

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LV

JANUARY 1961 TO DECEMBER 1961

CAMBRIDGE  
DEIGHTON BELL

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## THE BUILDING OF THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE CHAPEL

E. R. SANDEEN

Know ye that...the right honorable Sr Nicholas Bacon Knight Lord Keper of the great Seall of England, have freely bestowed vpon o<sup>r</sup> sayd Colledg dyvers great benefits, and purposeth to encrease the same to the great commoditey of o<sup>r</sup> sayde Colledge.<sup>1</sup>

ON either side of the entrance to the chapel of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, stand statues of two of the college's great benefactors, Matthew Parker and Sir Nicholas Bacon. Matthew Parker's services to the University of Cambridge and to this college, which he served as Master from 1544 until 1553, rank him among their wisest and most generous friends.<sup>2</sup> Sir Nicholas, though not so intimately associated with the college and university, proved on several occasions both a bountiful and thoughtful patron of education. Twice Bacon was connected with proposals for educational reform—once he suggested that some of the revenue resulting from the dissolution be applied to the training of statesmen and ambassadors and, at another time, drafted a short treatise concerning the education of children in the care of the Court of Wards.<sup>3</sup> The Lord Keeper was in 1574 persuaded by Archbishop Parker, who was one of his good friends, to aid the rebuilding of the Cambridge University Library, and Parker's persuasion resulted in a generous bequest of about seventy volumes.<sup>4</sup> But Sir Nicholas was also interested in the welfare of his own college, Corpus Christi.<sup>5</sup> A short while before his death, he endowed six scholarships in the college for boys from the Redgrave (Suffolk) Grammar School which he had founded.<sup>6</sup> His most important gift to the college was the sum of £200 for the construction of a chapel which, until 1823, stood on part of the site of the new chapel. His statue on the new chapel's façade is a just tribute to a man who throughout his life honoured, respected and furthered both education and religion.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from a testimonial letter addressed to Sir Nicholas by the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi, 27 January 1578/9 ('Miscellaneous Documents 1400-1700', no. 39).

<sup>2</sup> John Lamb (ed.), *Masters' History of the College of Corpus Christi* (London: John Murray, 1831), pp. 85-116.

<sup>3</sup> 'Sir Nicholas Bacon', *D.N.B.* vol. 1.

<sup>4</sup> E. R. Sandeen, 'The Origin of Sir Nicholas Bacon's Book-Plate', *Trans. Camb. Bibl. Soc.* II, no. 5 (1958), p. 373.

<sup>5</sup> He matriculated in the college in 1523 and graduated B.A. in 1527 ('Sir Nicholas Bacon', *D.N.B.* vol. 1).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

I began my research on the chapel because of the Lord Keeper's association with the building<sup>1</sup> but was induced to continue because of the wealth of material available for analysis and comparison. Corpus Christi College—as a good custodian of its resources—has preserved apparently every scrap of evidence produced in the course of the construction. As I studied the MSS. which describe the building of the chapel, I discovered that earlier historians of the college had greatly misjudged the part played by Sir Nicholas.<sup>2</sup>

The number of students in Corpus Christi College grew considerably during the sixteenth century as a result of the benefactions of Archbishop Parker. By 1578 the endowment and the buildings were both considered inadequate to serve the needs of the college.<sup>3</sup> The Fellows seem to have felt their most serious problem to be the lack of a proper chapel. While the old Saxon church of St Benedict may have served as a chapel in medieval days, in 1578 the Fellows and scholars were unable to crowd into the unsuitable college chambers which were then being used as a chapel.<sup>4</sup> Sir Nicholas was invited to the college by the Master and Fellows in September 1578, for the purpose of interesting him in their plans for the construction of a new chapel.<sup>5</sup> It is usually stated that the Lord Keeper agreed to contribute £200 to the project, and that others were also induced to help defray the cost of the building, which amounted to over £650.<sup>6</sup> Although not false, this summary is completely mis-

<sup>1</sup> This article is a part of a larger study entitled 'The Building Activities of Sir Nicholas Bacon' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Chicago, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> The most important secondary source for the chapel's construction is Robert Masters, *The History of the College of Corpus Christi* (Cambridge: J. Benthams, 1753). A later edition of this work has been cited already. Masters had been a Fellow of the college, and his description of the chapel is valuable primary source material. He does not, however, make very clear how he obtained some of his information, so that one is handicapped in criticizing his views. The other very valuable secondary work is Robert Willis, *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, ed. John Willis Clark (Cambridge: The University Press, 1886), 4 vols. The chapel is discussed at some length in vol. 1, some source material being completely transcribed. Willis also reprinted three views of the chapel. The first was David Loggan's view of the entire college sketched in 1688 and showing the north side of the chapel (cf. J. W. Clark and Arthur Gray (eds.), *Old Plans of Cambridge, 1574 to 1798* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1921)). Second was a sketch of the porch to the chapel reprinted from *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1826, but this appears to be only Loggan's drawing enlarged. The third is the well-known aquatint of the interior of the chapel by William Westall in Rudolph Ackermann's *A History of the University of Cambridge* (London: R. Ackermann, 1815), 1, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> The Fellows in a petition to the Bishop of Ely stated in 1578 that 'the number of scholars be so much increased, it [the college] was become too small to hold them, without putting so many together in a chamber, as might endanger breeding pestilential diseases: that the revenues of the College were so diminished without any fault of theirs, as to be insufficient for supporting the number appointed by the foundations . . .' (Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 429).

<sup>4</sup> The nature of the pre-1579 chapel is difficult to determine. Willis seemed to feel that the only other chapel had been St Benedict's, but this is incorrect (Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, 1, p. 289). In *Masters' History* several references are made to another chapel, e.g. 'the wall, which separated the upper chapel from the gallery, was taken down . . .' (Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 121). Dr G. H. S. Bushnell has informed me that the upper chapel is almost certainly the upper of two small chapels, built early in the sixteenth century alongside the south side of the chancel of St Benedict's. The lower is now the vestry of the church, and the upper is the bedroom of one of the Fellows of Corpus.

