THE VAULT PAINTINGS OF SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

By F. R. HORLBECK

The mischief wrought at Salisbury by James Wyatt in the last decades of the 18th century has continued to anger scholars and laymen alike. Not only did he shift and destroy recklessly in his efforts to restore the cathedral to what he considered to be its original condition, but he whitewashed until the interior must indeed have resembled a whited sepulchre[1]. In so doing, however, he may have unwittingly preserved a goodly portion of the original painted decoration of the 13th century. Because of a recent discovery, the scheme of painted decoration is recoverable with no little certainty, but of all the painting, which in the 13th century covered walls and vaults, only that on the high vaults of the church to the east of the main transepts contained figure subjects, and it is a portion of these subjects that Wyatt may have helped preserve.

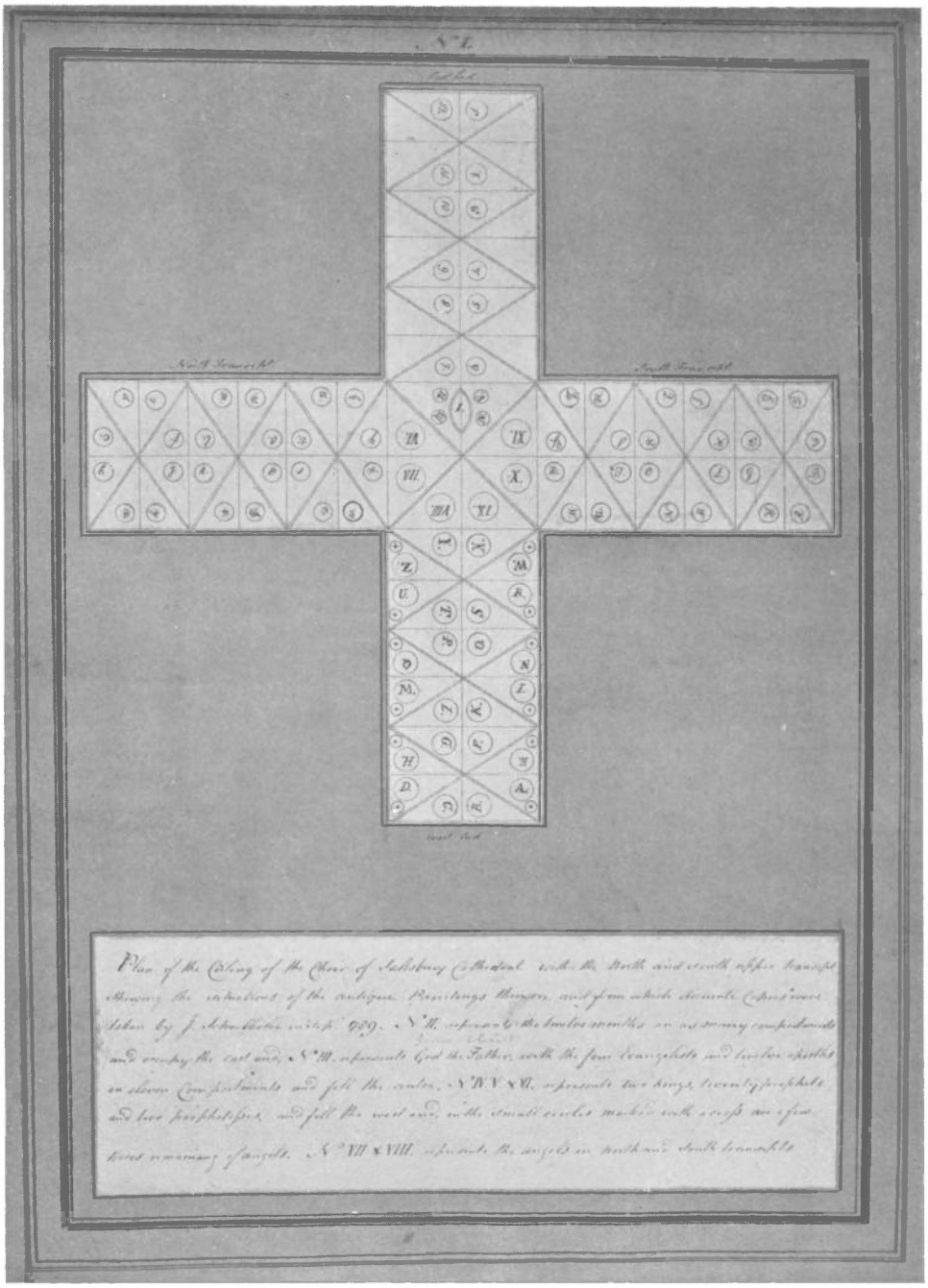
In 1789, one year before these vaults were hidden by whitewash, their original painted decoration was recorded by Jacob Schnebbelie, an artist in the employment of the Society of Antiquaries[2]. From small coloured sketches Schnebbelie prepared larger finished drawings which were purchased by the Society in December 1789 for the sum of twenty guineas[3]. A sketchbook of Schnebbelie, containing the preparatory sketches, came to the Society in 1877 as a gift of Frederick Overy, V.P., and a note on the flyleaf of the book states that 'Schnebbelie executed a series of careful drawings of the roof (of Salisbury Cathedral) for which he was paid but which are now not to be found—I imagine these are the sketches for them'.[4] These lost drawings have recently been discovered in the collections of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. They are found in the Gough Maps, XXXII (S.C. 17529), a series of large folios containing various works on British topography collected by the celebrated antiquarian, Richard Gough (1735-1809). How these drawings, purchased by the Society of Antiquaries in 1789, came into the possession of Gough we shall probably never know, but it is interesting to note that he was Director of the Society from 1771 to 1797, during which period the drawings were made for the Society! Gough's library was sold in 1810 with the exception of certain manuscripts and these topographical volumes which he bequeathed to the Bodleian Library.

1 Wyatt was not without his admirers. In a monograph on Salisbury Cathedral, published by the verger of the cathedral soon after Wyatt's restoration, the monochrome treatment of the interior was lauded as restoring the building to its original appearance. Mention was also made of the vault paintings, but so little appreciated was medieval painting even at this late date that they were dismissed as 'efforts of a wretched taste', obviously later additions because 'lines drawn in imitation of brick work' were observed under them. Wm. Dodsworth, *An Historical Account of the Episcopal See, and Cathedral Church, of Sarum, or Salisbury*, (Salisbury, 1814), 183.

2 Schnebbelie (1760-1792) was appointed draughtsman in ordinary to the Society of Antiquaries in February 1791. *Society of Antiquaries Minute Book* and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* (Oxford, 1937-8), XVII, 909.

3 In the Council Book of the Society of Antiquaries is the following entry for 18 December 1789: 'Mr. Schnebbelie produced according to order . . . coloured drawings in 93 compartments of the paintings on the ceiling of Salisbury cathedral: to these he proposes to add a plan of the ceiling now in hand. These last drawings he valued at twenty guineas which the council approving directed the Treasurer to pay him accordingly'.

