

within a relatively short time of their introduction a local tile industry using local clays grew up around Dublin and Kilkenny.<sup>57</sup>

In considering a possible date for the pavement at Swords there are difficulties in the almost total lack of evidence from Ireland and the fact that comparable types and designs in England are in general not closely datable.<sup>58</sup> The internal evidence from the site itself where there is a probable *terminus post quem* of 1324 appears to indicate a date in the first quarter of the 14th century. The excavations at Mellifont Abbey yielded some evidence for the use of inlaid tiles in the late 13th or early 14th century in Ireland.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand the designs on the line-impressed tiles in the Swords pavement are generally ascribed to the earliest to the end of the 14th century in England, a dating also applied to the tiles from near Chester. Further, a number of fragments of line-impressed mosaic were found within the chapel at Swords, probably of the early 14th century. These fragments were associated with a group of line-impressed tiles similar to those used in the pavement. As this material only occurred at the E. end of the chapel they probably represent the remains of a small mosaic pavement laid out around the altar. Line-impressed mosaic in England is quite securely dated first half of the 14th century;<sup>60</sup> its appearance in Ireland could be placed as early as the beginning of that century. The evidence from Swords suggests that the line-impressed tiles found there may be contemporary with the mosaic and thus belong to the early 14th century.

If it is proved that tiles of the type found at Swords can be dated early 14th century then it seems likely that the room in which the pavement was found was the archbishop's private oratory. If the tiles cannot be earlier than 1326, it seems that more structural work than has hitherto been thought was carried out on the domestic buildings at Swords after it ceased to be the archbishop's residence. It is apparent that the defences were modernized in the 15th century, so that it is possible that modernization of the domestic quarters was undertaken at the same time.<sup>61</sup>

Pending further excavation and conservation the pavement at Swords has been provided with temporary but effective protection against the weather and possible interference.

THOMAS FANNING

#### DECORATED 14TH-CENTURY TILES AT NORTHILL CHURCH, BEDFORDSHIRE (FIGS. 82-4)

Northill is the only parish church in Bedfordshire which contains a large number of early 14th-century line-impressed and incised floor-tiles *in situ*. They are laid in a pavement in the vestry, which is N. of the chancel. A piscina on the S. wall of the vestry indicates that it was originally a chapel. The pavement has almost certainly been relaid and is associated with Victorian tiles.

Line-impressed and incised tiles have been found in Bedfordshire in a limited area extending 11 km. SE. from the centre of Bedford, Northill being the easternmost site. The area is bounded on the N. by the R. Ouse and on the E. by the R. Ivel and its tributaries. Most line-impressed and incised tiles from Bedfordshire have been found

<sup>57</sup> In Co. Kilkenny, both at St Canice's and Kells priories, evidence for the manufacture of tiles in the form of fused fragments has been noted.

<sup>58</sup> During recent excavations at Norton Priory, Runcorn (Cheshire), P. Greene has recovered tiles of this type and has kindly sent copies of the designs to me. When his work on the site is finished more exact dating of the English material will be available.

<sup>59</sup> See L. de Paor, *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, 68c2 (1969), 131 and 152.

<sup>60</sup> E. Eames and L. Keen, *Jnl. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, xxxv (1972), 60. I am grateful to Mrs Eames for much help and advice in the preparation of this note and to Kevin O'Brien for the finished drawings.

<sup>61</sup> For a short description of the castle see H. G. Leask, *Jnl. Roy. Soc. Antiq. Ireland*, xlv (1914), 259-63.

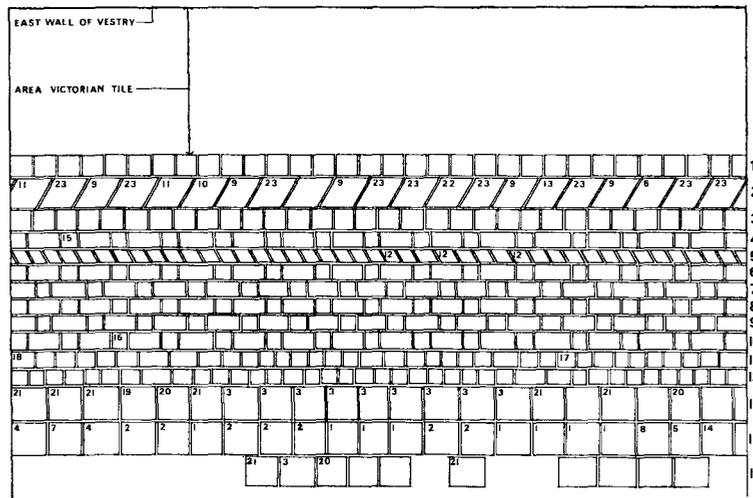


FIG. 82

## NORTHILL CHURCH, BEDFORDSHIRE

Diagrammatic plan of tile pavement (p. 209 f.). Numbers 1 to 23 refer to FIGS. 83-4.

during archaeological excavations; these sites are mentioned below. There is also a considerable number in Willington Church where several designs are set into the floor of the N. aisle.

