

## On the Augustinian Priory of the Holy Trinity, at Repton, Derbyshire.

(SECOND NOTICE).

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**S**INCE writing my last paper on this subject a year ago, the further excavation of the site of the priory church has been carried out by the Rev. W. Furneaux, with very interesting results. The whole of the debris which covered the area of the transepts and eastern arm has been removed to the floor level, and the outbuildings that encumbered the site have been cleared away. It was unfortunately thought advisable to remove portions of the walls uncovered in order to form a carriage drive, and it is a matter of equal regret that the plans for the new memorial schoolroom include the destruction of the remains of the nave south arcade, and the south-west pier of the crossing. These might easily be preserved, as part of the history of the place, at very small additional cost.

The plan of the church (Plate VII.), as now laid open, consists of a nave and aisles; central tower; north and south transepts, the former with an eastern aisle; and choir and aisles, with a large south chapel. The choir extends somewhat beyond the east end of the aisles to form a presbytery.

Though no part of the church, except a fragment of the west wall of the north transept, is standing to a greater height than three feet, thereby making it difficult to trace the architectural history, enough has fortunately been spared to allow the gradual





growth of the building to be ascertained with some degree of certainty.

The oldest portion of the existing remains seems to be the west wall of the north transept, with the jambs of the arch opening into the nave north aisle. This is apparently of late Transitional date. Of very little later date are the eastern responds of the nave arcades. Then follow the rest of the nave—which is, however, not all the work of one period; the south transept; the south chapel; the tower, choir, and alterations to the east side of the north transept.

With regard to the nave, I have nothing to add to my former description, except a few remarks on the base moldings. Despite the great difference in the plan of the pillars, the sections of the moldings do not indicate any corresponding difference in date. Beginning with the moldings of the eastermost pair of piers, we find them repeated on a somewhat larger scale in the north-west respond, which is perfectly different in plan. The south-west respond, again, has the same plan as its fellow, but the moldings are quite unlike, though each exhibits the same roll molding below, which is not found on the first pair of piers. A reference to the sections on Plate VIII. will make this clear.

Before leaving the nave, it should be mentioned that, near the south-west side of the westernmost pier of the south arcade, there is a piece of solid foundation level with the pavement, as if a font or other heavy object had stood there.

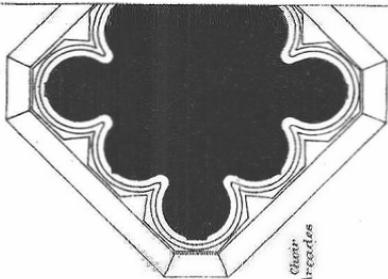
The north transept was about 33 feet long, by about 21 feet wide. Its north wall has been entirely removed, but the position of it may be fixed by its bond with the west wall. The latter remains to a height of a few feet, which increases suddenly towards the south to the height of the springing of the arch opening into the nave aisle, the jamb of which is almost complete, including a considerable portion of the capital. Of the corresponding jamb only the base-plinth is left. The jambs have plain re-entering angles, and are of the Transitional period. In the west wall of the north transept was a large recess, 13 feet 10 inches wide, and at least 4 feet ten inches

deep. No use can be assigned for this, unless it held a large *armarium*, or cupboard, for vestments and other ornaments; or, as no traces have been found of the night stairs communicating with the dormitory, they may have stood here within an arch. The east side opened by an arcade of two arches, the plinths of whose pillars remain, into an aisle or chapel. The arcade was contemporary with the tower and choir, but nothing is left of the aisle itself, even to help us to fix its dimensions, and they are shown on the plan quite conjecturally. Just to the east of the arcade is the foundation of a wall nearly six feet thick, running north and south. From its proximity to the arcade, it must be anterior in date, and clearly represents the eastern wall of an older transept, but whether it is contemporary with the west wall, or with the foundation of the aisleless nave, there is nothing to show.

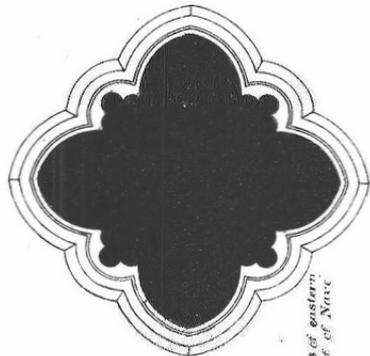
The remains of the south transept are most fragmentary. Part of the rubble core of the west wall remains, and that of the south wall was found, but has since been removed. On its east side, if an aisle ever existed, it was afterwards replaced by a large chapel, 47 feet 6 inches long, and about 21 feet wide. Of the arcade opening into this chapel and into the choir aisle, only one base remains (Plate XI.) This seems insufficient to carry the weight of the transept wall, and we should expect three arches instead of two. There is, however, no second base, and all possible traces of it have been completely removed. The moldings show this arcade to be somewhat later than the nave.