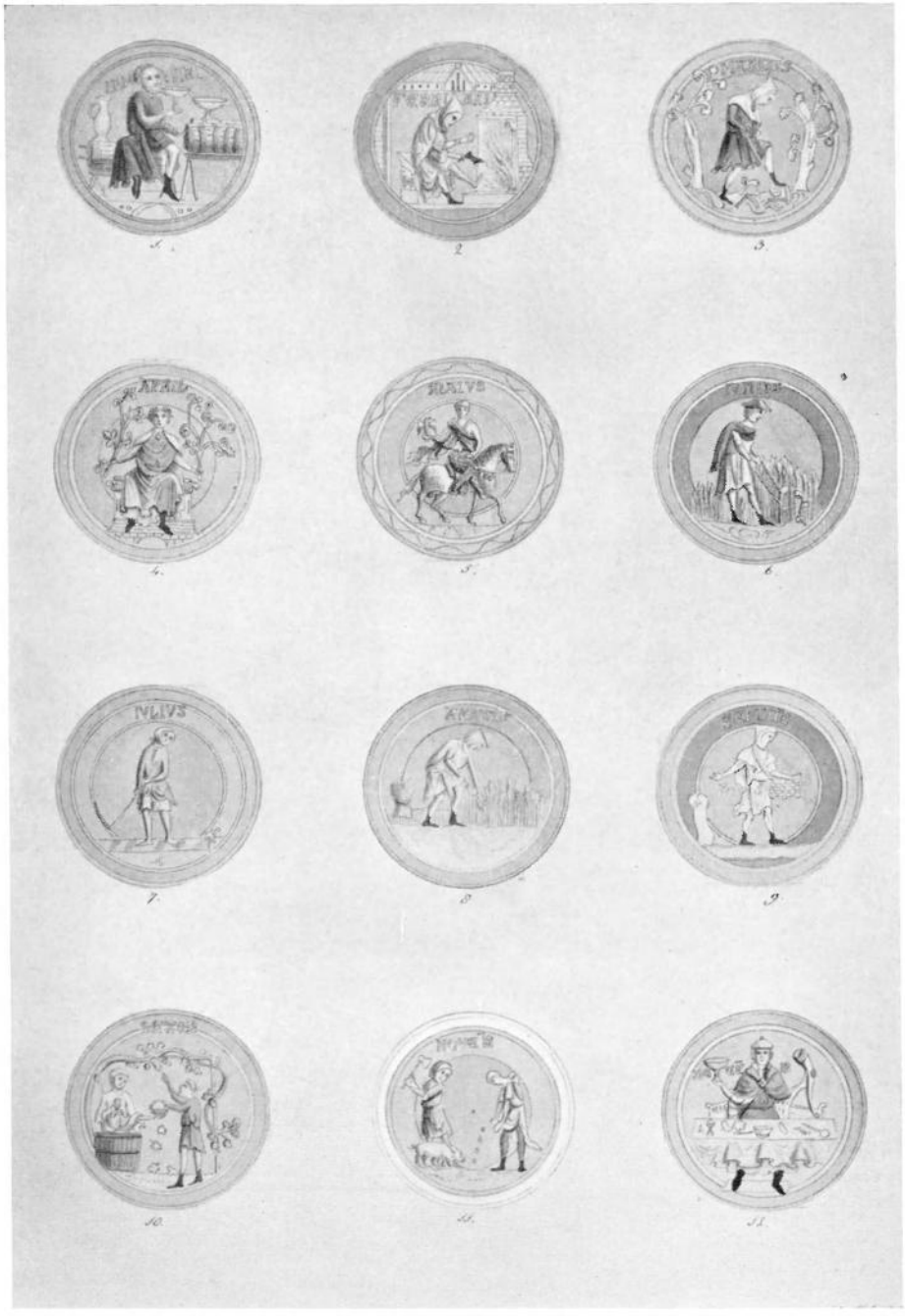
4 Society of Antiquaries, MS. 263.



Plan of choir, eastern transepts, and sanctuary of Salisbury Cathedral

Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie

(*By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*)



The Labours of the Months (Sanctuary)
Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie
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The drawings consist of eight sheets[1], the first being a plan of the eastern portions of the cathedral showing the disposition of the paintings on the vaults of the choir, eastern transepts, and sanctuary (Pl. XVIII). This scheme of decoration comprised a series of large medallions, generally eight to a bay, containing figure subjects. These late 18th-century drawings by an obscure artist are important because they give in amazing completeness the original iconography which was only partly disclosed by the Victorian restoration. Sir Gilbert Scott in the 1870's, attempting to rectify some of Wyatt's mischief, had the vaults of the choir, eastern crossing, and sanctuary repainted. In a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries in 1876, the Rev. H. T. Armfield discussed the painting with reference to the original position of the high altar, then a matter of great concern[2]. He reported that the yellow wash applied by Wyatt, being partially transparent, 'obscured the pictures without entirely concealing them'. Tracings were therefore made[3], but instead of attempting to restore the original paintings, Scott had them entirely renewed, the reason given being that the originals could not be saved because the pigments were in a state of powder.

Only the high vaults of the choir and sanctuary, however, were repainted; those of the eastern transepts remain as they were left by Wyatt in 1790. Under the yellow wash applied in that year, the outlines of forty-eight large medallions can be clearly seen, eight medallions to each of the six bays. From Schnebbelie's drawings (Pls. XXIV and XXV) it is clear that these medallions were filled with half length figures of angels holding crowns, chalices, suns, moons, stars, palms, scrolls, and musical instruments; in short, a celestial choir. It is this painting, covered by Wyatt and left undisturbed by Scott, which may yet be recovered to take its place among the most important examples of figure painting surviving in England from the 13th century.

At first glance it would appear that the partial restoration of 1870 followed the original scheme as recorded by Schnebbelie. Medallions containing figures of prophets and a king fill the three bays of vaulting over the choir, while a Majesty, surrounded by the four Evangelists and the twelve Apostles, occupies the vault of the eastern crossing. On the vaults over the sanctuary are twelve medallions, grouped along the crowns of the vaults and filled with figures illustrating the Labours of the Months. It is the latter which show most clearly that the Victorian restorers only followed the original disposition of the medallions. The Labours of the Months, as they now exist, were reproduced by Tancred Borenius in an article in the *Antiquaries Journal* in 1932[4]. The subjects are as follows:

1 Each sheet is about 19¼" by 13⅝". The medallions were drawn in ink and coloured, then cut out and pasted to buff-coloured sheets of stiff paper.

2 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd Series, VI (1873-76), 477-9.

3 One of these tracings was reproduced in *The Antiquaries Journal*, XII (1932), 395, fig. 1. In a letter dated 24 August 1960, Mr. M. C. Farrar Bell of Clayton and Bell disclosed that these tracings have disappeared since they were exhibited in 1932.

4 Tancred Borenius, 'A Destroyed Cycle of Wall-Paintings in a Church in Wiltshire', *The Antiquaries Journal*, XII (1932), Pls. LXXIX and LXXX.

January	Man warming himself before a fire.
February	Three men feasting.
March	Man digging.
April	Man sowing.
May	Horseman with a hawk.
June	Youth offering nosegay to a lady.
July	Two men harvesting.
August	Two men threshing.
September	Two men picking fruit.
October	Two men at a wine press.
November	Two men cutting wood.
December	Two men feeding and killing pigs.

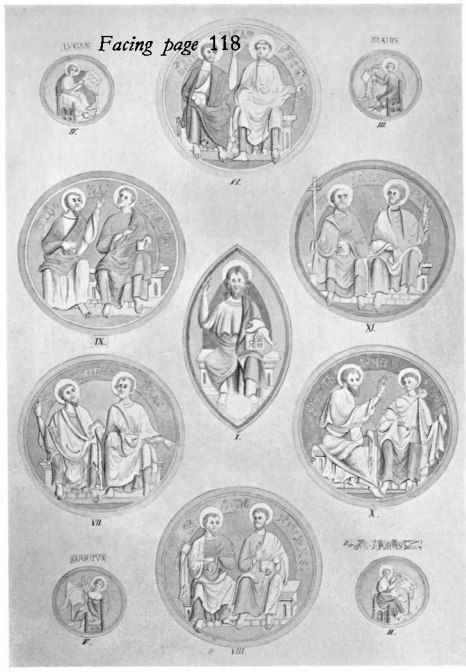
This series is quite different from that recorded by Schnebbelie (Pls. XIX and XXVII):

January	Man seated and drinking from a bowl.
February	Man warming himself before a fire.
March	Man digging.
April	Man seated and holding two branches.
May	Horseman with a hawk.
June	Man weeding.
July	Man mowing.
August	Man harvesting.
September	Man sowing.
October	Two men at a wine press.
November	Two men feeding and killing pigs.
December	Man feasting.

Between the two series there is a correspondence for only three months, March, May, and October, and even these are similar only in subject matter. The differences can be partially explained. Seven tracings of the original Labours of the Months were made by the restorers[1], and these were identified by Mr. Armfield as follows:

January	Man warming himself before a fire.
February	A feast.
March	Man digging.
April	Man sowing.
June	Man holding a flower.
October	Man with crust of bread and cup of ale.
December	Two men feeding and killing pigs.

