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# Tree-Ring Analysis of Timbers from the Roofs of the Lady Chapel North and South Aisle, and the Choir South Aisle, Worcester Cathedral, Worcester 

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## Summary

Fifty samples were obtained from the roofs of the north and south aisles of the Lady Chapel, and the south aisle of the Choir at Worcester Cathedral. These samples were analysed in conjunction with 143 obtained previously, producing four site chronologies, WORCSQ01-04, that included new samples; one sample dated individually. These new chronologies replace those produced during earlier analysis.

The site chronologies comprise 23, six, four, and two new samples, being 289, 191, 131 and 90 rings long. Three of these dated spanning AD $1484-\mathrm{AD} 1772$, $\mathrm{AD} 1095-1285$, and AD 1294 - AD 1424.

The latest work, from the north aisle of the Lady Chapel, uses timber felled in AD 1772. Some work in the south aisle possibly dates to this time too.

The Choir south aisle roof contains timber felled in AD 1742, with a brace structure here being made of timber felled in AD 1727 and between AD 1733-68.

The Lady Chapel roofs and the Choir south aisle roof also contain probable early to midseventeenth century timber, and probable early to mid-fifteenth century timber.

The north aisle of the Lady Chapel also contains probable early to mid-thirteenth century timber. Several timbers are of indeterminate date.

## Keywords

Dendrochronology
Standing Building

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[^0]Frontispiece: Worcester Cathedral from the south-west, across the River Severn.
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## Introduction

Worcester Cathedral (frontispiece), standing in a prominent position on the east bank of the River Severn (SO 850 545; Fig 1) has a long history. The bishopric was founded in the seventh century and the first Cathedral was dedicated to St Peter. Oswald, who was made bishop in AD 961, built a new cathedral, dedicated to St Mary. The presbytery of St Peter's was rebuilt following a Danish raid in AD 1041. Both early cathedrals appear to have been demolished around the time St Wulfstan started the present cathedral in AD 1084 (although the current hypothesis is that the Chapter House is a remodeling of a late Anglo-Saxon rotunda).

Surviving work of St Wulfstan's period includes the crypt, western transepts, cloisters, and Chapter House. In AD 1175 the crossing tower fell down and was rebuilt (Guy 1994). It was rebuilt again in the $A D$ 1370s. In $A D 1224$ the construction of a new east end was started under bishop William of Blois. Much of the existing decorated architecture at the east end belongs to this phase, with additional work in the perpendicular style dating from the latefourteenth or early-fifteenth century. There was also a considerable amount of rebuilding activity in the nineteenth century.

A modest amount of sampling for tree-ring analysis has been undertaken from timbers of the nave roof. This was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral in AD 1993, the work being funded by English Heritage (Howard et al 1995). The AD 1993 analysis indicated that, although a significant number of samples could not be dated, a certain amount of timber was felled in the early-seventeenth century, for repair work undertaken at that time. That programme of sampling showed that some earlier timbers were reused.

A much larger programme of sampling for tree-ring analysis, funded by English Heritage, has been undertaken from timbers of the choir, the north-east and south-east transepts, and the crossing between them in AD 1999 (Howard et al 2000). A further programme of tree-ring analysis was undertaken of the timbers of the roof of St John Chapel, and of the roof connecting the Chapel to the Chapter House (Howard et al 2001).

The work reported upon here concerns three areas of roofing, that of the north and the south aisles of Lady Chapel, and the south aisle of the Choir. A plan of the Cathedral showing the areas under consideration in this report is shown in Figure 2. The purpose of this work, also funded by English Heritage, was to inform the current (AD 2003) process of repair to these roofs by establishing felling dates for the timbers within. The repairs required the lifting of the lead covering and the late nineteenth or early twentieth-century softwood boards beneath. Normally clear access to these roofs, though not impossible, is difficult. The removal of the lead and boards allowed for clear and uninterrupted access to all timbers, and made it less difficult to obtain samples with complete sapwood, or with the heartwood/sapwood boundary. Access to such elements of the timber is often obstructed by the roof covering.