The Northill pavement (FIG. 82) measures *c.* 1.5 by 3.5 m. and starts 600 mm. W. of the E. wall of the vestry and extends across the full width of the room. The spaces E. and W. of it are filled with Victorian tiles. Some parts are concealed beneath cupboards, but all the designs can be identified (FIGS. 83-4). Certain tiles are extremely worn; others are unworn with surface glaze complete. Different degrees of wear on adjacent tiles support the suggestion that the pavement has been relaid.

The fabric varies from buff to red; white slip can be seen on the worn tiles which were originally clear lead-glazed to give a yellow surface. The rest were glazed dark green. There are fifteen rows of tiles arranged from E. to W. thus:

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Row 1             | Plain, <i>c.</i> 75 mm. sq.  |
| Row 2             | Large lozenge-shaped, with line-impressed and incised decoration                                 |
| Row 3             | Plain, <i>c.</i> 75 mm. sq.  |
| Row 4             | Alternate 60 mm. sq. and 120 by 60 mm., one with line-impressed design                           |
| Row 5             | Small lozenge-shaped, three of which have line-impressed designs                                 |
| Rows 6<br>to 10   | Alternate 60 mm. sq. and 120 by 60 mm., laid to a bond, a line-impressed design on one in row 10 |
| Row 11            | Irregular arrangement of rectangular and square, two with line-impressed designs                 |
| Row 12            | Irregular arrangement of rectangular and square  |
| Rows 13<br>and 14 | 125 mm. sq., with line-impressed and incised designs   |
| Row 15            | A mixture of medieval and Victorian; medieval, plain or with simple straight incised lines.      |