<sup>5</sup> 'Laid out for o<sup>r</sup> Mr his expences in his iournye to wayte vpon the L. Keper to ye Coll in August and Sept. 1578' (Chapel MS. B, p. 1); and also in the Audit Book, 1550-80 for the year ending Michaelmas, 1578: 'For the entertaynment of ye L Keper at ye Coll. . . .' That this visit was related to the chapel, I assume from the presence of the entry in the chapel accounts.

<sup>6</sup> Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, pp. 131-2. Willis follows Masters in this assumption.

leading. Sir Nicholas was interested in the project and did agree to contribute. His intention, however, was to provide all the money needed to build the chapel.<sup>1</sup>

We can only speculate about the first negotiations that took place in the college in September. How far the Master and Fellows had proceeded in their planning is not known. They cannot have simply asked Sir Nicholas for a gift, however, for between this first meeting and the signing of the official indenture on 24 January 1578/9 the Lord Keeper played an active role in the planning of the chapel. A first roughly drawn 'platt'—or plan—was prepared (Pl. IV) and, on the basis of its dimensions, estimates of the chapel's total expense were prepared.<sup>2</sup> Very soon after the September meeting, a mason named William Hunyard appeared in the college; we learn from later references to this man that he was sent by the Lord Keeper.<sup>3</sup> Robert Norgate, Master of the college, travelled to London on four different occasions between the September meeting at the college and the final agreement in January, carrying with him, I should imagine, some of the estimates and ideas which had been worked out between Norgate and the artisans.<sup>4</sup> One of the estimates was entitled, 'The charges of ye Chappell as they were estemed by the artificers before yt was taken in hand w<sup>ch</sup> estimate was dd [delivered] to ye L. Keper'.<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that this MS. showed the estimated expenses as £202. 12s. This estimate was a wretchedly contrived list of expenses. It is difficult to believe that it was actually drawn up by competent 'artificers', but there is no reason to believe that Norgate and the Fellows expected the chapel to cost more than that amount. In the indenture which formally concluded the negotiations, 24 January 1578/9, the phraseology is quite explicit and, I believe, ought to be taken at face value.

That wheare the saide Master and fellowes have most humblie and earnestlie made suyte to the saide Sir Nicholas that it would please his Lordshipp to erect and sett up within the saide Colledge a Chapell. . . the said Sir Nicholas. . . hath assented and agreed, for the better execution of all exercises of learninge, francklie and freelie to give to the saide M<sup>r</sup> and fellowes the some of two hundreth poundes.<sup>6</sup>

There then follows a paragraph which binds the Master and Fellows to certain specifications and to certain time limits. It is very clear that Bacon believed he had provided all the money that would be required for the construction of the chapel.

The chapel design passed through two distinct phases during the months between the September meeting and the January indenture, and another after the first year's building had been completed. The first two designs are clearly illustrated by Pls. IV and V. The chapel was not built according to the earlier platt, of course,

<sup>1</sup> By this date others had offered to help, but their assistance was in the form of building materials, especially monastic stone (Chapel MS. F<sub>1</sub>).

<sup>2</sup> The platt is lodged in the college strong room in a bound volume of MSS. ('Miscellaneous Documents, 1400-1700', no. 41). A whole series of estimates were prepared by different craftsmen and summarized on several different sheets (Chapel MSS. D<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>2</sub>, E<sub>1</sub>-E<sub>6</sub>, and F<sub>1</sub>-F<sub>6</sub>). The fact that the separate estimates which were used in drawing up the total estimate of expenses use the dimensions delineated on this paper platt indicates clearly that it belongs to the period between September and January 1578/9.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 26, n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Chapel MS. B., p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MS. D<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>6</sup> This indenture with the platt (Pl. V) attached is lodged in the College Archives XXXVI, E. It is completely transcribed in Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, I, p. 289.

but all the estimates which were used to arrive at £200 as the total cost of the building were based upon that platt. The Master and Fellows agreed to build the chapel according to the platt that was attached to the indenture of 24 January 1578/9 (Pl. V). Why they did not then revise their estimates of the chapel's cost in order to request a larger sum from Sir Nicholas I cannot explain.

Far more important, however, is the question of responsibility for the later platt. In the first platt, a building 48 ft. long and 26 ft. wide was visualized.<sup>1</sup> In the second platt the length was increased to 60 ft. In addition, the design was greatly improved. The second platt is more symmetrical, more clearly and skilfully arranged and demonstrates quite a bit more architectural sense. To have built the chapel from this platt instead of the former improved the finished building immeasurably. The person responsible for the design deserves a great deal of credit for the chapel's success. Unfortunately, no conclusive answer can be given to the question of responsibility, but the circumstantial evidence points to the influence of the Lord Keeper. Let us assume for the sake of argument that the first platt was drawn up under the direction of the Master and Fellows.<sup>2</sup> They were probably prepared to build the chapel from this platt until someone persuaded them that this design could be improved. The only one likely to do this was Bacon, since it was he who was providing the funds. The building account records a payment of 5s. 'for parchement for ye plattes and drawing them',<sup>3</sup> but the fact that the college paid for the platts does not remove the possibility that one of Bacon's servants or artisans might have drawn them. We ought also to notice that the January indenture was witnessed by John Osborne, one of Bacon's servants and a man associated with the drawing of the platt for Stiffkey Hall, Bacon's Norfolk residence. However, we know too little about this man to credit him with any certain influence. But though our information is inconclusive, the Lord Keeper's continued concern with and influence over the chapel during the five months preceding his death, coupled with his known architectural abilities and interests, give him a strong and hitherto unappreciated claim to partnership in the creation of the chapel's design.