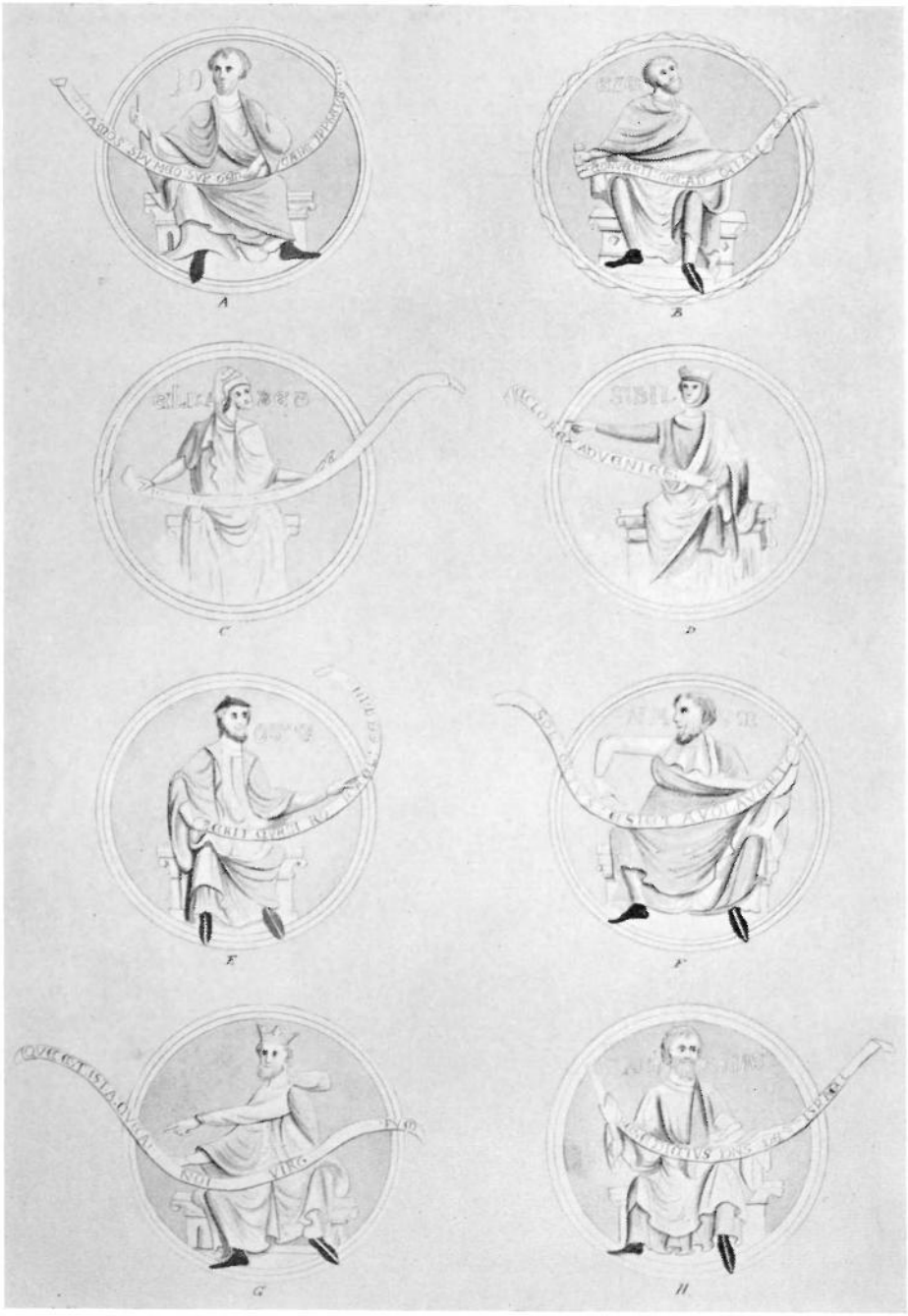
[1] Rev. H. T. Armfield, 'The Ancient Roof Painting in Salisbury Cathedral', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, XVII (1878), 133.



Christ in Majesty, Evangelists, and Apostles (Eastern Crossing)

Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie

(*By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*)



Eight Prophets (West bay of Choir)
Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie
(*By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*)

This identification was followed in the restoration—with the unexplainable exception of October—and one can only assume that the names of the months, which Schnebbelie was able to attach to his Labours, were not visible through the whitewash in 1870. Therefore the tracings were wrongly labelled to begin with. For the five Labours missing altogether—presumably tracings could not be made—the restorers may have consulted medieval calendars, but they surely were not typical English calendars of the 13th century.

English calendars with the Labours of the Months—usually in medallions—have survived in sufficient numbers to allow us to establish the reliability of Schnebbelie's drawings. The two that agree most closely with the Salisbury series are found in the Rutland Psalter, a manuscript commonly held to be from a Salisbury scriptorium[1], and an early 13th-century psalter in the British Museum, Royal MS. 1 D. X[2]. Their Labours of the Months are as follows:

	Rutland Psalter	Royal MS. 1 D.X
January	Three-faced Janus.	Man drinking from a horn
February	Man before a fire.	Man before a fire.
March	Man digging.	Man digging.
April	Man holding 2 fleurs-de-lis.	Man sitting with a nosegay.
May	Man standing with a hawk.	Horseman with a hawk.
June	Man weeding.	Man mowing.
July	Man mowing.	Man weeding.
August	Man harvesting.	Man harvesting.
September	Man threshing.	Two men at a wine press.
October	Man sowing.	Man sowing.
November	Man killing pigs.	Man killing a pig.
December	Man carrying wood.	Three men feasting.

These two series are so close to the Salisbury Labours that two conclusions can be drawn: (1) Schnebbelie copied correctly; (2) the Salisbury series belongs to the English tradition of calendar illustration. This latter point is confirmed by other English calendars of the 13th century, which, while offering slight variations, are nonetheless very close. Among them are the calendars from a psalter written for a nun of St. Mary's Abbey, Winchester, c. 1220-40 (Trinity College, Cambridge, MS. B.II.4); the Oscott Psalter, second half of the 13th century (B.M., Add. MS. 50,000); the Psalter of Simon of Meopham, c. 1270 (Sion College); a psalter probably from the diocese of Lincoln, after 1280 (B.M., Add. MS. 38116); and the Bardolph-Vaux Psalter, c. 1300 (Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 233).

[1] E. G. Millar, *The Rutland Psalter*, (Oxford, Roxburghe Club, 1937), ff. 1-6v.
[2] J. A. Herbert, 'A Psalter in the British Museum (Roy. MS. 1 D. X.)', *Walpole Society*, III (1913-14), p. 55.

On the vaults of the choir were—as there still are—twenty-four large medallions, each containing a seated figure holding a scroll which in every case extended beyond the borders of the medallions (Pls. XXI–XXIII). Eighteen of the figures are identified by name; twenty-three are identified by the texts on the scrolls. Using Schnebbelie's references, the prophets and their texts are as follows[1]:

A. JO (Joel)

'AMOS:SPV:MEO:SUP:OEM CARNE: 7 P PHETAB

(Effundam spiritum meum super omnem carnem; et prophetabunt filii vestri. Joel II:28)

B. EZEC (Ezekiel)

CONVERTI:ME:AD OR.I.AM . . . GS

(Convertit me ad portam domus. Ezekiel XLVII:1)

C. ELIZABET (Elizabeth)

No text

D. SIBIL (Erythrean Sibyl)

CELO REX ADVENIET

(A celo rex adveniet)[2]

E. OSEE (Hosea)

ERIT. QVASI. RO . RAEL:GEMIN

(Ero quasi ros; Israel germinabit sicut lilium. Hosea XIV:6)

F. NAVM (Nahum)

SOL' ORTVS:ESIET AVOLAVERT

(Sol ortus est, et avolaverunt. Nahum III:17)

G. ———— (Solomon)

QVE:EST:ISTA:QVEA . . . NOI . . . VIRG . . . FUM

(Quae est ista quae ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae. Song of Songs III:6)

H. ZACHARIAS (Zacharias, priest and father of John the Baptist)

BENEDICTVS DNS DE ISRAEL.

(Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel. Luke I:68)

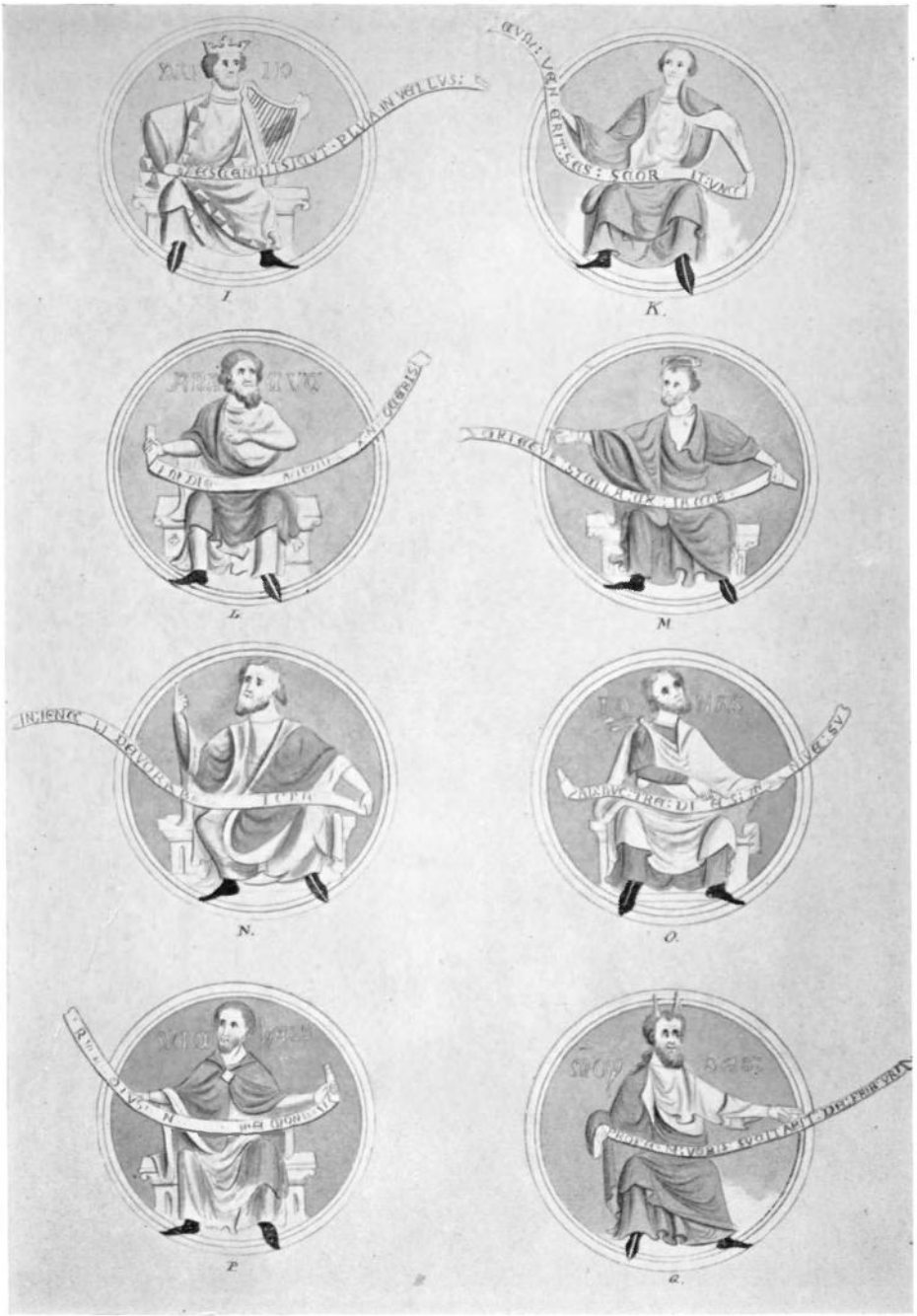
I. DAVID (David)

DESCENDIT. SICVT. PLVIA. IN VELLVS:

(Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus. Psalm LXXI:6)

[1] Prof. Francis Wormald was a constant source of assistance during the preparation of this article, but I am particularly grateful to him for his help in transcribing and identifying these texts.

[2] K. Young, *Drama in the Medieval Church*, (Oxford 1933), II, 130.



Eight Prophets (Centre bay of Choir)

Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie

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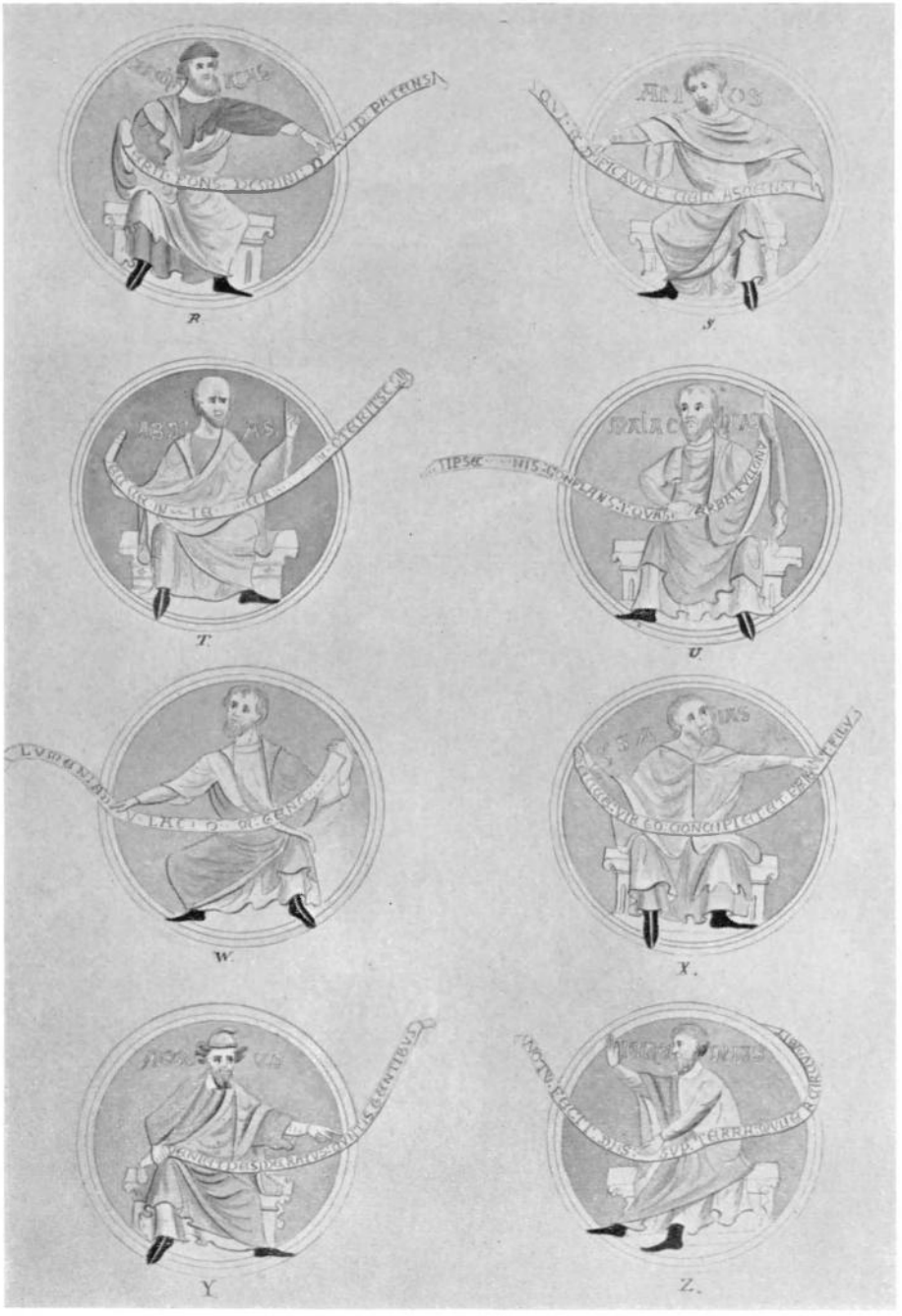