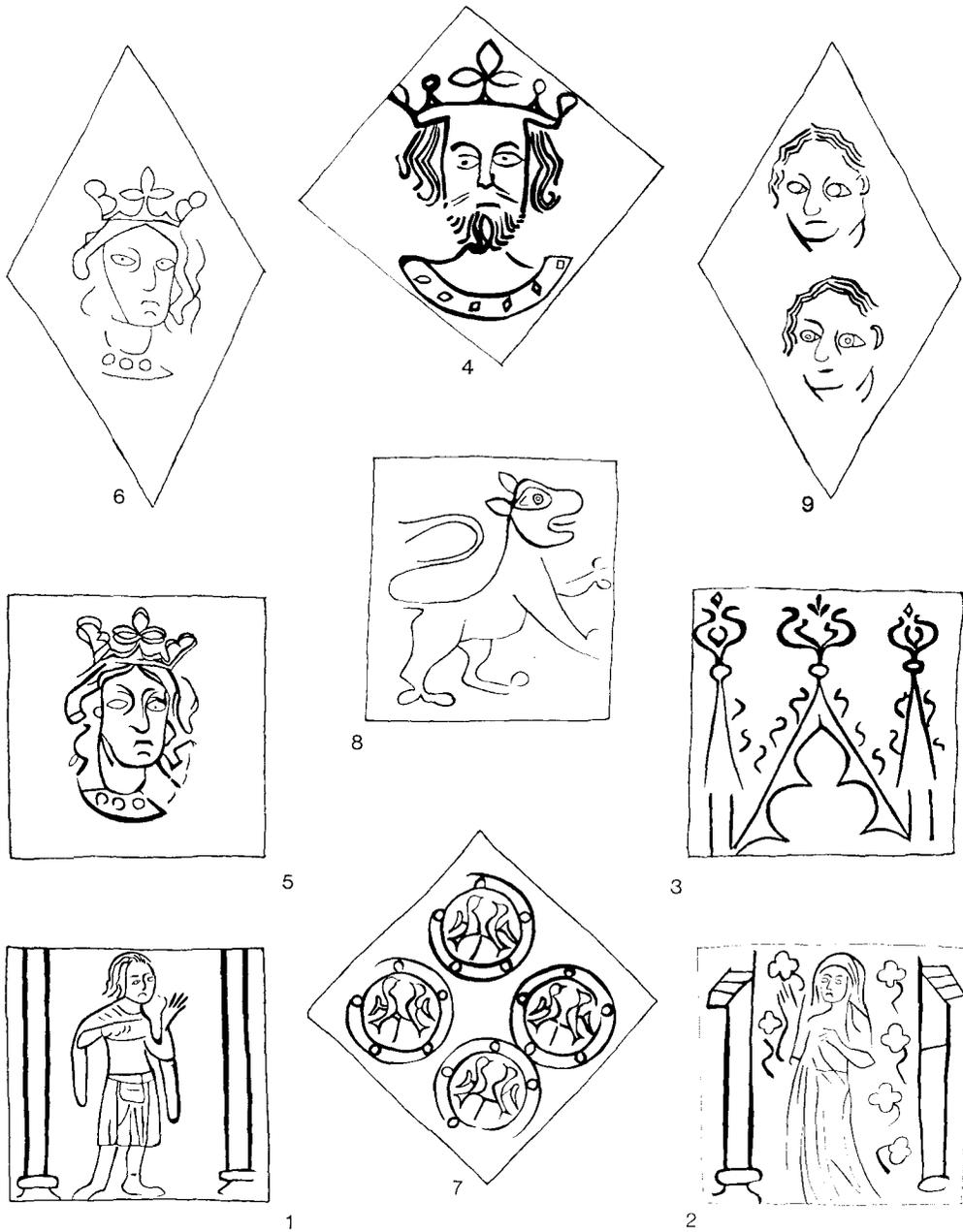


FIG. 83

NORTHILL CHURCH, BEDFORDSHIRE  
 Tile patterns, nos. 1 to 9. Sc. 1: 4 (pp. 210, 213)

