

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

**Cambridge Antiquarian Society,**

31 OCTOBER, 1892 TO 17 MAY, 1893,

WITH

**Communications**

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXV.

BEING No. 2 OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

(SECOND VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)

---

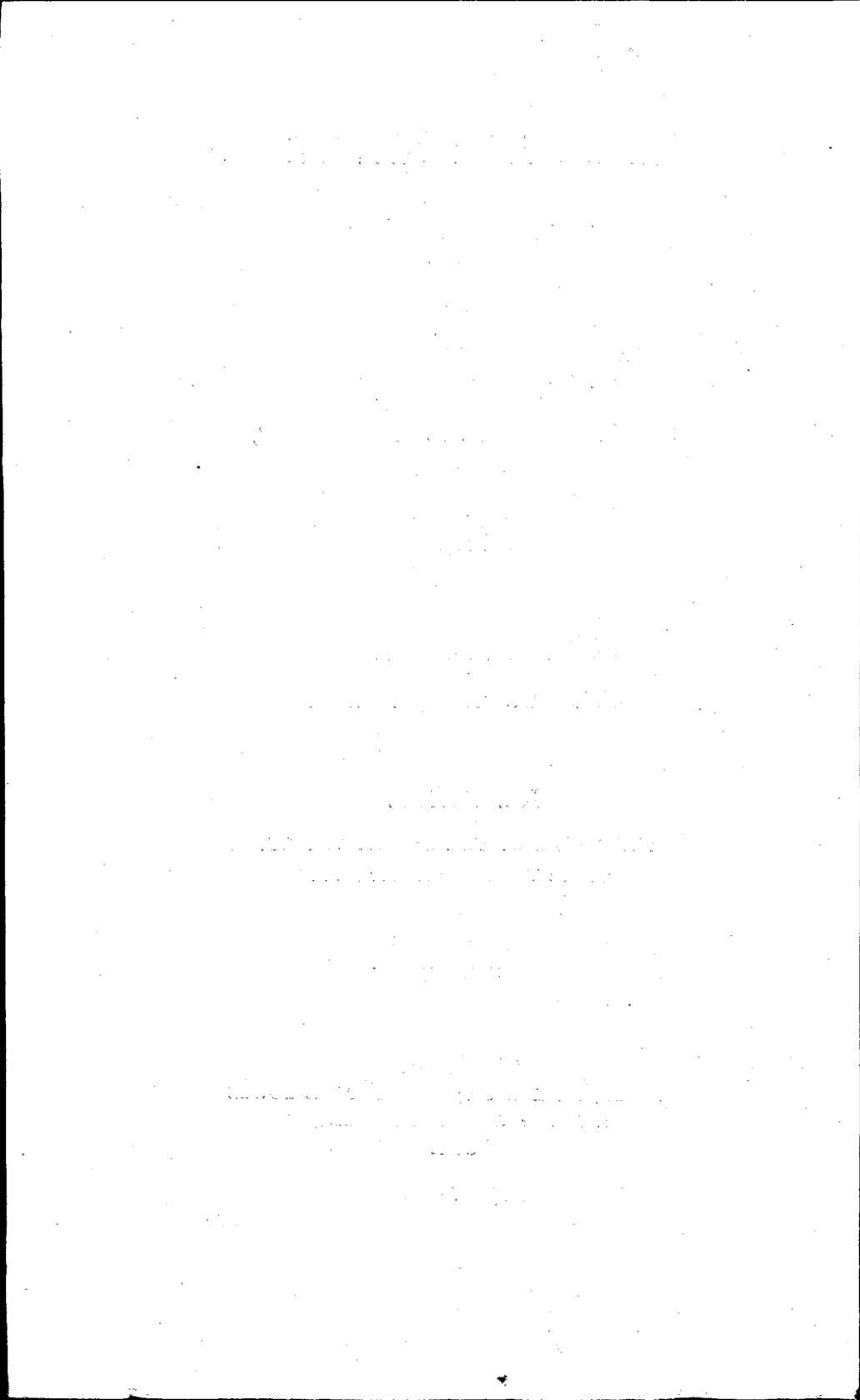
**Cambridge:**

DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; MACMILLAN & BOWES

LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS,

1894.

*Price 7s. 6d.*



PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
**Cambridge Antiquarian Society,**  
WITH  
COMMUNICATIONS  
MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

VOL. VIII.



NEW SERIES.