Eight Prophets (East bay of Choir)
Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie
(*By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*)

K. ———— (Daniel)
CVM:VENERIT.SES:SCOR . . . IT:VNC
(Cum venerit Sanctus Sanctorum cessabit unctio vestra)[1]

L. ABACVC (Habakkuk)
I M DIO . . . NIM . . . X.N.OCERIS
(In medio duum animalium cognosceris)[2]

M. ———— (Balaam)
ORIETVR:STELLA:EX:IACOB
(Orietur stella ex Jacob. Numbers XXIV:17)

N. ———— (Zephaniah)
IN: IGNE . LI:DEVORABI . . . TERR
(In igne zeli eius devorabitur omnis terra. Zephaniah I:18)

O. IONAS (Jonah)
AD:HVC:TRE:DIES: *7* N . . . NIVE:SV
(Adhuc quadraginta dies, et Nineve subvertetur. Jonah III:4)[3]

P. MICHEAS (Micah)
R . . . OIVS . . . N . . . E MON . . .
(Et regnabit Dominus super eos in monte Sion. Micah IV:7)

Q. MOYSES:(Moses)
PROFE . . . M:VOBIS:SVCITABIT:DE:FRIB VRI
(Prophetam suscitabit vobis Dominus Deus vester de fratribus vestris. Acts III:22)[4]

R. ZACHARIAS (Zechariah, prophet)
ERIT.FONS.DOMINI:DAVID:PATENS
(In die illa erit fons patens domui David. Zechariah XIII:1)

S. AMOS (Amos)
QVI.EDIFICAVIT.I.CELO.ASCENSI
(Qui aedificat in caelo ascensionem suam. Amos IX:6)

T. ABDIAS (Obadiah)
ECCE. IN . . . TE . . . ER . . . OTERITSC̄SI
(Ecce in monte Sion erit salvatio, et erit sanctus. Obadiah I:17)

[1] This text like that for Habakkuk derives from the pseudo-Augustinian sermon. Young, *op. cit.*, 126.
[2] *Ibid.*, 128.
[3] Cf. Matthew XII: 39. Sicut enim fuit Ionas in ventre ceti tribus diebus, et tribus noctibus; sic erit Filius hominis in corde terrae tribus diebus, et tribus noctibus.
[4] Cf. Deuteronomy XVIII: 15. Prophetam de gente tua et de fratribus tuis sicut me, suscitabit tibi Dominus Deus tuus.

U. MALACHIAS (Malachi)
IPSE . . . NIS:CONFLANS:I:QVASI:ERBA:FVLLONV
(Ipse enim quasi ignis conflans, et quasi herba fullonum. Malachi III:2)

W. ———— (Simeon)
LVMEN:AD V . . LAC O . . M:GENC . . .
(Lumen ad revelationem gentium. Luke II:32)

X. YSAIAS (Isaiah)
ECCE:VIRGO:CONCIPIET.ET.PARIET.FILIV
(Ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium. Isaiah VII:14)

Y. AGGEVS (Haggai)
VENIET.DESIDERATVS:CVNTIS.GENTIBVS
(Veniet desideratus cunctis gentibus. Haggai II:8)

Z. IEREMIAS (Jeremiah)
NOTV.FECIT.DNS: SVP.TERRA:MVLIER CIRCVDABIT
(Quia creavit dominus novum super terram: femina circumdabit virum. Jeremiah XXXI:22)

With the identification of the twenty-four figures established beyond doubt, it now remains to indicate the original positions of the figures. These are given by Schnebbelie in the plan of the eastern vaults which he attached to the Bodleian drawings (Pl. XVIII). A comparison with the sketch-plan in the Society of Antiquaries, MS. 263 (Pl. XXVI and fig. 1), undoubtedly executed on the spot, discloses, however, discrepancies which compel one to reconsider the order.

It is most difficult to account for the differences between the sketch-plan (fig. 1), and that included with the finished drawings (fig. 2). The former suggests a definite order with the figures grouped in pairs along the east-west axis. Jeremiah and Isaiah at the east end and Ezekiel and Daniel at the west end confront each other; the two female figures are placed opposite each other, as are the two kings and Moses and Balaam; and the six pairs of minor prophets are grouped as canonical couples. Such an arrangement is destroyed in the finished plan which places Elizabeth next to the Sibyl, facing Ezekiel, and which places Haggai between Jeremiah and Isaiah.

Following the sketch-plan, therefore, as being probably the more reliable of the two, a suggested reconstruction can be made (fig. 3). The series opens at the west end of the choir with the Major Prophets Ezekiel and Daniel and closes at the eastern crossing with Jeremiah and Isaiah. The twelve Minor Prophets are placed in the remaining webs along the crowns of the vaults and fill completely the vault of the easternmost bay in an arrangement which follows the canonical order in a somewhat tenuous fashion. In every case, and this strengthens the reconstruction, the figures face each other across the east-west axis, strongly suggesting that the same principle may be applied to the

Twenty-four Angels (North East Transept)
Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie
(*By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.*)

Facing page 123

Twenty-four Angels (South East Transept)
Drawing by Jacob Schnebbelie
(*By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*)

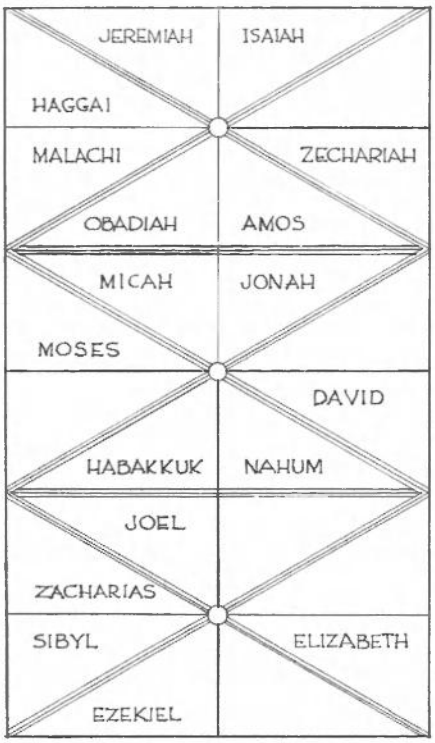


Fig. 1.
Sketch Plan, after Schnebbelie

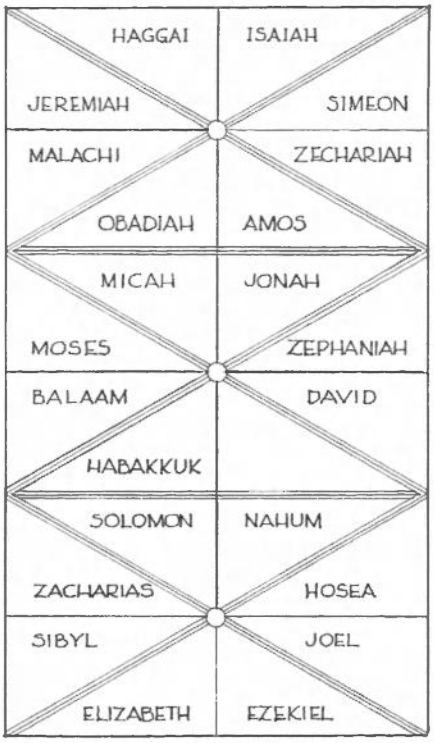


Fig. 2.
Finished Plan, after Schnebbelie

remaining figures. The positions of the Sibyl, Elizabeth, and Zacharias seem fairly certain, and the remaining web of the westernmost bay is then logically filled by Simeon. These last three with the Sibyl form a quartette of persons who are not Old Testament figures but are prophets, nonetheless, of Christ's coming. The text of Elizabeth's scroll is the only one missing, but only two possibilities present themselves:

1. Benedicta tu inter mulieres, et benedictus fructus ventris tui.
2. Et unde hoc mihi ut veniet mater Domini mei ad me?

The second is the more logical choice since it refers more directly to Christ's Incarnation, and this choice is confirmed by the Sarum usage for Advent. A sermon of the 5th or 6th century, 'Contra Judaeos, Paganos et Arianos,' attributed to St. Augustine throughout the medieval period, was used for the three lessons of the second nocturn at matins on the fourth Sunday in Advent.[1] The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Moses, David, Habakkuk, Simeon, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and the Erythrean Sibyl are introduced, and those prophets at Salisbury other than the canonical Old Testament prophets are undoubtedly drawn from such a source. Only Balaam and Solomon are

[1] *Breviarium Sarum*, ed. F. Proctor and C. Wordsworth, (Cambridge, 1882), fasc. I, cols. CXXXV-CXLIV.

