

WINSTONE CHURCH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

By W. H. KNOWLES, F.S.A.

The County of Gloucester is rich in archaeological remains. Its wolds are thickly strewn with prehistoric camps and barrows, and its vale and valleys enriched with an astonishing number of medieval structures of rare importance, including a preponderance of village churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹

Winstone is one of half a dozen churches situated within as many miles on the west side of the Roman Ermine Street, here passing between Gloucester and Cirencester. Each is accessible by a short road at right angles to Ermine Street and less than a mile from it. The hamlets which the churches serve are also connected with each other by a picturesque if tortuous way that is a delight to the pedestrian and available only to the skilled motorist. With the exception of Saxon Daglingworth (possibly also Duntisbourne Rous) the churches are of post-conquest origin. They stand in sheltered and secluded positions and combine with nature and a few scattered Cotswold cottages to produce pictures of exquisite beauty.

The place is recorded in the Biselige Hundred of Domesday as 'one of the manors which Ansfrid de Cormeilles received when he married the niece of Roger de Laci, and it descended to his heirs.'²

Winstone was a chapelry in the parish of Bibury,³ at which place the Bishop's manor remained with the see until the reign of Edward VI. The priest's land was

¹ At the time of Domesday 'the shire was better off than a large part of England, as the desolating tide of war had not swept over it.' (Taylor's *Analysis of the Domesday of Gloucestershire*, 4.) The Bishop of Worcester held 231 hides, being more than a tenth of the profitable land (Ibid. 99).

² C. H. Taylor. *An analysis of the Domesday Survey of Gloucestershire*, 174. 'In Gloucestershire Wulfward Wit, a landowner in many counties, and a friend apparently of

Queen Edith, had a priest on his lands at Salperton, but none on his holdings in Chedworth, Pebworth, Shepton Solars, Bagendon, Hatherop and Winstone.' W. Page, F.S.A. 'Some remarks on the churches of the Domesday Survey,' *Archaeologia* xlvii, 100.