The south wall of the south chapel was uncovered during the excavations, but had been removed before I had an opportunity of seeing it. In front of the third buttress was a small semi-octagonal base (not shown on plan), but it did not range with anything. From its position it must have had some constructional use not now evident. When I commenced excavations on the site in 1882, I found at the east end of this chapel a piece of solid wall, which ranges with the pier of the transept arcade. This has since been removed, and the measurements I took at the time of its discovery, are the only record of its existence. On referring to the plan, it will be seen that it is not in line with the arcade

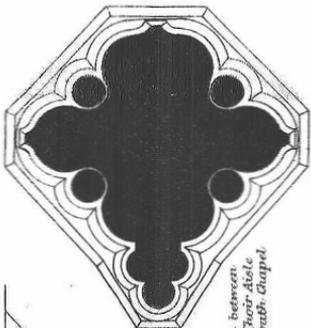
REPTON PRIORY - PLANS OF BASES.



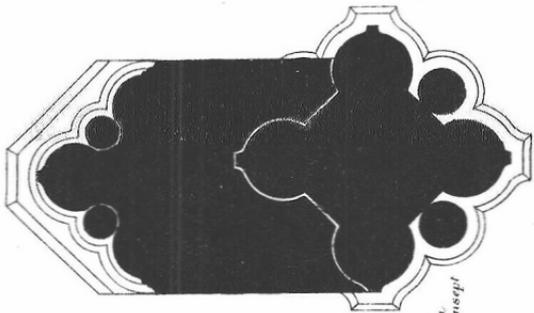
Choir  
Arcades



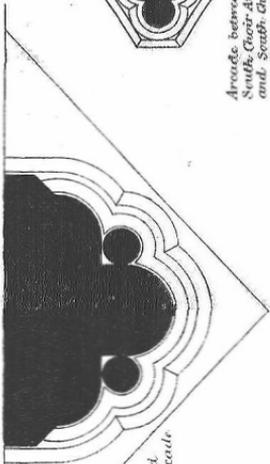
East of eastern  
half of Nave



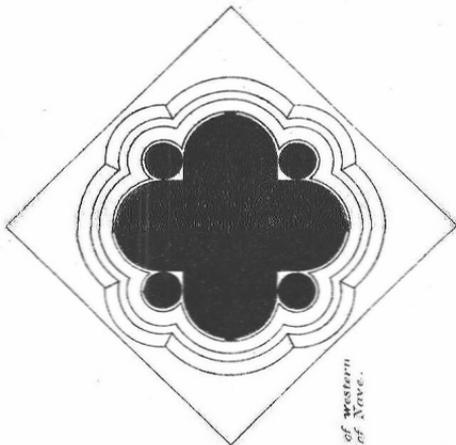
Arcade between  
South Choir Aisle  
and South Chapel



Base in  
South Transept



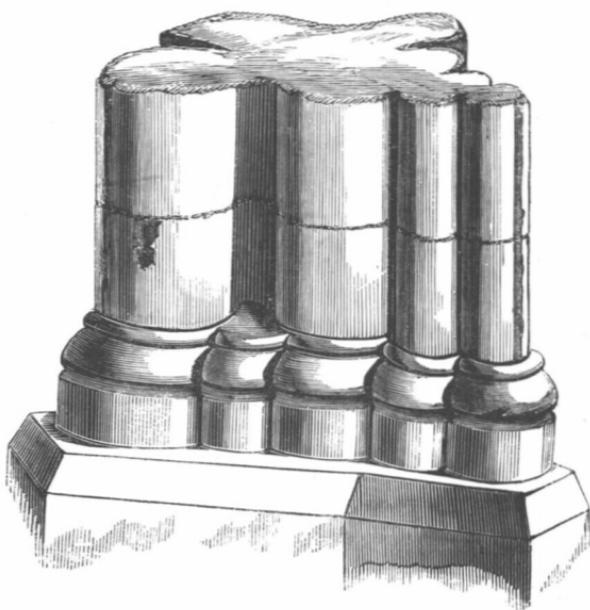
Western respond  
of Nave South Arcade



West of western  
half of Nave.

Scale of Feet.