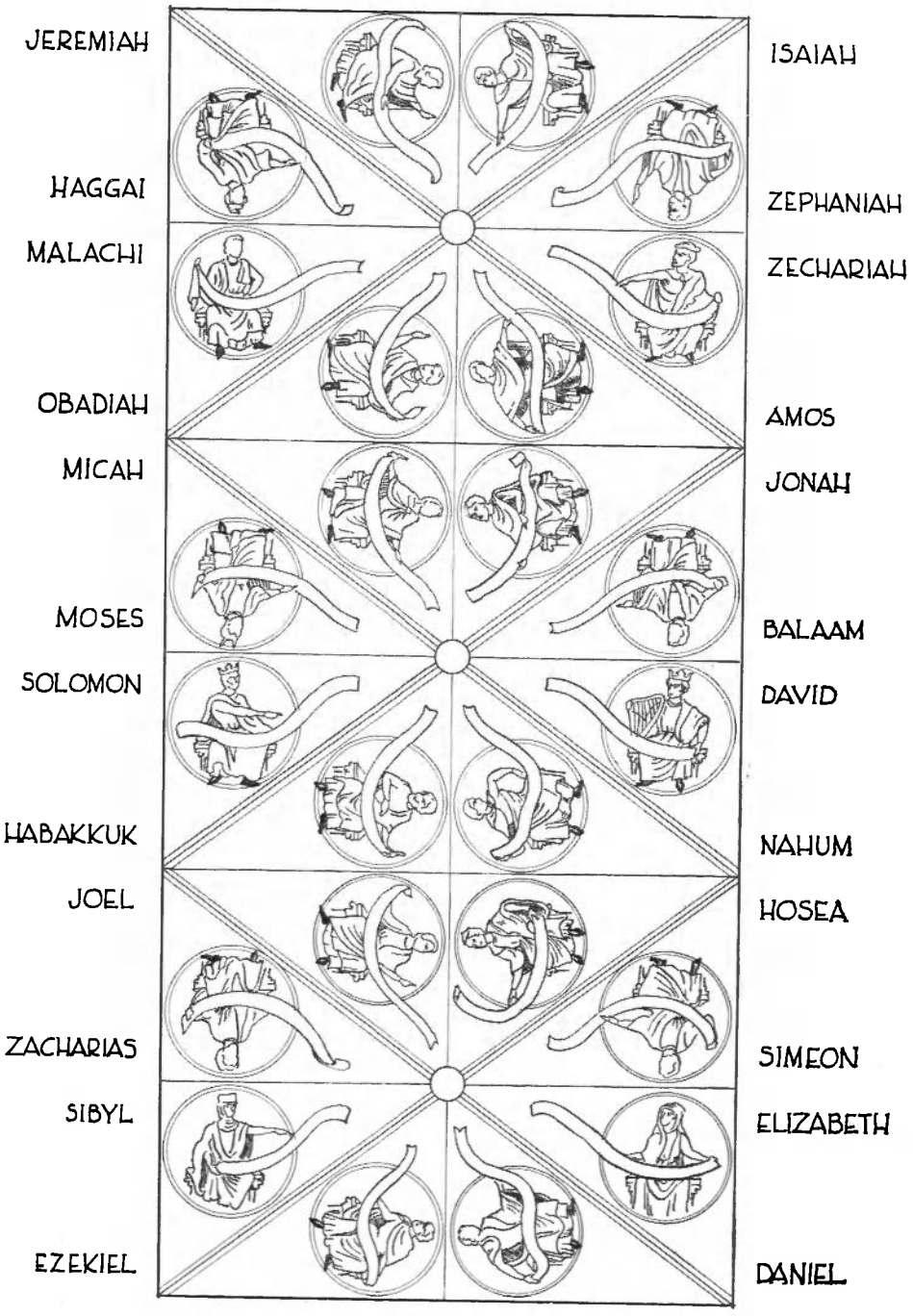


Fig. 3. Suggested Reconstruction

unaccounted for. Balaam is found in a 13th-century version from Laon of the *Ordo Prophetarum*, a medieval drama also based on the pseudo-Augustinian sermon[1], and Solomon may have been required as a second king to balance the figure of David[2].

There can be no doubt that the person responsible for the programme at Salisbury was familiar with the traditional use of the prophets which can be traced back to the pseudo-Augustinian sermon, but the same cannot be said for the restorers of 1870 who repainted the choir vaults. The figures now visible are not accompanied by names, but texts identify many of them. The texts for Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Malachi, Obadiah, Moses, Joel, Daniel, and Zechariah are those of the original scheme. Furthermore, these texts put these figures in their rightful places. This strongly suggests that a great deal was still visible in 1870. Other figures must have been identifiable by name in 1870 because the present texts, though different from the originals (for example, Nahum I:15 rather than Nahum III:17), nonetheless put Nahum, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, and David in their proper places. How the restorers arrived at some of the remaining texts is difficult to say. Job's exclamation of faith, 'Scio enim quod redemptor meus vivit,' or Abraham's 'Deus providebit sibi victimam holocausti' hardly refer to the Incarnation, the central theme of the 13th-century texts. Then, too, the Victorians chose to ignore altogether the Sibyl and St. Elizabeth.

That this wonderful array of imagery constitutes a *Coelum* is plain enough and has long been recognized, but its real significance as a magnificent example of 13th-century English iconography has never been considered. The Salisbury theme may be considered as an elaboration of the second vision of St. John, Revelation IV: 2-8, which was so highly favoured in the art of the 12th century, but no single prototype can be cited. Rather the Salisbury *Coelum* is more easily understood as the product of a long development spanning many centuries. The Christ in Majesty with Apostles, for example, can be traced as far back as a 4th-century mosaic in the Chapel of Sant' Aquilino in Milan, while the Majesty with Evangelists and Prophets can be found in Carolingian illumination of the 9th century. Handsome examples of the latter occur in two MSS. made for Charles the Bald, the Vivian Bible and the *Codex Aureus* of St. Emmeran; in both the four Evangelists with their symbols combine with the four Major Prophets to support the Christ in Majesty. This monumental composition was repeatedly copied in Ottonian MSS., the Sainte-Chapelle Gospels of the late 10th century containing a particularly fine example.

In Anglo-Saxon England certain compositions, preserved in manuscript illumination, may also be considered as having contributed to the development of the Salisbury *Coelum*. The Athelstan Psalter, B.M. Cotton MS. Galba A. xviii, of the first half of the 10th century, is ornamented with four full-page

[1] Young, *op. cit.*, 145.