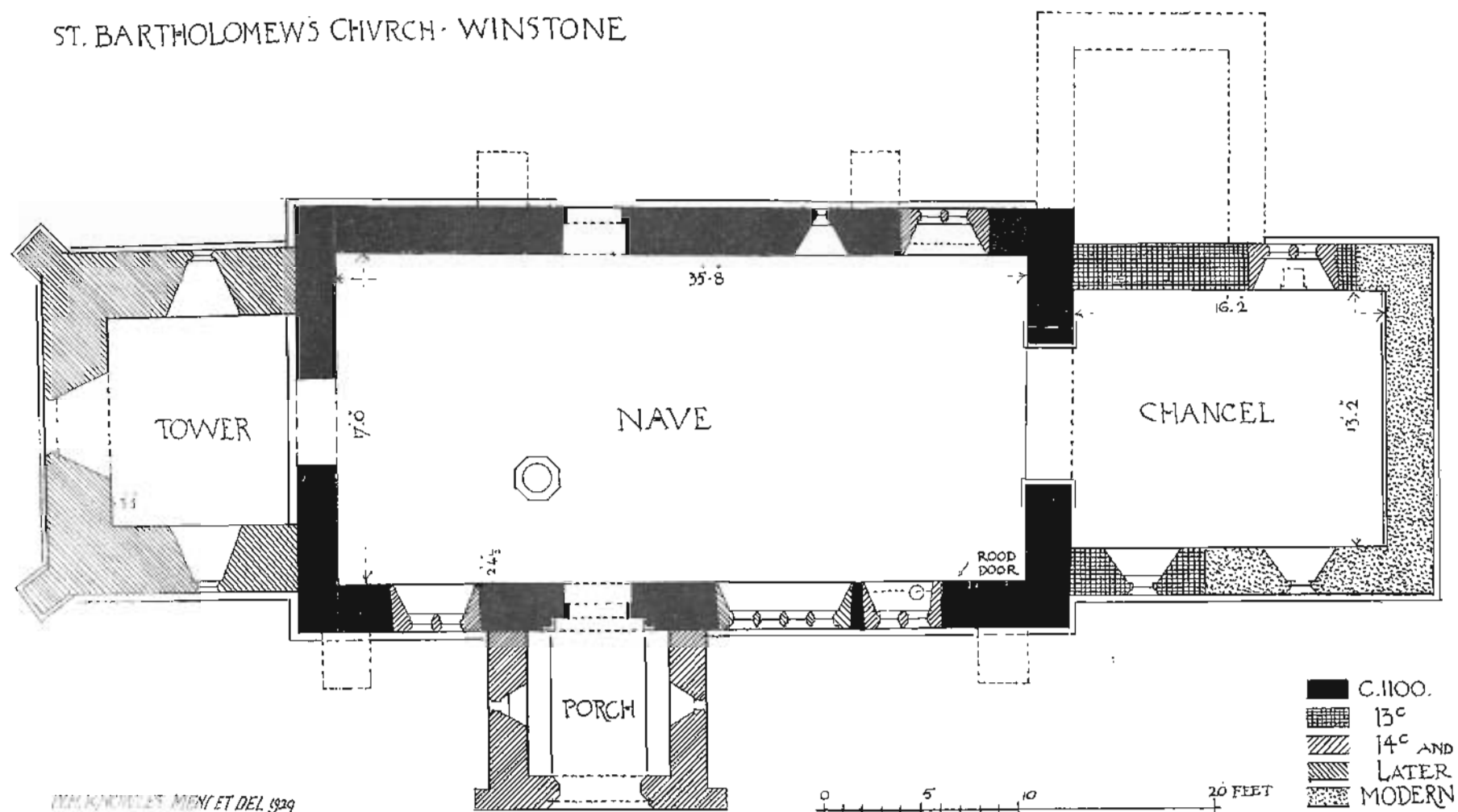
³ Bibury was well endowed, the priest having three hides. Taylor's *Analysis of Domesday Survey*, 104.



[Photo, S. Pilcher

WINSTONE CHURCH FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

ST. BARTHOLOMEWS CHVRCH · WINSTONE



afterwards known as Bibury Oseney, as it passed into possession of that abbey by grant of bishop John before 1320. Probably this was John of Contances, bishop of Worcester, 1196-1198, who had been archdeacon of Oxford 1186-1196.¹

Dr. H. H. E. Craster of the Bodleian informs me that the Rev. H. E. Salter, who is editing the Oseney Chartulary, says 'Beyond the fact that Winstone was a chapelry in the parish of Bibury, and that the advowson of Bibury was held by Oseney, the chartulary gives no information,' and further—'Neither do the Oseney deeds deposited in Bodley.'

Externally Winstone Church is possibly the least imposing of the group. Its interest, and the occasion of these notes, is the possession of features combining the pre-conquest tradition with Norman details which it seems desirable to place on record.

The church (Pl. ii) comprises a square ended chancel measuring on the interior 16 ft. 2 in. by 13 ft. 3 in., a nave 35 ft. 8 in. by 16 ft. 9 in.; with a north and south doorway, and a south porch; and a western tower. The porch and tower are subsequent additions. The walls of the nave and chancel are 2 ft. 4½ in. in thickness faced within and without with rubble in narrow irregular courses with wide joints. The angle-quoins average 8 in. in height, and some are 2 ft. 3 in. on the bed, an uncommon length. The walls are devoid of plinth mouldings, and stand on a visible foundation course projecting 6 in. beyond the face of the wall. In the Cotswolds thin walls of rough masonry are general in buildings of early date.

We will first examine the details which supply the evidence that the building is of the period of the Anglo-Norman overlap.