Had he lived a few years longer, he might have saved the college and Robert Norgate from some of the financial difficulties which soon developed. The beginning of the chapel's construction and the end of the Lord Keeper's life almost exactly coincided.<sup>4</sup> As the building progressed, it became abundantly clear that the £200 estimate was ridiculously inadequate. At the end of the first account (1579/80) over £300 had been expended, and the cost mounted to more than £650 by the time the building had been completed.<sup>5</sup> It was only after this unpleasant fact became

<sup>1</sup> The first platt has no scale of feet, but the dimensions of the building were recorded in Chapel MS. D<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>2</sup> The only alternative seems to be that it was drawn by William Hunyard, the Lord Keeper's mason, in which case Bacon's responsibility for the chapel would be even greater. I do not think that this is likely, however.

<sup>3</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bacon's mason, Hunyard, was inspecting stone at Thorney Abbey when he heard of his master's death. He wrote to Norgate, 'Thease shalbe to desyre you that you will not forget me at the Funerall to those o<sup>r</sup> Frenedes' (William Hunyard and John Martin to Robert Norgate, 1 March 1578/9, 'Miscellaneous Documents', no. 40).

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix.

apparent to the Master and Fellows that they began rather frantically to apply to old friends of the college for further gifts.<sup>1</sup> Why did this occur? Why did the chapel cost so much more than anticipated? First, the estimate was completely superficial. Such a major item in all building activities as labourers' wages was completely overlooked. So was the expense of ramming the foundation, nails and scaffolding.<sup>2</sup> These items were in themselves a large burden. Of course, the addition of 12 ft. to the length of the building and the enlarging of the windows, both of which were called for in the new platt, also increased the expense. The major element in the uncontrolled growth of the chapel's cost, however, was the fact that Robert Norgate refused to limit himself to the stipulations of the contract made with the Lord Keeper. He had agreed to build a chapel of stated dimensions and specifications, but, having finished this basic structure at a cost greatly exceeding what he had expected, he decided to enlarge it at still further expense—all this with no real prospect of finding another large donor. Had Bacon lived, he might have been willing to pay for a great deal of the added expense. The structure he had agreed to build was not a complete chapel. No provision was made in the estimates for the stalls and screen, and this woodwork proved very costly. But one wonders what he would have said when Norgate began to plan a library above the chapel. Apparently during the spring of 1579/80, Norgate decided to alter the plans of the chapel to include an attic story for housing the valuable Parker library. This required raising the walls about 4 ft., adding dormers to the roof, putting a floor down (Bacon's plan visualized an open-timbered roof) and building two expensive stairways to the attic.<sup>3</sup> Worthy as this project may seem to us, it proved to be one that the college could ill afford. Most of the responsibility for this additional expenditure seems to have been Norgate's. One of the fellows, Philip Nichols, complained to the Vice-Chancellor that Norgate had run the college into debt by building the chapel.<sup>4</sup>

Norgate's prodigality does not seem to have been limited to the actual building expenses. Some of the largest expenditures in the account are those incurred by Norgate on his money-raising expeditions. The college laid out over £35 in expenses to obtain the Lord Keeper's donation of £200,<sup>5</sup> and paid Norgate £4. 13s. 4d. for a fourteen-day trip to Canterbury which netted gifts of £66.<sup>6</sup> These journeys are not inexcusable, however, since the income did far surpass the expenditure. But what can we say when we discover that he was paid £9. 15s. 6d. for his expenses in London during the whole of one Lenten season, the result of which was absolutely nothing.<sup>7</sup> The tendency is to smile, but it may very well have been a heartbreaking experience.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapel MS. B, p. 9. Only after the conclusion of the first account were the great majority of gifts received—fully one year after the death of the Lord Keeper. A full list of the donors may be seen in Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Chapel MS. D<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>3</sup> Chapel MS. B, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> 'Itm for ye Masters expences in making sute for benevolenc to ye L. Mayor and Aldermen of London, and at ye Courte of ye Earle of Leycester and ye L. Treasurer and Mr. Secretarye Welson continuing there the whole Lent 1582. . . ix<sup>li</sup> xv<sup>s</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>' (*ibid.* p. 10).

Financial troubles seem to have dogged Norgate to the end of his life. His last days cannot have been happy, for on his death he was declared a bankrupt, his goods sold, and his widow and children left penniless.<sup>1</sup> Whether this was the result of his lavish expenditure on the college is not recorded. He seems to have been incapable if not irresponsible, but Corpus Christi became richer architecturally for his ill-considered actions.

The Corpus Christi chapel was constructed almost entirely of stone. As early as 1578, the Master and Fellows were assured of a supply of stone from Thorney Abbey, Cambs.,<sup>2</sup> then in the hands of the Earl of Bedford.<sup>3</sup> Masters stated that 146 tons of this monastic stone were hauled from Thorney to the college,<sup>4</sup> but the accounts are not at all clear concerning the amount hauled. Carriage of the stone was arranged in three stages, separate contracts being made for hauling between Thorney and Guyhirne, on the River Nene; between Guyhirne and Jesus Green or sometimes Queens' College; and from either of those points on the River Cam into the college.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the amounts hauled between these three transfer points do not agree. I am able to trace about 146 tons from Thorney to Jesus Green, but there are two payments for carriage from the river's side into the college.<sup>6</sup> Since only Thorney stone was carried by water, it seems that a great deal more abbey stone was carried than Masters suggested—almost twice his estimate. This abbey stone is frequently referred to as rag, indicating that it was used in the walls and not for the windows or other free masonry.