BASE OF ARCADE BETWEEN SOUTH CHAPEL AND CHOIR AISLE,  
REPTON PRIORY.

between the chapel and south choir aisle, and the latter must, therefore, replace either a former arcade or a solid wall. The first bay was probably left solid; either because it held the sedilia and piscina of the choir aisle, or a tomb on the chapel side. Between the third and fourth pillars the remains of a tomb were found, containing a skeleton, whose legs had been doubled up in a most uncomfortable way for want of room. Both the third and fourth bases, as well as the western respond, remain in very perfect condition, but lack their detached shafts. It will be seen from Plate IX. that they have a very singular plan, with a triple vaulting shaft attached to the north face.

Passing to the tower, as the next work in point of date, we find that the bases of all its four piers are now uncovered. They exhibit the same section throughout, but differ slightly in plan. Of the south-west one only the hollow-chamfered plinth remains. No additional information can be gleaned respecting the *pulpitum*; it is, however, not easy to say how a person turned round when he got to the top of the stairs leading to the loft, and there must have been a projecting cornice, or some such arrangement, to give additional width. The plain face of the *pulpitum* has a parallel at Rochester, and for the same reason, that the more gorgeous roodloft stood to the west, though no traces of the second screen remain at Repton. This is not, however, negative evidence of the existence of the western screen, for at Durham, where we have positive documentary proof there was one, no traces whatever can be detected on the piers.

The exact width of the choir has been found to be 26 feet 2 inches. The canons' stalls were placed against a solid wall, 1 foot thick, extending eastward 31 feet 2 inches. This wall was contemporary with, and part of, the pillars of the arcade, some of whose moldings it takes the place of. Though we have no means of ascertaining the height of the wall, it probably stopped short below the capitals of the pillars, and the moldings of the latter would appear complete above the coping of the wall. Nothing is left to show the number and arrangement of the stalls, but there is room for thirteen a side, and for four returned stalls on either

side the choir door, making a total of thirty-four. The arrangement of the arcades dividing off the choir aisles is somewhat eccentric; the more so, because both sides are contemporary, and the plans and sections of the pillars identical. On the north side only one base remains, and on the south, three; but these show that the north arches were half as wide again as the south, so that, as the perpendicular wall terminated at a pillar, there were two arches behind the north stalls, and three behind the south. There is, unfortunately, no positive evidence how the arcades continued eastward. Two additional arches would make a regular arcade on the south of five bays, and this was probably the case; but an additional north arch will not make the two arcades of equal length, unless it be of slightly wider span than the other two.

For an explanation of this unsymmetrical setting out, we must look to the order in which the parts of the church were erected. It has already been stated that the south chapel, and the arcade separating it from the choir aisle, are anterior to the choir. Further, the additional shafts on the north side of the south chapel pillars, prove that the choir aisle was, to say the least, meant to be vaulted. Now to enable the vaulting cells to be most easily constructed, it was necessary that a pillar should be opposite a pillar. A reference to the ground plan will show that this was done at Repton; hence the five bays of the south arcade, and the narrow arch next the tower. For the same reason, the south arcade cannot well have exceeded in height the arches of the south chapel. On the north side, however, the greater width of the arches, and the absence of any controlling influence, would allow them to be carried up much higher than those opposite, and therefore, over the lower arches of the south arcade, there must have been either a double clerestory, like we see in the presbytery at Ely, or, like Bridlington, the south clerestory windows considerably exceeded the north ones in length.

Of the east end of this part of the church only the rough core was found, at a distance of 69 feet from the *pulpitum*. It projected a bay beyond the aisles. The south wall was of earlier date than the south aisle wall, for the latter ends in such a way as to

clearly show it was built up with a straight joint against an older wall, which, moreover, had a plinth along it. The cast of this plinth runs through the aisle wall, and seems to show that, though the western part of this portion of the church had been rebuilt in later times, the east arm was originally aisleless. Owing to the earlier and later works not being in line, the junction must have been somewhat awkward.

The east end of the presbytery has been entirely removed since the excavations, and the ground lowered, but nothing was found to indicate the site of the high altar. Exactly at the point of intersection of two lines drawn through the east walls of the aisles and down the centre of the choir, is a block of stone, about two feet cube, roughly shaped, with a socket on the top, 7 inches deep and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches square. What it was for does not appear, and it must have been either below the pavement or flush with it. Possibly it was a socket for some object, or it may have been for a heart-burial. The high altar, according to the inventory, had four little candlesticks of latten, and a reredos containing five great images, and a table of alabaster with little images.

The north choir aisle has been so entirely demolished, that only its east end and part of the north walls are left. It seems to have been of greater width than the south aisle; perhaps 12 feet 6 inches. No detail remains to help us to fix its date. The junction of choir aisle and transept aisle is shown conjecturally on plan.