The north doorway (Fig. 1 and Pl. iii A) has monolithic jamb-stones and a broad lintel under a plain recessed ashlar tympanum enclosed by a semicircular arch of ashlar voussoirs. The jambs incline, the opening measuring 2 ft. 10 in. at the foot and 2 ft. 8½ in. at the top. The jamb-stones which are about 12 in. in width, with a 9 in. reveal, are rebated on the face 8 in. from the angle, projecting an inch beyond the face of the walling in order to receive the

¹ Ibid. p. 153.

plaster. The lintel is chamfered on the top edge, and the tympanum is recessed $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. within the arch. In this doorway alone we have a combination of the essentially monolithic pre-conquest jambs so alien to Norman practice, surmounted by an arch filled with a solid tympanum, resembling that at Coln St. Denys and elsewhere, built half a century

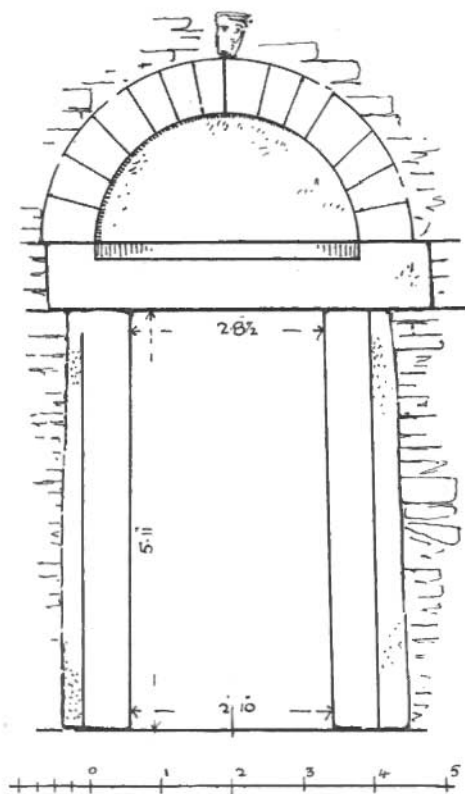


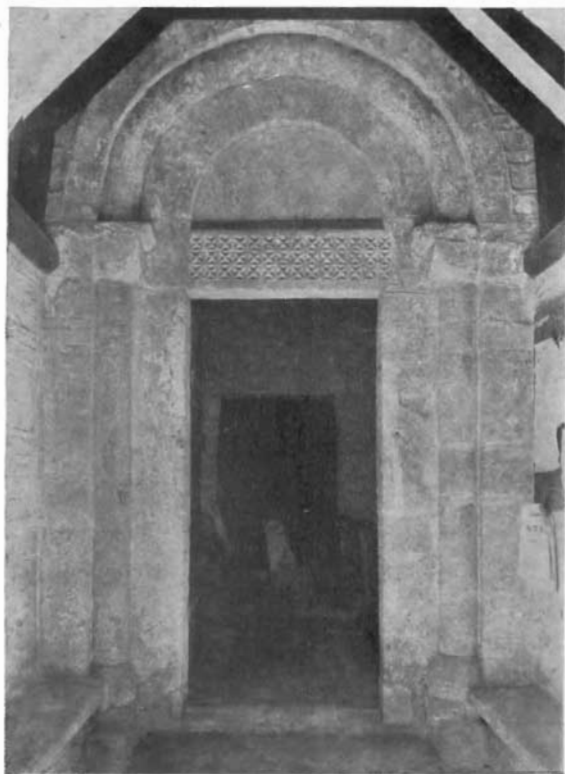
FIG. 1. WINSTONE: NORTH DOORWAY

after the Conquest. Internally is a square lintel supported by a monolithic jamb on the east side, the west jamb being in three stones.

To the east of the doorway just described is a small window (Fig. 2 and Pl. iv) wrought in a single stone; the pierced opening is round headed and only $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. wide by 2 ft. 6 in. high and on the exterior is worked within a square sunken or rebated plane. Internally the jambs have



A. WINSTONE : NORTH DOORWAY



[Photo, S. Pilcher

B. WINSTONE : SOUTH DOORWAY



WINSTONE : WINDOW IN NORTH WALL OF NAVE

wide splays which are continued around the arch. The sill is 8 ft. above the level of the floor. In the pre-conquest church at Coln Rogers is an almost identical window in one stone; and at Daglingworth there is one pierced by two diminutive slits, which is a reused stone bearing Roman lettering.