[2] The presence of the two most important kings in the ancestry of Christ immediately suggests the Tree of Jesse which would not be out of place among these prophecies relating to the Incarnation.

miniatures, two of them being Majesties with the Heavenly Choirs. The Majesty on folio 2v is supported by rows of Angels, Prophets, and Apostles; that on folio 21 is surrounded by the choirs of Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins. This grand theme was seemingly elaborated in that showpiece of Winchester illumination, the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold. The first seven miniatures show the choirs of Confessors and Virgins and the Apostles, and these suggest, as Prof. Wormald has already pointed out, that miniatures now missing from the series may have included a Majesty and the remainder of the choirs[1]. Still another example of Anglo-Saxon inventiveness is found in the Grimbald Gospels of the early 11th century. On folio 114v the border enclosing the portrait of St. John contains the Heavenly Host adoring the Trinity, wth Apostles, Saints, Old Testament Kings, and Angels filling the panels and medallions of the border. The decorated text page that follows on folio 115 is similarly framed but with the Heavenly Host adoring the Virgin and Child, a theme which, with reference to the later Salisbury *Coelum*, surely suggests the Incarnation.

The 11th century also saw the introduction of a related subject which was no less influential for the Salisbury iconography, namely the Apocalyptic Vision as conceived by the artists of the manuscripts of the Beatus Commentary on the Apocalypse[2]. The Majesty surrounded by the Evangelist symbols and the twenty-four Elders was a major theme of Romanesque iconography, and while the obvious examples, apart from the manuscripts, are such sculptured portals as Moissac and Chartres, examples in wall painting of the 12th century are common enough even in England. A particularly well-preserved painting, complete with St. John writing his book, is found on the apse vault of St. Gabriel's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral. Another, unfortunately re-painted in the 19th century, decorates the apse vault of the Norman church at Copford in Essex; here the Majesty is supported by Angels with Apostles below and with the Signs of the Zodiac in medallions on the arch at the entrance to the apse[3].

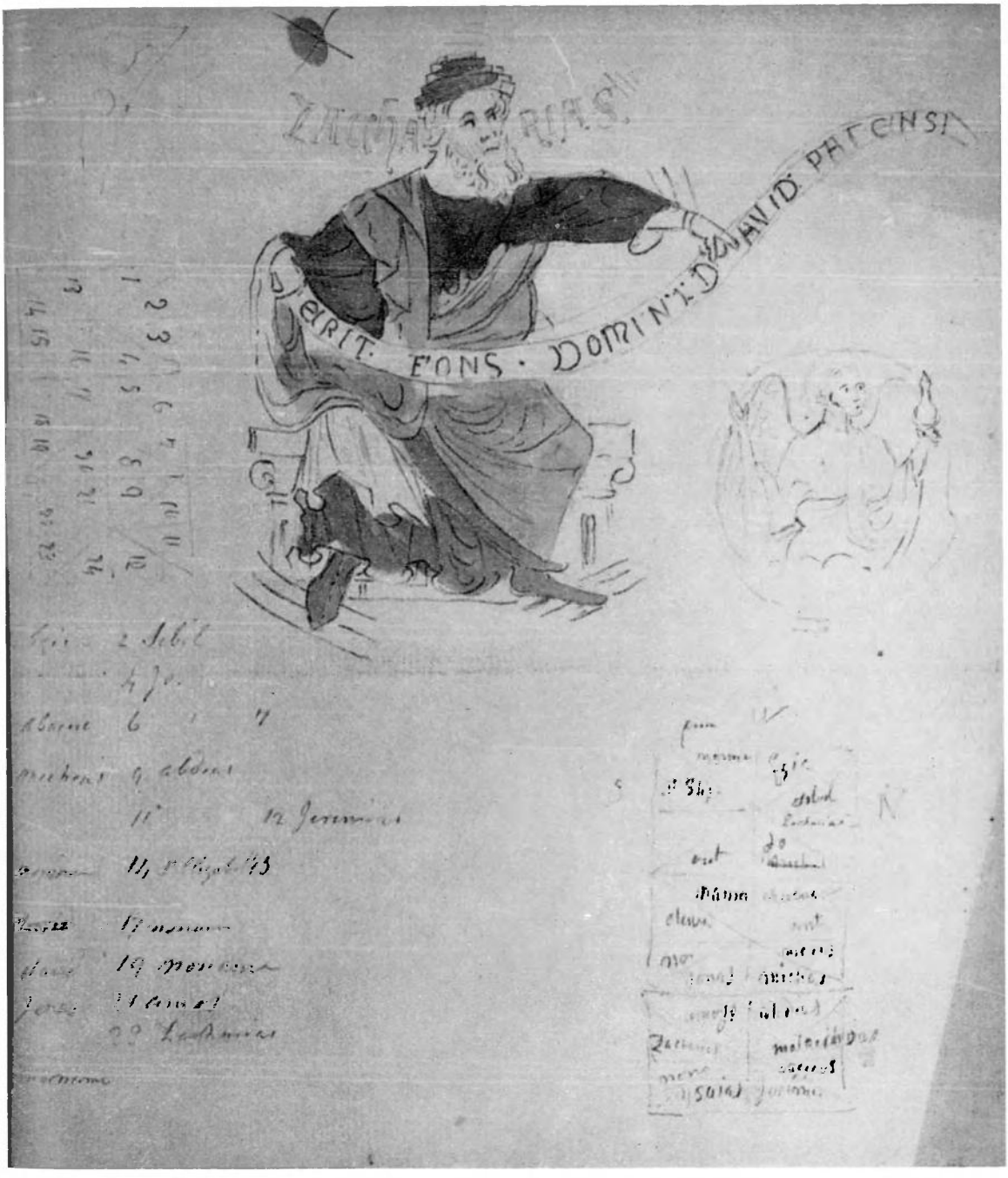
At Salisbury, however, in the middle of the 13th century, instead of the great subjects found most frequently in contemporary French sculpture, the Coronation of the Virgin or the Last Judgment—the latter having superseded the Apocalyptic Vision as the conception of the Doom—the older theme of the Majesty accompanied by the Heavenly Host was employed to decorate the high vaults of choir and sanctuary[4]. The retention of a theme, no longer in favour across the Channel, is not too surprising when considered in terms of English Gothic architecture. Just as English 13th-century architecture retains much

1 F. Wormald, *The Benedictional of St. Ethelwold*, (London, 1959), 12.

2 The early 11th-century Bamberg Apocalypse has a miniature of the same vision but merely adds a row of eight Elders to a Majesty with the Evangelist symbols, see H. Wolfflin, *Die Bamberger Apokalypse*, (Munich, 1921), Pl. 7.

3 For illustrations of the paintings in St. Gabriel's Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral, and Copford see E. W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Twelfth Century*, (Oxford, 1944), Pls. 2-11, 74-75, and supp. Pls. 2a and b.

4 At the same time the fact cannot be overlooked that the 13th century was one of the great periods in the history of the Apocalypse in manuscript illumination. There appears to be, however, no direct or even indirect connection between these manuscripts of the Apocalypse and the Salisbury paintings.



The Prophet Zechariah, an Angel, and Sketch-plans
Page from the Schnebbelie Sketchbook, MS. 263
(*By permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London*)

The Labours of the Months

Page from the Schnebbelie Sketchbook, MS. 263

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of the Romanesque in its thick walls with clerestory passage, broad trifo ria, and lack of vertical emphasis, so the painted decoration on the high vaults of Salisbury is still Romanesque in its iconography and composition. The comparatively low vaults of Salisbury (only 84 feet as against the 140 feet of its French contemporary, Amiens) lent themselves to a scheme of decoration which would have been lost on the high vaults of French cathedrals. In France, and above all in the Ile de France, wall painting, i.e., figure subjects, was largely replaced by stained glass that filled the enormous windows. It is interesting to note at this point that the untraceried lancets of Salisbury were largely, if not wholly, filled with grisaille glass, which provided the light necessary to see the vault paintings.

The use of the medallion which figures so prominently in the Salisbury vault can be paralleled in the 12th century in such paintings as those decorating the vaults of the Chapel of St. Julien at Petit-Quevilly near Rouen[1]. Medallions are also found as a compositional device in such MSS. as the Lambeth, Winchester, and Lothian Bibles of the second half of the 12th century[2]. Too little English Romanesque wall painting has survived, but in the meagre examples the medallion is most conspicuous. It is found on the vaults of St. Gabriel's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral, on the vaults of single bays of the south aisles of both Norwich and Ely Cathedrals, and on the apsidal vault of St. John's Chapel, Guildford[3].