A second source of stone which does not occur in the earlier estimates was the Priory of Barnwell. On 13 July 1579 the Master and his man rode 'to Haslingfield to speake with Mr Wendye for stone at Barnewell'.<sup>7</sup> This was Thomas Wendy, son of a former physician to Henry VIII; he was at this time the impropiator of the Augustinian Priory of Barnwell.<sup>8</sup> This Cambridge monastic house stood where the Newmarket Road crosses Abbey Road; the only surviving portion of the complex of buildings is a small thirteenth-century building called the Cellarer's Chequer.<sup>9</sup> Since no payment is recorded for this stone, we can assume that the more than 180 loads carried into the college (at 8*d.* per load) were Mr Wendy's donation.<sup>10</sup> An

<sup>1</sup> Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Chapel MS. F<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>3</sup> William Hunyard and John Martin to Robert Norgate, 1 March 1578/9, 'Miscellaneous Documents', no. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MSS. H and B, pp. 7 ff. The prices of carriage were 10*d.* per load from Thorney to Guyhirne, 2*s.* per ton from Guyhirne to Cambridge, and about 5*d.* per ton from the river to the college.

<sup>6</sup> Ninety-six loads were carried from Thorney to Guyhirne and about 123 tons from Guyhirne to Cambridge. If we assume that the same stone was involved in both transactions (i.e. that 96 loads equalled 123 tons) and add to it about 23 tons carried directly from Thorney to Cambridge, we have 146 tons. The two payments from Jesus Green into the college amount to 138 tons and 143 loads (Chapel MS. B, pp. 7-8).

<sup>7</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, 1, p. 290.

<sup>9</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 192.

<sup>10</sup> The account records a payment for carriage of 182 loads but indicates that other loads were carried without charge by some of the college's tenants (Chapel MS. B, p. 8).

additional 127½ tons of rag were carried into the college from an undisclosed source for about 2s. 6d. per ton.<sup>1</sup>

Stone of a finer texture, called white stone (i.e. clunch), was obtained in smaller quantities. Between 40 and 50 tons were carried at a cost of 12d. to 16d. per ton from Hinton—that is, Cherryhinton.<sup>2</sup> Another 54 tons were purchased from a Mr Harwood of Eversden for a cost of about 2s. per ton and a carriage charge of 2s. 9d. per ton.<sup>3</sup> This latter is the only stone for which a payment was recorded. The total amount of stone used in the chapel during the first year<sup>4</sup> thus comes to approximately 700 tons—twice the amount figured in the estimate.<sup>5</sup> Although the college had not spent much on the purchase of stone, the carriage expenses were enormous. In the one case in which the stone was purchased, the cost of carriage from Eversden, a distance of less than ten miles, exceeded the cost of the stone. The total expense of hauling stone during the first year was £61. 17s. 7d.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the timber used in the chapel was supplied from Haverhill, Essex, by a carpenter named Robert Gardener.<sup>7</sup> No negotiations for the purchase of woods or the hire of carpenters and sawyers were necessary. This one man contracted to supply all the timbers in the exact dimensions required, being paid 5d. per cubic foot of wood. The staging timber or scaffolding was obtained without charge from woods in Barton belonging to a Dr Busby.<sup>8</sup> At least 28 loads of timber were carried for this purpose. The Queen seems to have supplied some timber during the second year of building, but from whence and how much the account does not reveal.<sup>9</sup>

The other materials such as slate for the roof,<sup>10</sup> lime, straw, sand and hardware were purchased outright. This is one of the greatest contrasts with the manor houses being built in this century. The Master and Fellows were not able to take advantage of the natural resources of the manor. The college held a number of manors, but these, being some distance from Cambridge, were useful only on the few occasions when their tenants provided free carting. Sand could not be dug near the building site, nor could brick-earth be easily and cheaply located, and a site for a kiln provided. The college does not seem to have had any timber resources of its own. The category in which this difference is most sharply manifested is carriage. The total cost for the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* and Chapel MS. J.

<sup>3</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Only small amounts, particularly for the porch, were carried after the first year.

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MS. F<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>6</sup> Chapel MS. B, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> The contract for the first year's timber is completely transcribed in Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, I, pp. 310–12. The timber in the third account was provided by other carpenters.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps 'without charge' is too simple a phrase. The account records 'laid out vppon Dr Busbye for his dinner diuers times . . . ij<sup>s</sup>'. He appears to have lived in Fulbourn (Chapel MS. B, pp. 2 and 7).

<sup>9</sup> 'For writing a supplication to ye Quens Ma<sup>ty</sup> for tymber . . .' and 'for ye Clarke of ye signet for writing ye warrant for ye sayd tymber' (*ibid.* p. 10). Masters claimed the amount was 30 loads, but he gave no source. Since he also claimed the wood came from Barton, I suspect that he may have confused the timber given by Busby with the Queen's. He is surely wrong in claiming that the Queen's grant was the result of Bacon's solicitation (Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 132).

<sup>10</sup> Willis also transcribed the contract between Norgate and the slaters 'Raffe Wodward and Jhon Scatliffe off Easton in Northamptonshire' for 'slate to be rayseed out of the quarrye' (Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, I, p. 312). The 'slate' was therefore probably Collyweston stone.

more than half a million bricks at Redgrave Hall, Suffolk, was under £100, while stone carriage costs for the chapel amounted to over £66. The total carrying charges for Redgrave Hall and the Corpus Christi chapel are almost equivalent, although Redgrave was twice as expensive to build.

There were only a very few important workmen connected with the building of the Corpus Christi chapel. As usual, the masons were the dominant figures. I have mentioned previously that William Hunyard is known in this account as 'my Lord Keepers Mason'.<sup>1</sup> He is the first mason to appear in the accounts and seems to have acted as the master mason for the first year's construction.<sup>2</sup> Nothing is heard of him after the first year, however, and it is John Martin who finished the work during the next two accounts. Martin was solely responsible for the construction of the chapel porch and probably designed it as well. He is never referred to as the Lord Keeper's mason, and no connection with Bacon can be proven.<sup>3</sup> These two men during the first year were responsible for carving such work as the windows, quoins, 'water table', 'skewes' and 'anglers'.<sup>4</sup>

The laying of the foundation, rough walling and plastering was done by a crew of rough masons led by a man named Parker. He worked by contract, promising to lay the foundation and raise the walls at the rate of 26s. 8d. for 'every pole in square flat measure', that is, for a square pole—256 square feet.<sup>5</sup> In the second account he did some work by the day, and the members of his crew were listed. At various times the following were being employed:

Parker himself at 12d. per day  
His boy Dick at 10d. per day  
His boy Tom at 8d. per day  
His labourer John Burdall at 8d. per day  
His labourer Malin at 8d. per day  
His labourer Pepin at 8d. per day  
His brother at 12d. per day.<sup>6</sup>

The joiner, Chapman, was employed from October 1583 until after Christmas 1584/5. He supervised the work of sawing the wainscots, made moulds or templates for the seats or misericords, fashioned the doors—in short took complete charge of all the interior woodwork.<sup>7</sup> He too employed a large crew of men:

Chapman himself at 16d. per day  
His journeyman Richard Flood at 12d. per day

<sup>1</sup> Chapel MS. H, and see also Chapel MS. E<sub>4</sub>.