In spite of the fulness of the 1538 inventory, it is not easy to point out which parts of the church are indicated. The visitors seem to have made their list in the following order—presbytery, choir, south choir aisle, south chapel, south transept, nave, north transept, and north choir aisle; thence to the cloister and surrounding buildings.

By this theory the south choir aisle was St. John's chapel. There are the holes for a "partition of wode" in the arch at the west end. The south chapel, there is every reason to assume, was the chapel of our Lady. Its altar had an alabaster reredos, and a (painted) wooden frontal. The grate of iron belonged to a tomb,

and the "partition of tymber" filled the arch or arches between the chapel and the transept, as the pier shows. The south transept seems to have been the chapel of St. Nicholas. It contained apparently two altars—one had images of SS. John and Sythe, and an alabaster reredos set in the wooden screen behind; the other a Rood and an image of St. Nicholas, with a reredos of alabaster.

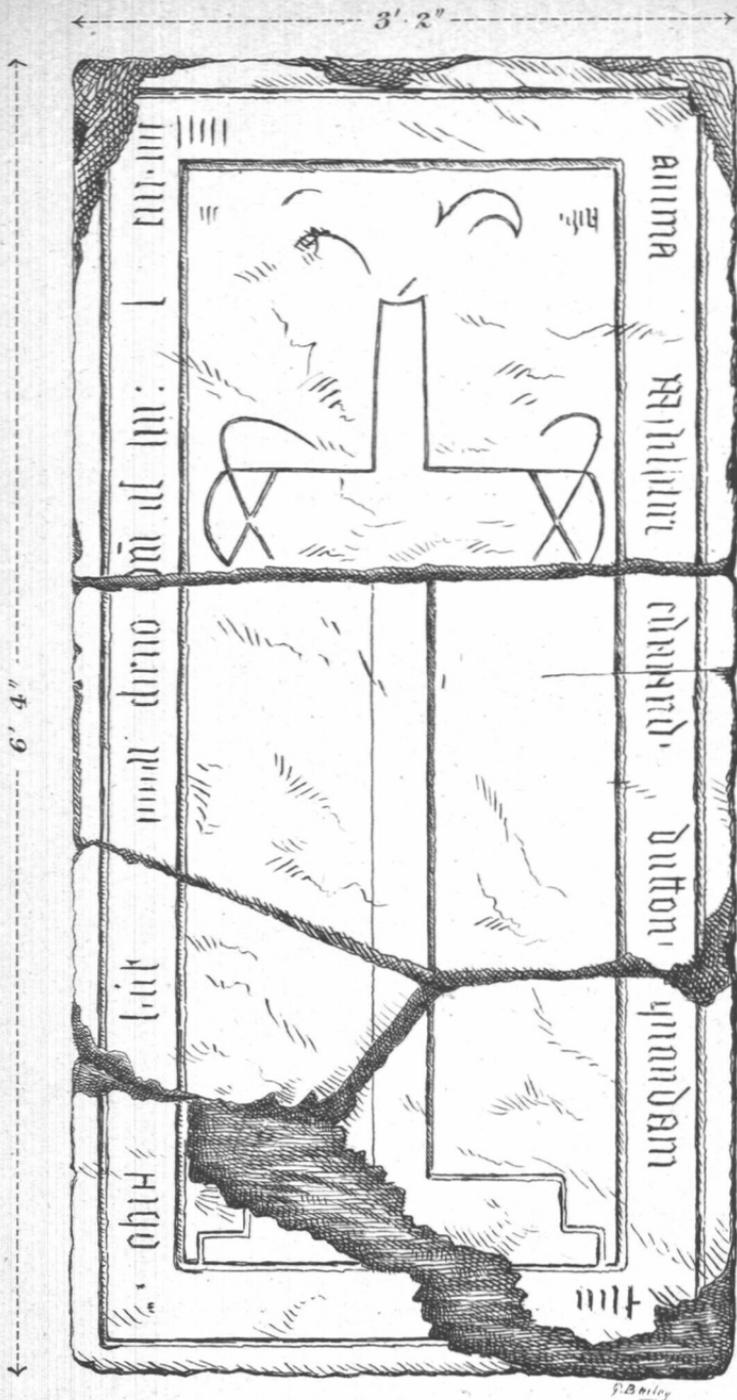
In the body of the church, that is, the nave, were seven "peces of tymber, a "lytell oulde house of tymber," "the xij Apostells," and an "image of o' lady in o' lady of petys chapell." We have also to account for three other altars. One of these was dedicated to St. Thomas. It had a gilt wooden reredos, and was apparently enclosed in a small chapel, for the inventory mentions a "partition of tymber seled ouer in seint Thom's Chapell." All we know about the two remaining altars are, that one had a wooden reredos and a screen, the other a small reredos of alabaster.

