modern materials and shape, are decorated with very elaborate orphreys dating probably from the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., of extremely beautiful and magnificent work with the needle.

A. The *White Chasuble*. On this have been sewn parts of the two orphreys of a cope, the subjects being as follows :

1. St Matthew, with an angel holding an open book.
2. St Philip, holding a tall cross.
3. St Jude, holding a long, curved oar.

(On the back.)

1. A secular saint in hat and gown of Henry VII.'s time.

2 and 3. The B. V. Mary and St John looking upwards to a crucifixion-scene, which is now missing. These figures were probably at the top of each orphrey of the cope, the Crucifixion being on the hood.

4. St Peter holding one key.

5. Another secular saint, in similar dress to no. 1. Probably intended for St Alban, as Mr M. R. James has suggested.

The *technique* of this needlework is the same as that of the Lyng altar-cloth, described in the previous *Communication*.

The colours of the silks are very rich, and great variety of effect is produced by different arrangements of the stitches used for the gold thread, especially for the diapers of backgrounds and other decorative details.

Each figure is represented under a pillared canopy, standing on a floor of marble squares, shown in perspective in a very un-mediaeval way. The canopy-details and other points show

that the date of this needlework is probably not earlier than the reign of Henry VIII.

B. The *Red Chasuble*. This also is ornamented with pieces cut from the orphreys of one or more copes of the same date and workmanship as the previously described orphreys. The subjects are taken from the legend of the martyrdom of St George of Cappadocia, the Patron Saint of England during the latter part of the mediæval period. Some scenes are evidently missing, such as his death by decapitation. Those here represented are :

1. St George in silver armour, with a red cross on his breast, represented as a youth, nimbed; he is brought before a king or emperor under the charge of having pulled down the edicts against the Christians which Diocletian had ordered to be published in Jerusalem, and other parts of the Roman World, about the year 296. According to the usual form of the story St George was brought before Dacianus the proconsul of Judæa; but here the enthroned figure is represented as a royal or imperial person, with crown and sceptre.

2. The King consults with his counsellors.

3. St George, stripped of his armour, is brought before the King, who orders him to sacrifice to Apollo.

4. St George is again brought up for judgment. This subject has been very badly restored. The intermediate one of the fall of the Temple of Apollo is missing.

5. St George is hung up, nude, to a "*furca*," and is tortured with a whip and pincers in the presence of the King and his attendants.

6. St George is raised from the tomb by Christ; in the background is a view of Jerusalem, represented as a mediæval fortified city.

Over each subject is a canopy on pillars, with two angels holding the "*rutilans rosa*," the favourite badge of Edward IV., as used on his "rose-nobles."

The whole work is *appliqué* on linen, and great splendour of effect is given by stuffing parts of the gold canopies with wool, so as to make them stand out in high relief, a not unusual method at this late period, but more common in Germany than in England.

The whole history of the cult of St George is a very curious one. He has been, from a very early period, and still is, one of the most popular saints of the various Eastern Churches—Greek, Coptic, Maronite, and the like. A church at Thessalonica was dedicated to him as early as Constantine's reign, only about 30 years after his death. In 494 Pope Gelasius, when reforming the Calendar, decided that his legend was doubtful, and placed St George among those "Saints whose names are rightly revered by men, but whose deeds are known only to God."

In all the eastern forms of his legend, there is no mention of the fight with the dragon. That story is simply a Christian version of the old Perseus and Andromeda myth, which was taken up and added to the existing legends about St George by the Crusaders in the 12th century. All the details of the myth are similar in both the pagan and Christian legend; and varieties of both legends give two different places as the site of the exposure of the Princess Andromeda or Cleodolinda—namely, Joppa on the Phoenician coast, and the shore of the Egyptian Delta. Again, as in classical art, Perseus holds the head of Medusa, so in the Christian legend, St George is sometimes represented holding a head, which is taken to be a symbol of his death by decapitation.

Henry I. of England first made St George the Patron Saint of his army; in 1222 a public feast in his honour was decreed in England; and in 1330 he was made the Patron of the newly-founded Order of the Garter. In this way he gradually became regarded as the special Patron Saint of England.

In other countries he was especially the patron of the

Armourers' guilds; for whom, e.g. at Florence, Donatello carved his wonderful statue of St George, which stands in a niche of the magnificent votive church of Or San Michele.

The finest series of paintings of his life and sufferings is at Padua, in the Chapel of St George, executed by Altichiero and Jacopo degli Avanzi, pupils of Giotto. Carpaccio's at Venice deal only with the dragon-story, and the subsequent baptism of the princess and her father.

Professor HUGHES exhibited a half figure in gilt bronze, 1½ inches in height, which was described by Professor Middleton as follows:

"This figure appears to have formed part of the ornaments of a large Altar Candlestick or some such object of ecclesiastical use. The figure is that of a king wearing a crown, and worshipping, with folded hands: its base is surrounded with a garland of trefoil leaves, which, together with the stiff treatment of the beard, and the conventionally wavy hair, seem to show that the figure is of the 14th century. It appears to be a *cire perdue* casting, and is thickly gilt, evidently by the old mercury process."

The figure is said to have been found in a grave near Kirkwall in the Orkney Isles, and was lent to Professor Hughes by the Rev. Dr OMAND of Monzie.

Mr J. W. CLARK exhibited, and made remarks on, one of the sheets of John Hamond's plan of Cambridge, published in 1592.

He prefaced his remarks by an exhibition of the plan by Richard Lyne, 1574, drawn to illustrate the *Historia Cantabrigiensis Academiae* of Dr Caius. This, the earliest plan of the town, is a bird's-eye view, drawn without any regard to scale or proportion. It was succeeded by that which appears in the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, by George Braunius, which

# CONTENTS

OF PROCEEDINGS, No. XXXI.

VOL. VII, No. I.

	PAGE
On a skeleton of a Stag from Manea Fen. By J. W. CLARK, M.A. . . . .	2
On an Egyptian <i>Stele</i> . By Professor MACALISTER . . . . .	3
Notes on an altar-cloth from Lyng Church, Norfolk. By Professor MIDDLETON . . . . .	4
On an early Christian Inscription at Mertola, Portugal . . . . .	7
Exhibition of a silver medal of Queen Anne . . . . .	9
Notes on two Chasubles at Sawston Hall. By Professor MIDDLETON . . . . .	10
Exhibition of a bronze figure. By Professor HUGHES . . . . .	13
Exhibition of a sheet of Hamond's plan of Cambridge, 1592. By J. W. CLARK, M.A. . . . .	13
On recent discoveries in Linton Church. By W. M. FAWCETT, M.A. . . . .	15
On a Collection of Egyptian skulls. By Professor MACALISTER . . . . .	17
Exhibition of the <i>Scala</i> of Johannes Climacus, M.S. By F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A. . . . .	17
On certain sculptured stones. By Professor BROWNE . . . . .	17
Exhibition of the Will of General Arnold. By F. C. WACE, M.A. . . . .	18
On the stone of Jællinge. By E. MAGNÚSSON, M.A. . . . .	18
On antiquities found at Hauxton. By Professor HUGHES . . . . .	24
On three choir-stalls from Brampton Church, Hunts. By Professor MIDDLETON . . . . .	28
On Fine Art as applied to the illustration of the Bible, Sæc. ix—xiv. By M. R. JAMES, M.A. . . . .	31
Annual Report (presented 27 May, 1889) . . . . .	70
On a blue-glazed Oenochœ. By Professor MIDDLETON . . . . .	72
List of Presents . . . . .	77
Treasurer's Report, for year ending 31 December, 1888 . . . . .	82