VOL. II.

1891—1894.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

SOLD BY DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; AND MACMILLAN & BOWES.  
LONDON, GEORGE BELL AND SONS.

1895.

WEDNESDAY, *February 8th*, 1893.

Professor E. C. CLARK, President, in the chair.

The President called attention to the appeal of Professor Hughes for funds to enable the Exploration Committee to carry on the necessary work at the Roman Villa lately discovered at Swaffham Prior.

Dr Taylor, Master of S. John's College, exhibited a copy of a portrait of Alan Percy, second Master (1516—1518), which had been made for him by Mr Charles Edmund Brock, of Cambridge. The original, dated 1549, is in the Guildhall at Norwich. Blomefield, in his *History of Norfolk*, describes it, and commends it as "a good picture<sup>1</sup>."

Mr T. D. ATKINSON made the following communications :

#### I. ON A ROMAN HOUSE AT SWAFFHAM PRIOR.

During some agricultural operations on the land adjoining the Reach and Swaffham road in November, 1892, some pieces of brick and stone were brought to the surface, and the brick was at once recognized by Mr C. P. Allix, who happened to be near, as Roman. Mr Allix having communicated with Professor Hughes and myself, we immediately visited the spot, and five minutes' digging brought to light unmistakable evidence of a hypocaust. A length of straight wall, part of an apse, and several pilæ were exposed before evening. The foundations promising to be extensive, Professor Hughes, in the course of the next few days, formed a committee to undertake the systematic excavation of this and similar remains in the county, and subscriptions were collected for that purpose. With the consent of the owners<sup>2</sup> of the land and their tenants, the work was

<sup>1</sup> See *Baker's History of S. John's College*, ed. Mayor, i. 75—84; *Cooper's Athene Cantabrigienses*, i. 206, and the authorities there quoted; Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*, 8vo edition, iii. 208, 261; iv. 229, 231, 298.

<sup>2</sup> The house is situated on two properties, the south-east part lies on the land of Mr John Smith, of Cambridge, held by Mr C. C. Ambrose, of