How many altars the nave and its aisles contained is not apparent from the entries quoted above. There was a principal altar in the nave, but its dedication is unknown. There was also an altar against the second south pier, perhaps that of our Lady of Pity, or St. Thomas. Two or three altars could stand in the north transept aisle and north choir aisle.

I have purposely omitted all reference to the north transept, as it is possible that here stood the shrine and altar of St. Guthlac. Some sumptuous heads of canopies, of the best fourteenth century work, adorned with painting, were uncovered in this transept and the choir aisle adjacent. They seem to have belonged to some shrine or similar work. The fact of the demolition of all the shrines in the kingdom before the suppression of the religious houses took place, will account for the absence of all mention of St. Guthlac in the inventory.

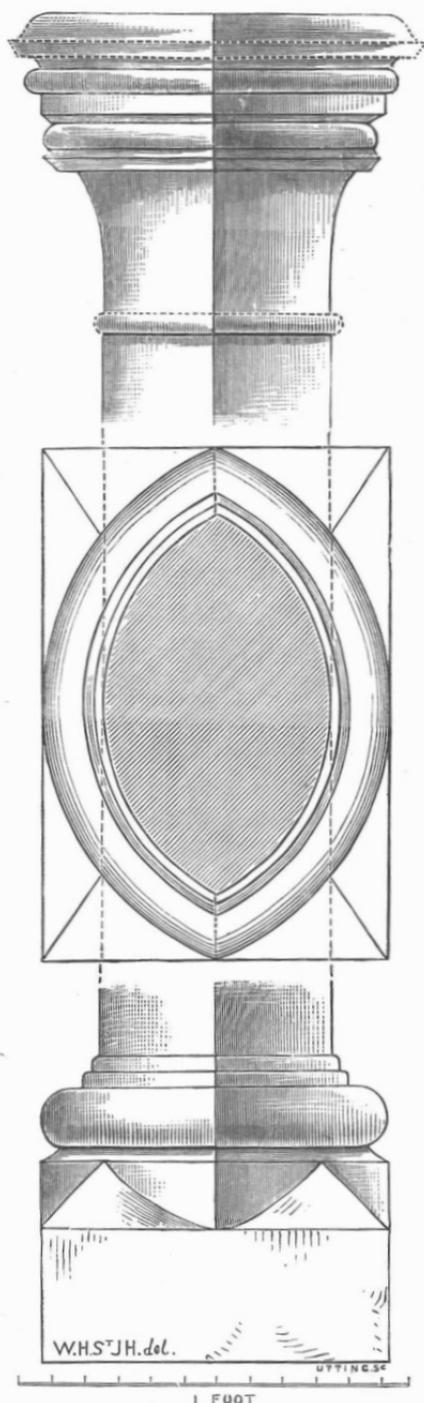
In the floor of the nave, just before the tower, was uncovered an incised slab, bearing a rudely executed cross fleury on steps, and the marginal inscription:— (Plate XII.)

[ + Orate pro ] anima magistri edmundi dutton quondam can[onic]  
huius ecclesie ] qui obiit . . . . . januarij anno dni mcccc<sup>o</sup>  
cui' aie ppic' [ deus. Amen ]



F. B. Bailey

INCISED SLAB OF EDWARD DUTTON. REPTON PRIORY CHURCH.



CAPITAL, BASE, AND SECTION OF CENTRE PILLAR FROM CHAPTER HOUSE, REPTON PRIORY.

This memorial has been removed from its site for preservation.

No additional light has been thrown on the conventual buildings, as the excavations did not extend to them. It has, however, been found that the width of the chapter-house was 26 feet. There has also been discovered the capital, base, and part of the shaft of a remarkable pillar, having the section of a pointed oval, which may have been the centre pillar of the chapter-house doorway. It is shown on Plate X. At a short distance from the north end of the dormitory, part of a building has been uncovered, which evidently belonged to the *necessarium*. It was 26 feet long, but as it has not been fully excavated, it may be wider than shown on plan.

On the exterior of the north wall of the frater, at the points shown on the plan by dotted lines, there is a kind of incipient projection, which seems to indicate the position of the reading pulpit.

The sections shown on Plate VIII. are reduced by photography from drawings taken with the cymagraph. Plates VII., X., and XI. are similarly reduced from my own measured drawings. Plate XII. is from a drawing by Mr. George Bailey, and Plate IX. from a photograph by Mr. Keene of Derby.