The chancel arch (Fig. 3 and Pl. v) is 4 ft. $7\frac{1}{8}$ in. wide and 7 ft. 1 in. from the floor to the springing of the arch. The voussoirs, with ashlar soffit 2 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, do not radiate correctly; the jambs are square edged, and the impost of simple primitive section. The north jamb is in

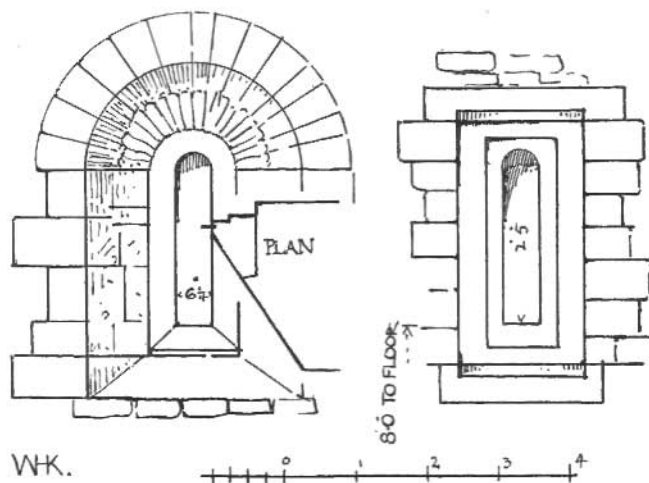


FIG. 2. WINSTONE: WINDOW IN NORTH WALL OF NAVE

one stone, dressed with a rebate on the face, stepped at the top and bottom. The south jamb is in four stones of long-and-short fashion. The relieving arch (Fig. 3) has a primitive appearance in that it does not spring from the impost of the order, and that the voussoirs do not radiate from a common centre. But the tooling of the voussoirs indicates that it is to be regarded as part of the restoration of 1876, when the gable over the arch was largely rebuilt.

The profile of the impost (Fig. 4, 1) is a noteworthy detail. It has a broad vertical face, with a V-shaped horizontal incision near the lower edge, over a chamfered plane moulded with two shallow hollows separated by a