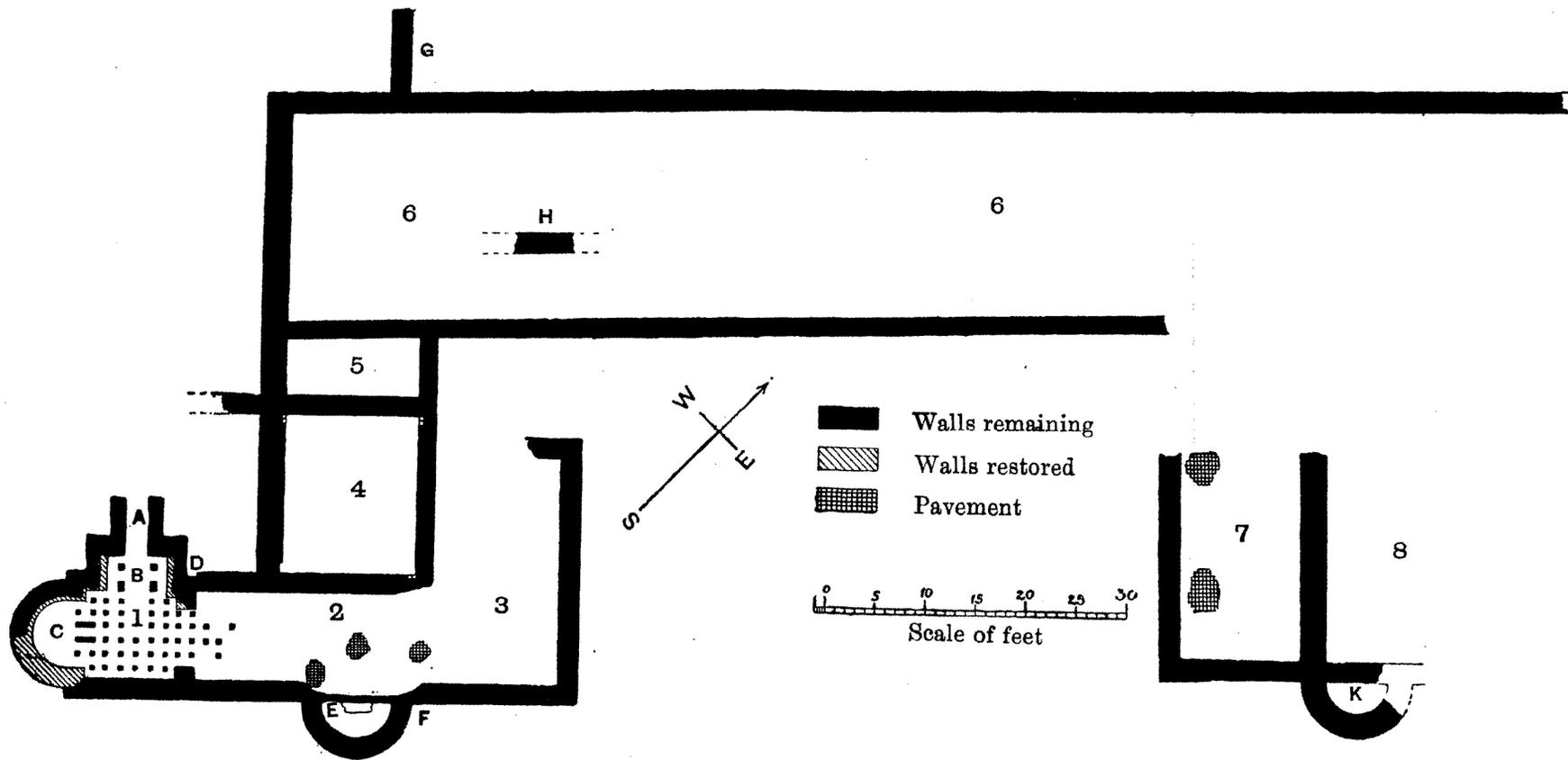


FIG. 1. Ground plan of Roman House at Swaffham Prior, Cambridgeshire, discovered in November, 1892.

continued during the mild weather, and finally covered up during the winter. It was proposed to resume work in the summer, but unexpected difficulties made this impossible. It is hoped that these will be eventually overcome, and that the unexplored part of the villa will be taken in hand next summer. In the meantime the stoppage of the work before any part was completely finished must be my excuse for the very incomplete character of this paper. The thanks of the committee are due to all who have subscribed towards the expense of the work, and more especially to Mr Allix and to Mr C. C. Ambrose for their liberal and kindly help.

The accompanying plan (fig. 1) shews the work exposed in 1892. It consists of three ranges or blocks of buildings nearly at right angles to one another, forming three sides of a court. A long range ran N.E. and S.W.; from the S.W. end of this range a building projected to the S.E.; and a similar building appears to have projected from the N.E. end. An apse projected from the S.E. face of each wing. So far as they were excavated, the two wings were found to be nearly symmetrical in other respects also. The foundations were covered by soil of an average depth of 6 inches.

The part examined in greatest detail was the S.W. wing. Of this the S.W. extremity contains a pillared hypocaust (1), the floor of which is 2ft. 6in. below the level of the ground floor in room 2. The stoke-hole (AB) was on the N.W. side. In the external angle formed by the projection of the stoke-hole and the main building there is a small recess (D) measuring 11in. wide and 5in. from back to front. Its object is uncertain. Perhaps it was carried to the top of the building, and received a pipe to carry the rain-water from the roof. The S.W. side terminated in an apse (C). The pilae filled an area measuring 9 ft. by 8 ft. 8 in. and extended into the wider part of the stoke-hole (B). Their arrangement in the apse (C) is not known, as this part had been destroyed by the workmen before Mr Allix saw it. The inner face of the remaining half of the apse was Swaffham Prior, and the north-west part on that of Mr Robert Pike, of Upware, held by Mr Robert Brown, of Reach.

also found to be ruined, but this destruction had taken place at some earlier time, and most probably from natural causes. How far the pilae originally extended to the N.E. does not appear, but before reaching the apse F some tessellated pavement was found without a hypocaust under it. The pillared hypocaust ended, probably, in horizontal flues which turned to the left and warmed room 4. The range of buildings figured 1, 2, 3 on the plan is about 9 ft. wide internally, and was probably divided by cross walls forming three separate rooms.

The apse F contained several large pieces of concrete, evidently part of a floor. None were in their original position, except, perhaps, that marked E. This may have been a step down to the apse, the floor of which appears to have been at a lower level than that of room 2.