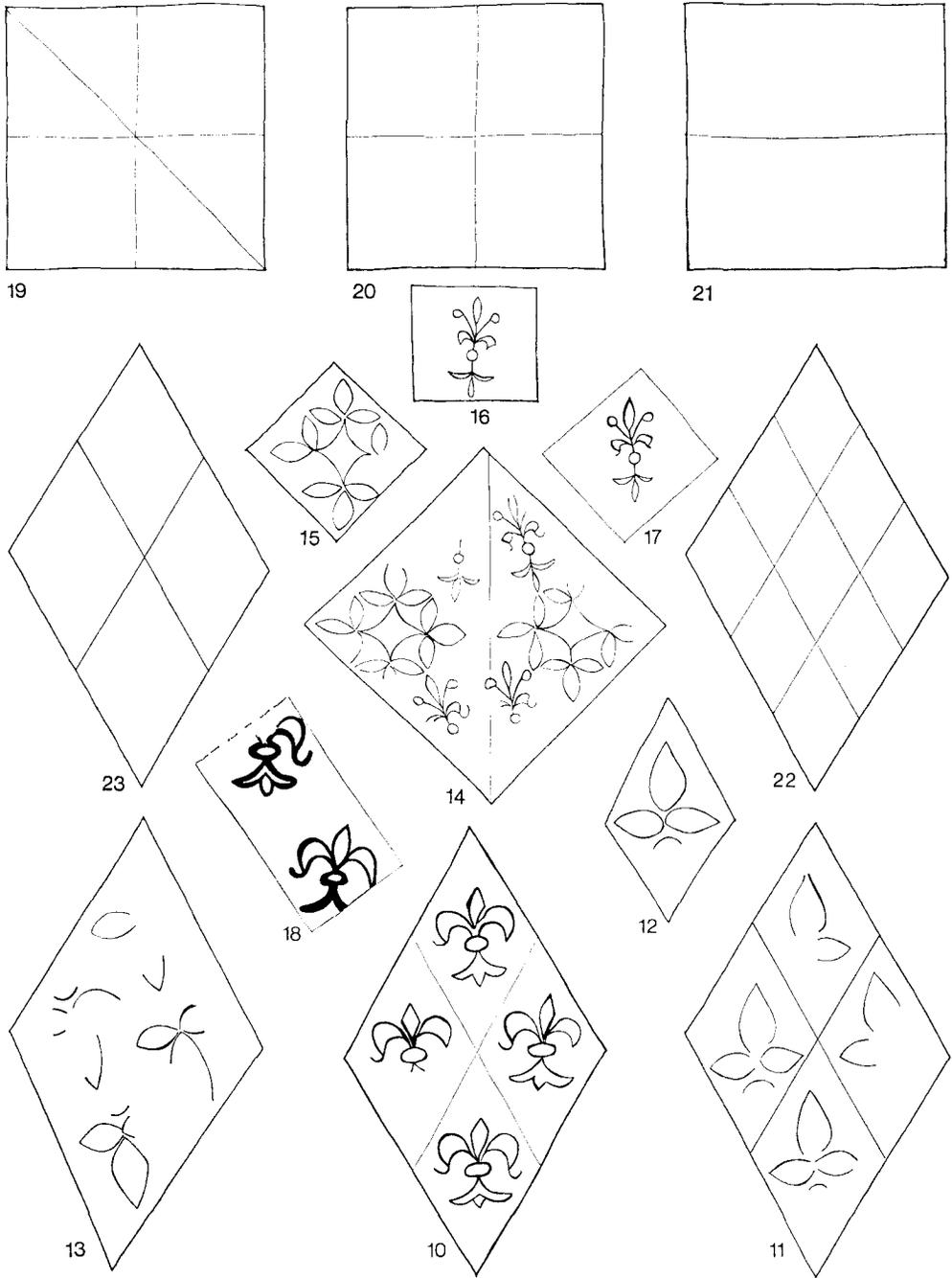


FIG. 84

NORTHILL CHURCH, BEDFORDSHIRE  
 Tile patterns, nos. 10 to 23. Sc. 1:4 (pp. 210, 213)

Tiles with related designs have been excavated in quantity at several sites near Northill. Two pavements recently excavated at Old Warden (p. 233, PL. xvii) have been lifted for museum display. Quantities of tiles, some with designs identical with those at Northill and almost certainly produced with the same stamps, have been found at Bedford, Elstow Priory, Beadlow Manor and Newnham Priory. Wasters in Bedford Museum from earlier excavations at Old Warden seem to confirm that tiles were fired on the site. Clay is available close to where the tiles were probably made and a stratum of grey clay runs just over 1 m. below the present ground surface.

J. M. BAILEY

### ROBERT D'ARCY'S CHANTRY PRIESTS' HOUSE, MALDON, ESSEX

(FIGS. 85-9)

As he lay dying Sir Robert D'Arcy of Maldon (1385-1448) ordained that on his death his executors should set up "as quickly as possible" a chantry called "Darcyes-chauunterye" in All Saints' Church. It was to have two chaplains, one to be known as the first principal chaplain and the other as the second chaplain, who were to celebrate mass daily before the altar of Holy Trinity for the souls of himself and his wives Margaret and Alice (both dead), all his relatives and benefactors, and the king and queen. The two chaplains were to be provided with a "messuage and a garden and an acre of land

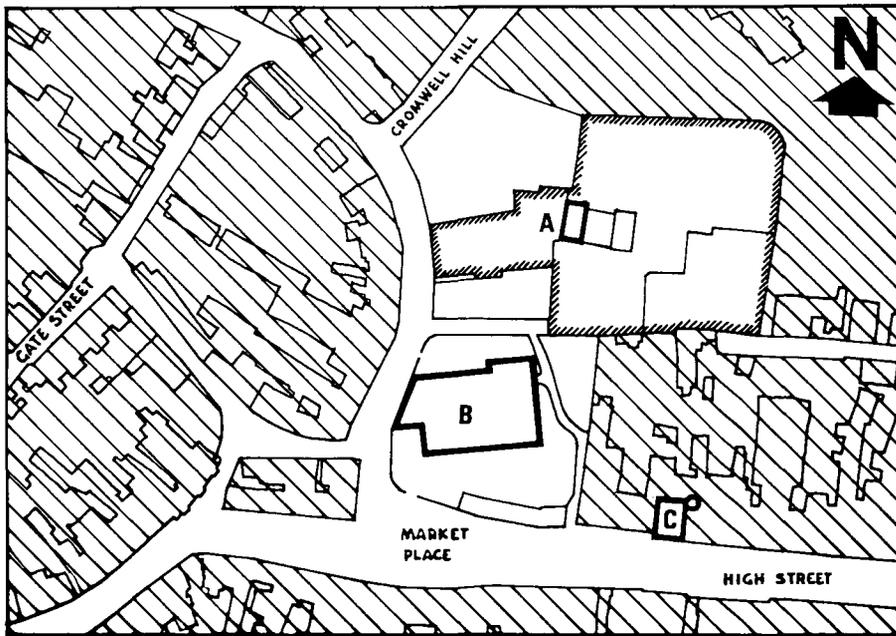


FIG. 85

MALDON, ESSEX

Map showing location of: A. D'Arcy's chantry priests' house;  
B. All Saints' Church; C. D'Arcy's Tower (p. 215)