<sup>2</sup> He made agreements with other workers, oversaw the winning of the stone at Thorney, laid out the building with Martin's help, purchased materials and in other ways demonstrated his authority.

<sup>3</sup> His was the second signature in the letter written to Norgate from Thorney in which mention was made of the Lord Keeper's funeral; however, the first person is employed throughout the letter, indicating that Martin signed only as a courtesy (William Hunyard and John Martin to Robert Norgate, 1 March 1578/9, 'Miscellaneous Documents', no. 40).

<sup>4</sup> *Water table* is late medieval English for the sloping tops of plinths and cornices. *Skewes* usually refer to gable copings. *Anglers* appear from the context to be stones used for interior angles, as opposed to quoins used on exterior ones (cf. Chapel MS. G).

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MS. F<sub>6</sub>.

<sup>6</sup> Chapel MS. B, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid. passim*.

His apprentice John Nixon at 12*d.* per day  
 His boy Luke Brady at 6*d.* per day  
 His son Andrew Chapman at 12*d.* per day  
 His son Richard Chapman at 14*d.* per day.<sup>1</sup>

Chapman's first name is never mentioned, unless the first payment in the account was also made to him. In that case, the man involved was named Andrew the joiner from Ely.<sup>2</sup> The fact that one of Chapman's sons was named Andrew increases the probability that this is really the same man—Andrew Chapman of Ely. Notice the basis upon which both the Parker and Chapman crews were built—the family and the apprenticeship system. In Parker's crew there were Parker and his brother plus two apprentices and three labourers. The boys, Dick and Tom, were probably not his sons, for, as in Chapman's case, sons are usually called sons and the word 'boy' reserved for the apprentice. Labourers were not generally taken from one job to another but were local men recruited from the day-labouring force. Malin, for instance, is found doing other things in connection with the chapel.<sup>3</sup> I do not believe that any of the day-labourers or craftsmen were boarded.

The first year's account contains little illuminating detail, but enough is included to enable us to piece together the events of 1578–9. Early in the account we find, 'for Hunyards and Martins expences at Cambridge to set out ye ground plat 5 daies . . .'.<sup>4</sup> The free masons were measuring and laying out the lines which the foundation was to follow. In another MS. the work of these first few weeks is described as 'removinge of the walls and taking vp of trees and making playne the ground'.<sup>5</sup> The chapel stood on part of the site occupied by the present chapel. When completed in 1584, the chapel stood about 60 ft. south of what is now called the old court but was then the only quadrangle in the college. Between the chapel and the old court was located the Master's gallery. Abutting diagonally on the north-west corner of the chapel was a fifteenth-century structure then used as lodgings. The ground to the south and east was open.<sup>6</sup> The only obstruction on the site was a staircase leading into the Master's gallery. A portion of the north wall of the chapel was raised against the south wall of the Master's gallery, and a later entry in the account discloses that a window was placed in this portion of the chapel wall so that the Master could view the service from his own chambers.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the hauling of materials, the next task was the laying of the foundation. For this purpose the carter Cutche was paid for 'caryage of lxxiiij loades of Rubbishe

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 17 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> ' . . . for horse hyre and his [Mr Chever?] expences and Malins to Sergeant Bendeloes' (*ibid.* p. 2).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MS. D<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>6</sup> A map of the layout of all past and present buildings of Corpus Christi College is found in Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, vol. iv.

<sup>7</sup> 'For vij foot of glas in the windo out of the Mrs gallery' (Chapel MS. B, p. 20). Compare the comment of the antiquarian Cole who wrote in 1744: 'In ye N Wall by ye side of ye Altar is a neat Stone projecting Window out of ye Master's Gallery, for him to overlook if he would not be at Chapel or indisposed' (Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, 1, 296, quoting British Museum Add. MS. 5807, vi, 20).

from ye Quenes Colledge and Caius Coll.<sup>1</sup> This probably seems more alarming to us than it ought. I imagine that 'rubbishe' indicates a great miscellany of stones, flint and gravel rather than a huge pile of litter and ashes. Parker was then paid 'for ramynge ye foundation 13 poole in length and 8 foote depe'.<sup>2</sup> On this footing he then laid a standard foundation and began raising the walls. His contract stipulated the exact dimensions of all this work:

Md 19 feb 1578 Covenanted w<sup>th</sup> Parker for the workmanship of the blank wall of the Chappell viz. That he shall dig the foundacion of the sayd walls and buttresses and ram vp the same well and surely w<sup>th</sup>in 2 foote of the ground where he shall begin to warke vp the sayd foundacion w<sup>th</sup> lyme and stone vp to the height of the ground at the bredth of 4 foote and there to set out the sayd wall at the bredth of iij foote to the height of the grass table above the w<sup>ch</sup> yt shall be in thicknes ij foote and half vp to the top.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time as the walls were rising, the free masons were carving and setting in place the window and door frames and other free stone work.<sup>4</sup> By the beginning of the winter, the masonry shell was virtually complete. On 25 October 1579 the account recorded 'takeing downe of scaffolds', and a little later 'stopping ye chappell windowe w<sup>th</sup> thack', a routine precaution against the winter rains.<sup>5</sup> The expenses for the year totalled £329 although none of the timber purchased in this year had yet been used.<sup>6</sup>