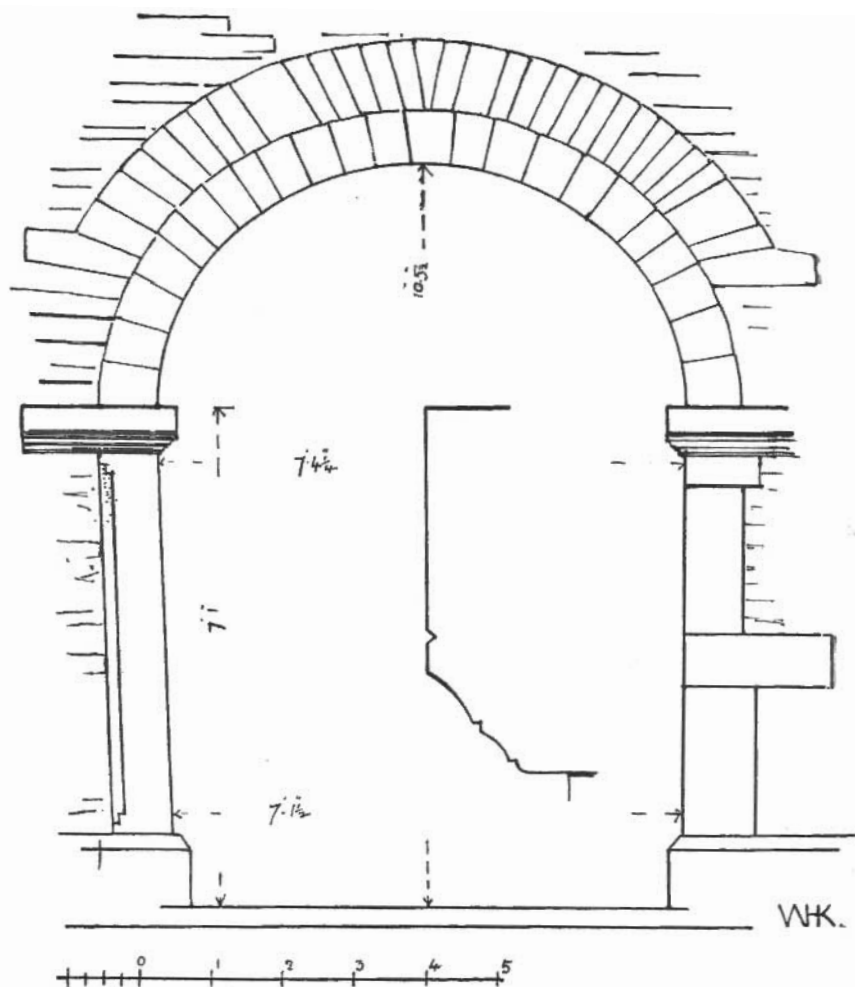


FIG. 3. WINSTONE : CHANCEL ARCH

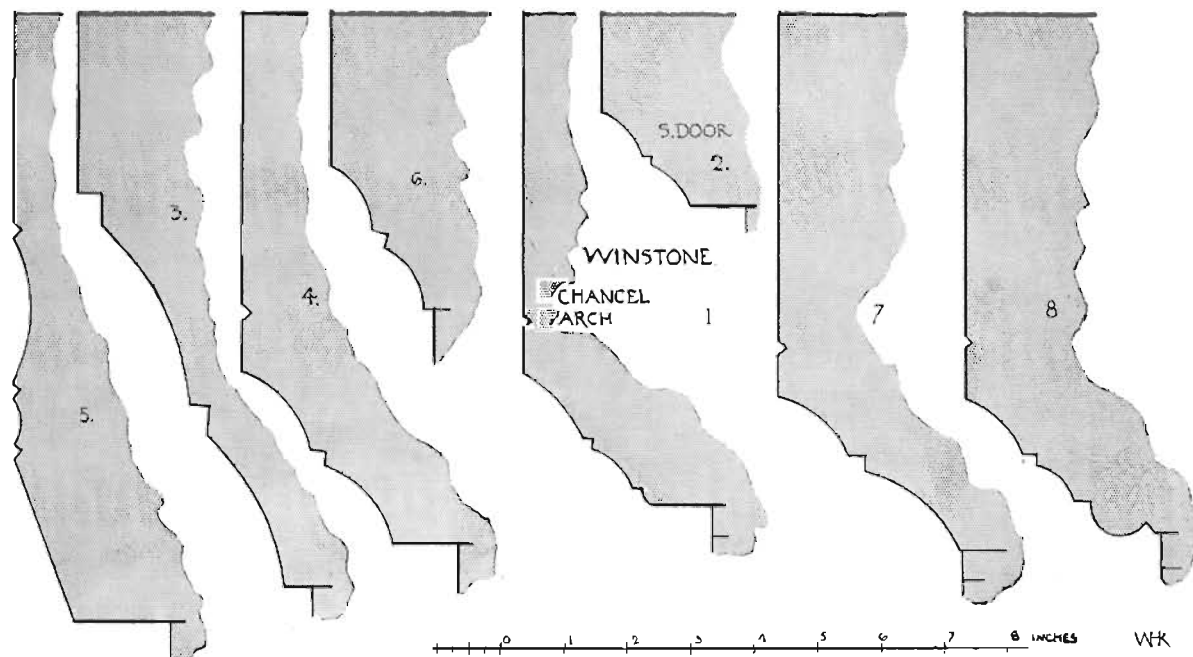


FIG. 4. PROFILES OF LATE SAXON AND EARLY NORMAN IMPOSTS
 1, 2, Winstone; 3, Deerhurst priory; 4, Daglingworth; 5, Deerhurst chapel;
 6, Gloucester Cathedral crypt; 7, Baunton; 8, Moreton Valence.