The Laboratory would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted with the sampling of the timbers. In particular thanks are due to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral, the Clerk of Works, and to the Vergers' Office, whose staff assisted with access to the roof. The Laboratory would also like to thank Mr Christopher Guy, the Cathedral Archaeologist, who made a detailed study of the roof, produced and provided the drawings and
photograph used in this report, and who assisted with the descriptive introduction to the site given above.

## The roofs

For the purposes of this programme of analysis the Laboratory was asked to sample three areas of roofing; the north and south aisles of the Lady Chapel, and the south aisle of the Choir.

Structurally, the roofs of all three areas are very similar. Each is formed in a lean-to fashion against the main walls of the Lady Chapel or the Choir. The roofs of the Lady Chapel aisles consists of principal rafter frames with tiebeams fixed at their inner ends into the wall of the chapel, and wall posts. There are four principal rafter frames in the north aisle, and two in the south. The principal rafters carry double purlins, which in turn carry slightly smaller common rafters. The north aisle is thus divided up into five bays of varying width, the south aisle into three bays of equal width. At various intervals within these roofs are to be found paired struts, a lower one running from the foot of the wall posts where it meets the tiebeam to the lower purlin, and an upper one from about half way up the wall posts to the upper purlin. An illustration of a typical frame from the Choir south aisle roof is given in Figure 3.

The Choir south aisle is also constructed of principal rafter frames, in this case six, again with tiebeams fixed into the wall, and wall posts. These frames, which divide the roof up into seven equal bays carry triple purlins, the common rafters here being noticeably smaller than the principals.

The timbers in all three roof areas appear to be of mixed age. Judging from the evidence of empty mortices, redundant temnons, and peg holes, it is believed that many of the beams are reused. Such timbers appear to be poorly carpentered and are now well worn and eroded, giving the impression of being of some antiquity.

On the other hand there are timbers which show no signs of reuse, are well carpentered, and squarely cut. Such timbers show surface evidence of sawing, possibly with a mechanical circular blade. These timbers are very sound and show no evidence of being degraded.

The roofs also contain modern softwood timbers which are known to date to the repairs of the AD 1960 s, or believed to belong to other minor earlier twentieth-century repairs of indeterminate date. No formal record of these works was ever made. Drawings of these roofs, showing the possible phasing interpretation are given in Figures $4 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{c}$.

At the east end of the Choir south aisle roof is found an unusual bracing structure, laid horizontally on the floor of the roof void (the upper side of the aisle ceiling). This is formed almost as a roof truss, with principal rafters, a tiebeam, king post and struts. It appears to hold the east gable end wall plate in place. Its date is completely unknown though a comparison with other timbers in the roof suggests it might be of eighteenth century date. A photograph of this structure is given in Figure 5.

The Choir also contains a small number of "random" individual timbers, inserted as blocks or
beams in the walls, with no apparent structural significance. In some cases these timbers appear to have had a previous use, judging by the evidence of redundant mortices etc. Some of these timbers appear to have been pulled out of their sockets in the wall and are ex situ, that is, they have been moved and are no longer in their original positions.

Thus, on the basis of this physical appearance of the timbers, on the documentary evidence, and upon the basis of previous tree-ring analysis, it is believed that two or three, and possibly more, phases of oak timber might be present. It is believed that the reused timbers might date from the thirteenth century, while the later timber is probably of eighteenth or nineteenth century date. It is believed that there may be other timbers of different dates.

## Sampling

After discussion with Chris Guy on the possible phasing of the timbers, and in conjunction with the brief provided by English Heritage, a total of 50 core samples was obtained. Each sample was given the code WOR-C (for Worcester Cathedral). Given that the last sample from previous programmes of work was numbered WOR-C143, the samples obtained for this analysis run from WOR-C144 to C193.

An attempt was made to obtain approximately equal numbers of samples from each of the three roofs, with samples within each roof spread between what appeared to be reused timbers and those that were believed to be later. Of course, such a selection is based on the subjective examination of the timbers and in the past this has not always been correct. Some timbers which were originally thought to be later on the basis of their appearance subsequently turn out not to be and vice-versa. In particular the timbers of the Lady Chapel south aisle were less easy to categorise than those of the other roofs. Samples were also obtained from some of the random timbers in the Choir, and from the horizontal brace structure here.