In 13th-century England the Salisbury medallions are not unique. There are examples in Winchester Cathedral on the vault of the Chapel of the Guardian Angels, in Lincoln Cathedral on the vaults of the main transepts, and in Oxford Cathedral on the vaults of the Chapter House[4]. Thus, a scheme of vault decoration, which in all probability was an invention of the mid-12th century and which originally involved the use of medallions with stylized acanthus scroll-work, was still a favourite setting for figure subjects on English vaults as late as 1250.

The 19th century was primarily interested in the Salisbury painting for the evidence it seemingly provided as to the original position of the high altar. According to one school of thought, the high altar must have been under the eastern crossing because of the Majesty on its vault[5]. Sir Gilbert Scott, on the other hand, argued that it must have been farther east[6]. The latest writer to deal with the problem believes the high altar was originally placed under the

1 P. Gelis-Didot et H. Laffillee, *La Peinture Decorative en France du XIe au XVIe siecle*, (Paris, n.d.—*c.* 1880-90), Pl. 10; also Yves Bonnefoy, *Peintures Murales de la France Gothique*, (Paris, 1954), Pls. 1-5.

2 Even earlier examples can be cited in two manuscripts in the British Museum, Arundel 91 and Harley 614; for these two manuscripts see C. R. Dodwell, *The Canterbury School of Illumination*, (Cambridge, 1954), Pls. 17b and 19b.

3 Tristram, *op. cit.*, Pls. 20-22, 51-53, 82-84, and supp. Pls. 2c, 3a, 5a and c.

4 E. W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1950), Pls. 44-49, 83-93 and supp. Pl. 19.

5 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd Series, VI (1873-76), 478.

6 Sir Geo. Gilbert Scott, *Salisbury Cathedral: Report upon the Position of the High Altar, January* 1876 (Salisbury 1876).

eastern crossing and only moved eastward in the 14th century[1]. One consideration militates against accepting the view that the Majesty on the vault of the eastern crossing necessarily determined the position of the high altar. Such an arrangement assumes that the ritual choir extended westward under the main crossing into the nave. If this had been the case, would it not have been likely that the painted decoration on the vaults would have also extended westward as far as the choir screen? Yet there is no indication whatsoever that the painted decoration ever comprised more than what has been described and is now visible.

On the other hand, it may seem strange that the imagery was extended eastward by placing the Labours of the Months on the high vaults of the present sanctuary. The Apocalyptic Vision carved on French tympana in the 12th century was often, if not normally, accompanied by a calendar consisting of the Labours of the Months and the Signs of the Zodiac on the framing arch orders. The inclusion of a calendar at Salisbury is therefore not surprising. Neither is its position which further suggests that in this instance eastward signifies upward. The entire scheme may then be thought of as a kind of iconostasis defining the entrance to the presbytery in a horizontal rather than a vertical plane. The scheme has nothing to do with the high altar or its position but is concerned with the sanctuary as a whole and was intended to embrace the entire sanctuary.

It is true that the Apocalyptic Vision, as conceived at Salisbury in the mid-13th century, is a particularly complete treatment of the subject. To have extended this magnificent theme would have meant either destroying its unity or transforming it into a Last Judgment, and this was obviously not the intention of the Cathedral Chapter at Salisbury. Cannot this *Coelum* be regarded as the final statement of this Romanesque theme? The Majesty is surrounded by the Apostles and the Evangelists—not their symbols as is true of most 12th-century examples—and is supported by the Heavenly Choir and by twenty-four Prophets who, surely not by chance, equal in number the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse. Both the First and Second Coming of Christ are alluded to in the Prophets' scrolls. The adaptation of this scheme to the cruciform plan of the ritual end of the church was truly inspired and its placement on the high vaults exceedingly logical. A Last Judgment would have been difficult, well nigh impossible, to arrange on the high vaults, and, indeed, the Doom, which figures so largely in the decoration of English churches in the 14th and 15th centuries, is almost invariably placed over the chancel arch. Its hierarchical arrangement lends itself to a vertical wall treatment. To be sure, the English parish church was seldom vaulted; nevertheless, the Doom was conceived in relationship with the Rood, and no example of its ever having appeared on the vaults of an English church, large or small, can be cited.

It is tempting to read into these drawings, because they are so important, the style of the original paintings, which the drawings simply do not convey.

1 Richard Mount, 'Screens or Vistas in Cathedrals?', *Country Life*, September 29, 1960, 672.

In particular one would like to compare them with the nearby and only slightly earlier paintings in Winchester Cathedral, namely the angels in medallions on the vault of the Chapel of the Guardian Angels[1], or to see in them relationship with the group of mid 13th-century manuscripts commonly associated with the scriptorium of Salisbury Cathedral[2]. Since none of the original figure-work at Salisbury is now visible, close comparisons cannot be established with regard to figure style. Even the preparatory sketches, presumably executed on the spot, are of little value.

On the basis of a single tracing—one of several made in 1870 and reproduced by Borenius in 1932—it is fairly safe to say that the Salisbury figure-work on the vaults was stylistically more advanced, the figures better proportioned and more naturally posed, their draperies less patterned than that of the manuscripts ascribed to Salisbury[3]. If more of the tracings had survived, we might be in a better position to carry the discussions of style a little further. Nonetheless, while acknowledging an indebtedness to Schnebbelie, one cannot fail to recognize his limitations as a recorder of medieval style; one merely has to compare that single tracing of the prophet Hosea with Schnebbelie's copy of the same figure. The latter copied no more than he saw, but his vision was undeniably tempered by his training—or lack of it—as well as by the tenor of the times[4].

A possible link with the manuscripts ascribed to Salisbury is suggested, however, in certain architectural details. In several miniatures, the thrones of the Virgin, of Christ, or of such royal personages as David are richly decorated with rows of arcading and of quatrefoils[5]. Some of these thrones, the decoration of which appears to be peculiar to this group of manuscripts, also show uprights ornamented so that they resemble the knob-turnings of 17th-century furniture. These same features—in a highly simplified form, to be sure—are to be seen on the thrones of the four Evangelists which surround the Salisbury Majesty (Pl. XX).

It is otherwise fruitless to attempt a stylistic analysis based on a comparison with contemporary paintings. The eye can all too easily be made to see in the late 18th-century drawings what one would very much like to see. A stylistic analysis must be postponed until investigations have been made to determine whether under Wyatt's whitewash there still remains some portion of the original painting which may be uncovered and preserved. Were the Victorians right in stating that the original painting could not be uncovered, or were they

1 *Arch. J.*, CXVI, Pl. XVI.

2 A Hollaender, 'The Sarum Illuminator and His School', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, L (1943), 230-262.

3 Borenius, *op. cit.*, 395, fig. 1.

4 An archaeological interest in the Middle Ages was then in its infancy, and Schnebbelie may be considered one of the lesser pioneers along with the giants, John Carter, John Britton, Thomas Rickman, and Augustus Pugin.

5 For the more important examples see the following: f. 150 of the Missal of Henry of Chichester in the John Rylands Library at Manchester, MS. 24; f. 6 of the Psalter in All Souls' College Oxford, MS. 6; f. 66 v. of the Wilton Psalter, London, Royal College of Physicians; f. 144 of the Bible of Wm. de Hales, B.M. Royal MS. 1B.xii; and the Beatus page of the Rutland Psalter. Hollaender, *op. cit.*, Pls. III, IX, and XIV.

merely excusing an overpowering desire to renew instead of grappling with the far more troublesome matter of saving what was already there? Were they unable to deal with the technical problems of recovery and preservation?

Such questions can only be answered by employing an expert to examine the vaults of the eastern transepts. It is to be hoped, then, that the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury will take steps in the near future to see whether or not Wyatt unwittingly helped to preserve something of a wealth of medieval painted imagery when he in fact sought to blot it out in 1790. If such should prove to be the case, the vault paintings of Salisbury Cathedral would quickly take their place among the most important medieval paintings in England. The ghostly silhouettes on the vaults of the eastern transepts and now the Bodleian drawings urge that action be taken.