V-shaped sinking, and finished below with a small bead. The impost is returned 2 ft. 3 in. on both the east and west faces. In character it is based on the old pre-conquest tradition. At Deerhurst priory is a string below the level of the window sills with the double hollow separated by a V-shaped sinking (Fig. 4, 3). At Daglingworth reused impost to the porch has a very shallow double hollow and an incised line in the vertical face (Fig. 4, 4). At Deerhurst chapel (the chancel arch) dated 1056 are shallow hollows separated by V-jointed sinkings (Fig. 4, 5) though the hollows are not arranged on the chamfer-plane. Following the Conquest, in the crypt at Gloucester, begun in 1089, the capitals generally have a vertical face over a chamfer-plane, but one (Fig. 4, 6) has two shallow hollows separated by a V-shaped sinking. At Baunton not far distant from Winstone, the impost (Fig. 4, 7) of the chancel arch has a deep vertical face with incised line and the double chamfer; whilst at Moreton Valence (Fig. 4, 8), a later example, the impost of the inner order of the chancel arch nearly resembles Winstone, except that the bead is quirked.

Compared with the details already described, the south doorway (Fig. 5 and Pl. iii b) exhibits more advanced technique. The unmoulded doorway opening is 6 ft. 7 in. high by 3 ft. wide, with a deep lintel enriched with a sunk star ornament in three rows, and a tympanum relieved with lozenge decoration, within a square-edged semicircular inner arch. The jambs have single attached shafts, with mitred cushion capitals, and the abaci are moulded with a double hollow divided by a V-shaped sinking (Fig. 4, 2) a profile to be associated with the impost of the chancel arch. The outer order of the arch is moulded with a roll of the same section as the shaft. The bases are of bulbous section, much worn, apparently a small hollow over a deep torus. The interior jambs have quoins, with a lintel over. The doorway is a rude conception compared with the abundant examples of beautiful doorways prevalent in the county.

In the building there is no indication of the distinctive pre-conquest pilaster wall-strips, long-and-short quoins, or triangular arches. But there survived after the Conquest as we have seen the rebated monolithic jamb-stones to the north doorway and the chancel arch, the impost of the

chancel arch and of the south doorway, and the window pierced through a single stone that are indisputable survivals of pre-conquest type.

Equally the tympanum of the north doorway and the shafted jambs of the south with its star ornament and

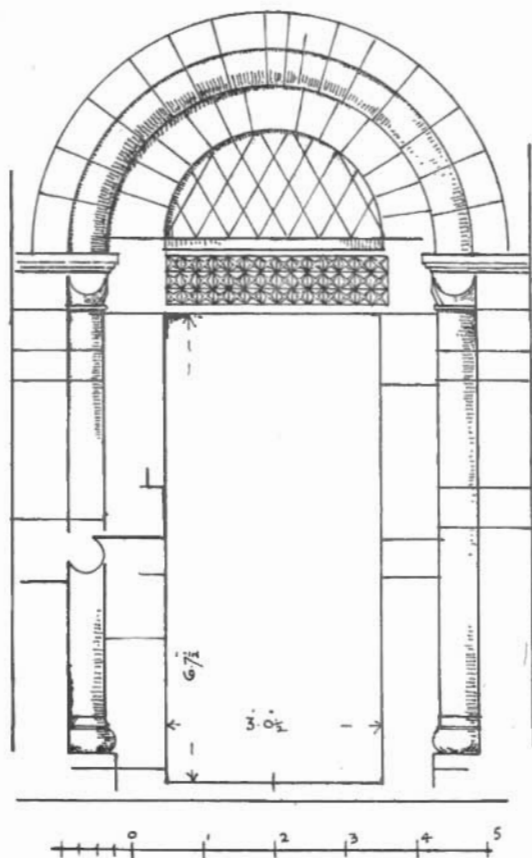


FIG. 5. WINSTONE: SOUTH DOORWAY

mitred cushion capital are definitely Norman. The Saxon door had usually a square head or open round arch.¹