The work of the second year can be simply catalogued. The walls were raised about 4 ft., two staircases were constructed, and the roof was framed and slated. The cost for the year's work amounted to £131. The reference to 'raysing ye walls'<sup>7</sup> is important, I believe, in indicating a change in the plans. It is very difficult to separate the successive schemes which Norgate adopted, but I believe that I can isolate three stages in the evolution of the library. Carpenter's drawings indicate that before Bacon's death an open-timbered roof was planned for the chapel.<sup>8</sup> A later timber estimate included several new items—timbers for a stair and a treasury.<sup>9</sup> From the measurements of the treasury timbers, it is apparent that this room was to occupy one-quarter of the attic—that is, the area over the ante-chapel.<sup>10</sup> Norgate was changing his mind for the second time, then, when he ordered the walls raised to provide space for the library. One stairway had been planned to give access to the treasury.<sup>11</sup> Two were projected for the library, one to spiral up from the ante-chapel,

<sup>1</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 8. We learn from MS. D<sub>1</sub> that this rubbish was used in the foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Chapel MS. F<sub>5</sub>.

<sup>4</sup> Chapel MSS. B, p. 8, and G<sub>1</sub>. Cf. also MS. C, a contemporary mason's drawing of one of the side windows.

<sup>5</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>7</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 10. I arrive at the figure of 4 ft. from the account entry, 'for 16 foot of coyne at ye rayseing of ye walls higher. . . ' (*ibid.* p. 11); dividing the 16 ft. into four (for the four corners of the building), we arrive at 4 ft.

<sup>8</sup> Chapel MS. E<sub>6</sub>.

<sup>9</sup> Chapel MS. E<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>10</sup> The partition which separated chapel from ante-chapel was set between the first pair of buttresses to the east of the entrance.

<sup>11</sup> This staircase is probably the key to another mystery which puzzled Willis. The platt (Pl. V) shows a window on the south wall of the ante-chapel (the window opposite the entrance), but in Westall's drawing of the chapel the window illuminating the ante-chapel is on the west wall. The reason for the change is

and the other to join the Master's gallery with the library.<sup>1</sup> In addition to framing the roof, the carpenters, during 1580-1, laid the floor in the library.<sup>2</sup>

The work recorded in the last account (1583-5) can be divided into two parts, the finishing of the interior and the construction of the chapel porch. In the interior, the library was finished in a simple manner. The rough mason, Parker, plastered the walls and ceiling; the smith provided eight window casements.<sup>3</sup> Two of these casements were double and were probably meant for the east and west gable-ends of the library. The six single casements were placed in dormers, the three on the north side being visible in Loggan's drawing of the college.<sup>4</sup> No mention is made in the account of furnishing the library with shelving or desks.

Chapman the joiner almost completely finished the interior woodwork in this period.<sup>5</sup> His work included the screen, doors, forms, stalls, wainscoting, and the communion table which he made at his own house.<sup>6</sup> The glazing expenses mentioned in the third account represent the cost of the great east window which contained the arms of most of the donors to the chapel.<sup>7</sup> Several of the other windows were the gift of alumni of the college, but the account does not mention the installation of these windows.<sup>8</sup> To complete the equipping of their chapel, the Master and Fellows begged an eagle lectern from a Mr Hawfhead of Malton and had it repaired and polished.<sup>9</sup>

During the years 1581-2, a porch in the Renaissance style was added to the Corpus Christi chapel. This porch was built from funds provided by Sir Nicholas Bacon's widow as a tribute and memorial to the Lord Keeper.<sup>10</sup> One of the original mason's drawings of the porch has been preserved and is reproduced as Pl. VI.<sup>11</sup> Lady Bacon gave £25. 13s. 4d. to the college after the death of Sir Nicholas, undoubtedly indi-

easily explained when we realize that no stairs were originally planned for the ante-chapel. When a staircase was introduced, the window must have been moved. For the Westall drawing see Ackermann, *History of the University of Cambridge*, I, p. 170.

<sup>1</sup> 'Itm for vj sparrs to the roof of the stayers out of the Mrs Lodging to the Library', and 'Itm for vj cuppel of sparrs to the roof of the stayers out of the Chappell up to the Library' (Chapel MS. B, p. 15).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, I, p. 251.

<sup>5</sup> Masters is correct, I believe, in stating that a plaster ceiling (shown in Westall's drawing) was installed in the chapel early in the seventeenth century, but I do not believe that he had good evidence for claiming that the wainscoting was also finished at that time. The fact that three coats of arms were added to the screen is not sufficient proof (Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 133).

<sup>6</sup> Chapel MS. B, p. 18. A small section of the stalls from the old chapel has been retained in the new chapel.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> 'Itm for the hire of ij horses to Malton to speake w<sup>th</sup> Mr Hawfhead about the Eagle of bras', 'Itm to georg the goldsmith for making v newe claws to the eagle and for sothering on a pece of bras to the wing thereof', and 'Itm to Params wyfe for skouring the Eagle' (Chapel MS. B, p. 20).