Room 4 measures about 15 ft. 9 in. by 13 ft. 3 in. It was probably heated by a channel hypocaust, as mentioned above. The branches of these no doubt led to the small vertical flues in the angles of the room. Remains of the flue-pipes remain in three angles, and the recess in the fourth angle no doubt contained a similar flue. The wall between rooms 4 and 5 was continued further S.W., but was not followed.

The range figured 6 was not explored. A wall (G) projected a short distance from the back, and a fragment of wall (H) was found parallel with the side walls.

Rooms 7 and 8 were not examined. No. 7 contained patches of pavement similar to those in room 2. A small apse K projected from the S.E. side of room 8.

The uses to which the various rooms were put has not yet been made out. The S.W. wing (rooms 1—5) very likely contained the bath rooms, the apse F, with its sunk floor, suggesting a bath.

It remains to give some account of the construction and materials.

The walls were of flint and well built. All angles were formed with bricks 1 ft. 4 in. long, 10 in. wide, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick. The walls vary in thickness from 1 ft. 9 in. to 2 ft. 6 in., those of the hypocaust being 2 ft. thick. They were covered with plaster

on the outside as well as the inside. The pilae of the hypocaust are about 9 in. apart, and are formed with bricks  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in. square, and with an average thickness of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. The lowest brick of each pillar is  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. square, and thus forms a base. The bricks are bedded in clay, the beds being  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. thick on an average. The bricks of four of the pilae in the stoke-hole are rather larger, and on the chord of the apse C two pilae have been joined respectively with the two adjacent, by filling up the spaces between with bricks, thus forming two large piers. None of the floor above remained and none of the pillars were intact, the highest stump being 1 ft.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. A considerable number of pieces of pottery, plaster, concrete, roofing tiles, and flue-pipes were found in the *débris* between the pilae.

Patches of tessellated pavement of the common roughly shaped red tesserae,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. square and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick, were found in rooms 2 and 7. In room 2 one of the patches partly overlay the S. wall. This probably shews that the wall was thinner above the floor level, though an instance occurs at Silchester of a wall built on the pavement. The walls of apse F were lined internally with *opus signinum* about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick, and fallen, pieces of greater thickness were found among the *débris* in the apse.

The plaster found in the hypocaust was coloured yellow, black, and red, the latter being much the commonest. The roofing tiles were flat with flanges. They were about  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. thick, and the flanges stood up about 1 in. They were about 18 in. long, and in width they tapered from about 13 in. to about 11 in. These tiles were so shaped that tiles of the same pattern could be used upside down as covering tiles over the joints. Some half-round tapering tiles for the same purpose were also found, so that it cannot be said which sort was used. A number of fragments of flue tiles were also found in the hypocaust. These were square, measuring 3 in. inside and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. outside. In room 4 these were placed in pairs side by side, in recesses in the wall made to receive them. Two or three iron cramps, probably to secure the flue-tiles, were also turned out. The pottery consisted of common black, brown,

and red ware and three small pieces of Samian. Oyster shells were found, and a considerable number of bones, including those of the horse, small ox allied to *Bos longifrons*, sheep, and pig.

## II. ON THE HALL OF MICHAEL HOUSE.

Last summer, during some alterations in the buildings to the south of the hall of Trinity College, some foundations were exposed which were clearly those of the hall of Michael House, and two or three fragments of stone, easily recognizable as parts of the oriel, were found. These discoveries add something to our knowledge of the buildings of the second college founded in Cambridge.

Michael House was founded in 1324<sup>1</sup> in what is now the south-west corner of the great court of Trinity College. We do not know much about any of the buildings except those which survived the foundation of Trinity College, and which are shewn in some old views and plans. New buildings were erected in the middle of the 15th century, and again about fifty years later. It is probably to one of these occasions that the building of the hall may be attributed.

In 1546 Trinity College was founded by Henry VIII., and to make way for it King's Hall, Physwick Hostel, and Michael House were surrendered to the king. King's Hall provided the college with a chapel, and each of the three with a hall and chambers. In 1550-1 and 1551-2 some of the buildings of each of these older foundations were destroyed, including part of Michael House. The hall of the latter, however, was retained as the hall of the new college.

In 1554-5 a new buttery and kitchen were built, and it is possible that the hall was lengthened at the same time. Michael House contained only 21 persons, but its hall had now to receive in addition the scholars from King's Hall and Physwick Hostel—an increase, it would appear, of between 80

<sup>1</sup> The following facts relating to the history of Michael House and Trinity College are taken from Willis and Clark's *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*.