Unquestionably Winstone, or its nave in which are

¹ See Deerhurst Priory, *Archaeologia*, lxxvii, 147-150. Where recessed doors are attempted as at Kirk Hammerton and Kirkdale both in Yorkshire, illustrated in G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts of Early*

England, ii, 397, the arch and jambs are illogically connected. The relations of shaft and archivolt to the chancel arch at Wittering, p. 400, is similarly deficient.

the features we have discussed, is of one building-period. It is evident therefore that the details which exhibit the most advanced technique must determine the date of its erection.

The mitred cushion capitals of the south door, and the double hollow moulding of the chamfer-plane of the impost over it are evidently inspired by the capitals in Gloucester crypt begun before 1089, and the attached jamb-shafts and continuous roll over it may be observed in the wall arcade of the chapter-house of later date.

The profile of the impost, except for the incised line of the square face, resembles Daglingworth, and excepting the rebate over the hollows that of the string-course at Deerhurst, both pre-conquest churches. The monolithic jambs of the north doorway, and the small pierced window near to it are also characteristically pre-conquest. The double hollows of the impost of the chancel arch bear a general resemblance to those of the chancel arch at Odda's chapel, Deerhurst, built in 1056; and are almost indetical with Moreton Valence, which because of its associated features must be placed in the first quarter of the twelfth century.

It is clear therefore that Winstone must be regarded as an instance of the use of mixed pre-conquest and Norman elements, demonstrating that the Normans did not entirely and at once supersede the local fashion, and that for more than a quarter of a century there existed in certain districts Englishmen possessed of the old tradition, yet indifferently influenced by the new style introduced by the Norman Conqueror, which at Winstone is only used in a tentative manner in the south doorway, the usual object of superior effort.

Taken together the related features warrant the assumption that Winstone was erected within a few years of 1100. It affords a remarkable example of overlap, in importance comparable (although of a different school) to Wharram le Street, Yorkshire [*Archaeologia* lxxiii, 55] which Dr. Bilson attributes to the early twelfth century, and that of lesser consequence at Weaverthorpe, Yorkshire [*ibid.* lxxii, 51].

To continue the story of the church. The character of the ancient masonry of the north and south walls of the chancel (Pl. ii) differs from that of the nave, and is to be



[Photo, S. Pilcher

WINSTONE : CHANCEL ARCH

dated by a single-light thirteenth-century trefoil headed window in the south wall, of which it is an integral part. The adjoining window is a modern copy. The two-light window in the north wall is a fourteenth-century insertion, and has below the sill a square aumbrey with rebated jambs. The east gable was rebuilt in 1876 but fortunately as of old was left windowless. Unpierced east ends occur at Baunton, Brimsfield and Cold Aston, all of Norman origin. It is a peculiarity shared by Notgrove Church which is however of later date, where the absence of an east window may be attributed to the existence of an elaborate reredos, fragments of which remain.

The two-light windows in the nave and chancel are fourteenth-century insertions; they are square headed with trefoil cusping, two have chamfered rear arches and two a flat lintel over corbels. The large square headed four-light window is of the sixteenth century. In the view (Pl. v) the lower and upper openings leading to the rood loft, now built up, will be observed, and over the chancel arch a carved beam probably part of the screen.

The south porch is an addition of the fourteenth century. Within its gable flanked by small buttresses is a pointed arch of two chamfered orders enclosed by a moulded hood. In the side walls are small trefoil-headed slits and on the interior chamfered stone benches.