<sup>10</sup> 'Miscellaneous Documents', no. 140.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* last folio. Pl. VI does not represent the final design of the porch (cf. Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 132), but probably the first of two. The account records the phrase, 'Barganed w<sup>th</sup> Iohn Martin freemason for his woorkmanshipe of ye stone woorke of ye same [porch] accordinge to ye nowe devised plat' ('Miscellaneous Documents', no. 140). A comparison between the drawing (Pl. VI) and the porch as it was reputedly built (*Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1826) does not indicate many differences between the two. What changes were made were mostly above the entablature.

cating how she wished the money spent. When completed, the porch bore the arms of the Lord Keeper and his two wives and two inscriptions commemorating his life.<sup>1</sup>

The Renaissance style had first reached Cambridge about 1533 when foreign (probably French) artisans carved the screen of King's College Chapel. Fifteen years before the building of the Corpus Christi chapel, Dr Caius, the eminent physician, began rebuilding the college which now bears his name. Dr Caius studied in Padua, where he was greatly influenced by Italian architecture, and in the rebuilding of Caius employed a Flemish 'architect' named Theodore Haveus.<sup>2</sup> The Corpus Christi chapel porch, in contrast to these two examples, seems to have been the work of a native English craftsman, John Martin. There is no question that John Martin built the porch—the account has recorded its construction in great detail. There are, however, no references in the account of the artisan who designed the porch. He may have been someone not otherwise connected with the building of the chapel. Whoever he was, the artisan responsible for the drawing did not have the knowledge or ability carefully to delineate the Tuscan order.<sup>3</sup> A mason such as Martin could have produced this kind of design from a pattern book like Serlio's without very much understanding of the material he was copying. In fact, this is exactly the kind of drawing we would expect a provincial mason to be producing at this time.

When considering this porch, one naturally thinks of the other essay in the classical manner for which Bacon was responsible—the Gorhambury porch. The two structures are superficially similar. That is, they are both derived from the triumphal arch, a classical motif which had found favour in France at Ancy, Ecoen and Anet, and then in England at Somerset House.<sup>4</sup> The similarity almost ends there, however. The skill with which the classical elements were handled, the artistry with which they were combined at Gorhambury, find no sixteenth-century parallel in Cambridge, not even in Dr Caius' gates. English Renaissance architecture ought to be judged on the basis of its fidelity to the classical examples and, more importantly, its ability sensitively and artistically to utilize the classical elements even though these were imperfectly understood. The chapel porch, even if executed with more skill than the design would lead us to believe, does not rank highly when judged by this standard. It is not great architecture. This is not to say, however, that it is not interesting architectural history.

When completed in 1584, the chapel presented a modest and, except for the porch, wholly traditional appearance.<sup>5</sup> William Westall's drawing shows a pleasant, dignified, but simple interior.<sup>6</sup> From Loggan's view of the college, we can gain some

<sup>1</sup> Lamb, *Masters' History of Corpus Christi*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, pp. 8 and 108.

<sup>3</sup> I wish to thank Sir John Summerson for pointing out to me some points at which the artisan responsible for this platt failed to follow the classical patterns. He also mentioned, however, that the execution of these classical orders was often much better than the drawing of them.

<sup>4</sup> Pevsner, *Architectural Rev.* cxvi (September 1954), pp. 163 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Nor was this the last Gothic or traditional building constructed in Cambridge. Not until Wren designed and built the Pembroke College chapel could the University claim to have a purely classical building (Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire*, p. 104).

<sup>6</sup> Ackermann, *History of the University of Cambridge*, 1, p. 170.

impression of the exterior—a very plain structure with a dormered roof, awkwardly crowded between the irregular masses of the older buildings.<sup>1</sup> The chapel cannot be called exciting or adventurous architecture, but, in keeping with the character of its chief benefactor, gave evidence of good taste and traditional ideas employed in the service of the new religion and ancient learning.