The west tower is of two stages separated by a chamfered string. It is of the dimensions and in the usual position common to early churches possessing the feature. Its broad foundation-course is similar to that to the nave walls, and the walling and quoins bear a general resemblance to the nave, but on the interior the north and south walls (3 ft. 5 in. thick) merely butt against and are not bonded into the nave gable. The small square-headed windows, and the few other details of the tower, which is capped with a saddleback roof very similar to three of the half-dozen churches we remarked in the vicinity, are of later date. The west doorway is modern and the square-headed recess without dressings is the only indication of the communication between tower and nave.

The font is an early fifteenth-century one; it is octagonal on plan and decorated with quatrefoils and four-leaf flowers.

There are two medieval bells with Lombardic inscrip-

tions, and one by Thomas Rudhall with his initials and the date 1771.¹

The plate includes an Elizabethan chalice and paten without silver marks or date-letter.

In the churchyard is the base (over two steps) and part of the shaft of a fourteenth-century cross.

It has been suggested that a brief reference should be made to the outstanding number of early churches in Gloucestershire which appear to be insufficiently appreciated or recorded.²

Apart from the important priory church and the interesting chapel at Deerhurst, and bordering on the Roman roads Ermine Street and Fosse Way which converge on Cirencester, are three pre-conquest churches. Two of them, Coln Rogers and Daglingworth, retain the original walls of both nave and chancel intact, the third Bibury extensive structural remains, and all of them distinctive characteristics peculiar to the style. In addition there are several churches as Somerford Keynes, embodying fragmentary features indicating their pre-conquest origin.

Two churches, those at Bully and Tibberton near Gloucester, and Baunton, referred to above, should possibly be classed with Winstone, but their Anglo-Norman details have been too much altered to speak with certainty, whilst others including Ampney Crucis, Miserden and Edgeworth, with doorways suggestive of Saxon technique, are certainly not earlier than the end of the eleventh century.

Of the simple Norman churches with an unaltered oblong nave and narrower square-ended chancel—there are none with apsidal ends—with usually a north and south door but occasionally south and west doors, there are numerous examples as at Stoke Orchard³, Postlip, Rudford, Great and Little Washbourne.⁴

Of the type which included a western tower are Chedworth, Beverstone and Tormarton. Others with a tower between the nave and chancel include the exceedingly interesting church at Coln St. Denys, most happily preserved, and Avening to which additions have been made.

¹ Ellacombe, *Church Bells of Gloucester* (1881), p. 71.

² Compared with other counties it is of medium size, its area being about 800,000 acres.

³ *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Arch. Soc.*, xlviii, 296.

⁴ *Ibid.* 289.

Elkstone and Hampnett were also of this plan. There are several churches firstly built of the cruciform plan with a tower at the intersection, now incorporated and obscured by subsequent additions such as South Cerney, Cheltenham, Great Rissington and Stowell. Others, as Marshfield and Bishops Cleeve, have been entirely remodelled.

Some of the chancels including Avening, Elkstone, Rudford and Hampnett were vaulted. Of doorways and chancel arches, the usual place on which to lavish ornament, there is an abundance of varying merit, ranging from the simplest form with a single roll or chevron order (just a little more advanced than Winstone) as at Saintbury and Postlip,¹ to those of a late period with an excess of ornament such as Condicote, Quenington,² South Cerney and Lower Swell,³ about forty of which are further decorated with carved tympana embracing human and animal subjects.

Possibly the valleys of the Leach, the Coln, the Churn and the Frome are richest in the number of the lesser churches. In the vicinity of Winstone it was stated above that there were half a dozen churches within as many miles, but there are groups equally crowded near Coln St. Denys, Ampney Crucis, the Barringtons and the Slaughters. Approximately, of two hundred and forty churches of medieval foundation one hundred and forty yet possess Saxon or Norman details.

To my friends J. Bilson, D.Litt., and A. W. Clapham, F.S.A., who have visited Winstone with me, I am indebted for helpful suggestions.

¹ Ibid. l. 90.

² Ibid. l. 90.

³ The site of the church at Lower Swell and its immediate vicinity has been in

continuous occupation from prehistoric times, as indicated by the existing barrow, the discovery of Roman remains and the presence of incised dials of Saxon date.