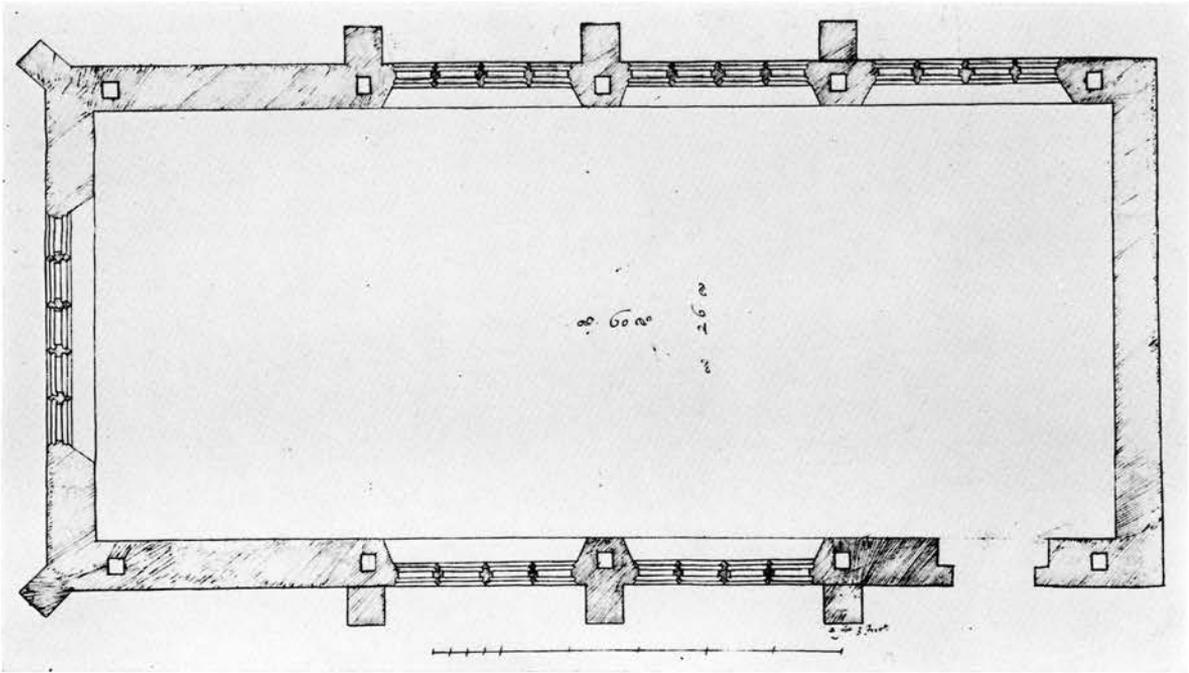
## APPENDIX

## A SUMMARY OF THE EXPENSES OF BUILDING THE CORPUS CHRISTI CHAPEL

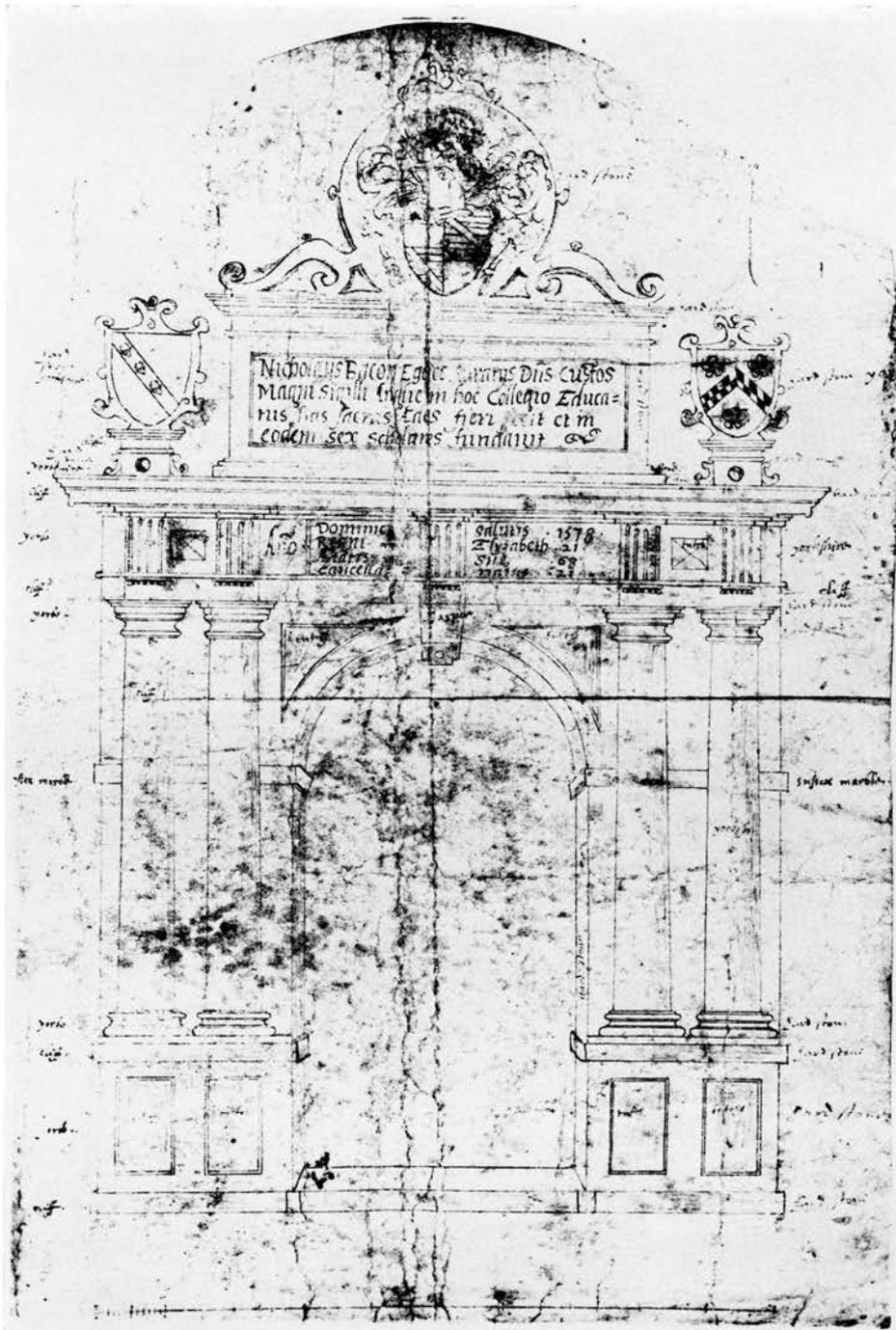
Categories	First Account	Second Account	Third Account	Total
	1578-80	1580-2	1583-5	categories
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Fund-raising expenses	38 15 10½	18 18 5	—	57 14 3½
Free masons	39 16 2	4 15 5½	48 11 7	93 4 2½
Rough masons	33 11 8	15 2 10	6 5 10	55 0 4
Carpenters and sawyers	0 18 0	12 17 10	4 11 8	18 7 6
Joiners	—	—	40 14 10	40 14 10
Painters	—	—	3 17 0	3 17 0
Slaters	—	12 3 6	—	12 3 6
Glazier	—	—	4 12 6	4 12 6
Labourers	35 18 11	0 15 10	9 3 7	45 18 4
Carriage	80 9 11	5 17 11	7 9 7	93 17 5
Stone	5 13 4	0 17 4	7 17 8	14 8 4
Brick and paving stone	1 8 0	—	2 14 0	4 2 0
Iron-work and nails	14 7 10	1 13 2	14 17 5½	30 18 6
Lime	9 4 0	23 16 0	3 2 6	36 2 6
Timber	64 11 10	14 5 1	34 6 4	113 3 3
Slate	—	18 9 2	—	18 9 2
Glass	—	—	9 2 1	9 2 1
Miscellaneous materials	2 16 11	2 5 6	4 6 3	9 8 8
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>329 4 2½</b>	<b>131 6 2</b>	<b>201 16 11½</b>	<b>662 7 4</b>
Income	310 13 4	12 3 6	126 12 6	449 9 4
Deficit	18 10 10½	119 2 8	75 4 5½	212 18 0

<sup>1</sup> Willis, *Architectural History of Cambridge*, I, p. 251.





The final platt for the chapel of Corpus Christi College (see p. 25, n. 6).



A mason's drawing of the porch of the chapel of Corpus Christi College (see p. 33, n. 11).

The Editor would like to thank Dr R. Vaughan, Librarian of Corpus Christi College, for permission to reproduce the three plans (Pls. IV, V and VI) and for his help in finding them, and Mr L. P. Morley, of the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, for taking the photographs.

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

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