This sampling information given above is summarised below:

## Sample area

Lady Chapel north aisle - later timbers
Lady Chapel north aisle - reused timbers
Lady Chapel south aisle all timbers
Choir south aisle - reused timbers
Choir south aisle - later timbers
Choir south aisle - horizontal brace

## Number of samples

9 WOR-C150-158
17 WOR-C159-175

6 WOR-C144-149

7 WOR-Cl76-182
6 WOR-C183-188
5 WOR-C189-193
Sample numbers

The positions of the timbers cored were recorded at the time of sampling on the timber survey plans produced and provided by Christopher Guy, Figures $4 a-c$. It should be pointed out that not all the timbers in the roof are illustrated in these drawings, so that in some cases, the horizontal brace structure or the wall plates for example, the position of some individual
timbers is not shown. Details of the samples are given in Table 1. When referring to frames, bays, and timbers, this report follows the numbering convention used in the drawings provided.

## Analysis

Each sample was prepared by sanding and polishing, and the growth-ring widths of all 50 were measured; the data of these measurements are given at the end of the report. For the purposes of analysis, the 50 samples obtained in this programme of work, WOR-C144-C193, were compared with each other by the Litton/Zainodin grouping procedure (see appendix) in conjunction with all other samples of at least 54 rings obtained during previous campaigns, samples WOR-C01 - C143.

At a minimum $t$-value of 4.5 two larger groups, and two smaller groups, which included crossmatching samples from the most recently acquired material, could be formed, these newly formed groups replacing those of any previous analysis. The largest of these groups contains a total of 79 samples, 56 samples obtained previously plus 23 newly acquired. All 79 samples were combined at their indicated relative off-set positions to form site chronology WORCSQ01, with a combined overall length 289 rings. Site chronology WORCSQ01 was compared with a large number of reference chronologies for oak indicating a series of very high $t$-value cross-matches when the date of its first ring is AD 1484 and the date of its last ring is AD 1772 . Evidence for this dating is given in the $t$-values of Table 2.

The next major group comprises a total of 40 samples, 34 obtained previously plus six samples newly acquired. These 40 samples were combined at their indicated relative off-set positions to form site chronology WORCSQ02, with a combined overall length 229 rings. Site chronology WORCSQ02 was also compared to a large number of reference chronologies for oak indicating a series of satisfactory $t$-value cross-matches when the date of its first ring is AD 1057 and the date of its last ring is AD 1285 . Evidence for this dating is given in the $t$ values of Table 3 .

The third group comprises eight samples, four from the previous work and four newly obtained. These eight samples were combined at their indicated relative off-set positions to form site chronology WORCSQ03, with a combined overall length 139 rings. Site chronology WORCSQ03 was also compared to a large number of reference chronologies for oak indicating a series of satisfactory $t$-value cross-matches when the date of its first ring is AD 1286 and the date of its last ring is AD 1424. Evidence for this dating is given in the $t$-values of Table 4.

A fourth and final group, consisting of only two new samples, could also be formed, WORCSQ04, of combined overall length 90 rings. Although compared to a large number of reference chronologies, there was no cross-matching and site chronology WORCSQ04 remains undated.

The relative positions of only the 35 newly acquired cross-matching samples of each of the four groups (any previously obtained cross-matching samples being omitted) are shown in bar diagrams Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9. In these bar diagrams the samples are shown in simple last
measured ring position, but are colour coded to show the area from which samples have been taken, blue for the Lady Chapel, and red for the Choir.

In addition to the main groups of samples, other small groups which included previously and newly obtained samples were also indicated. However, there was usually only one new sample in each group. An attempt was made to date these groups by comparison with the reference chronologies, but no consistent satisfactory cross-matching was indicated. These groups were not made into site chronologies and are thus not illustrated, the newly obtained samples being now treated as singletons.

Each of the four new site sequences thus created, WORCSQ01-C04, was then compared with all the remaining newly acquired but ungrouped samples, and the samples which had cross-matched with the previously acquired material but were still undated. There was, however, no further satisfactory cross-matching. All the remaining newly acquired samples were then compared individually with the full range of reference chronologies. This process indicated satisfactory cross-matching and dating for only one further sample, WOR-C169, dated as spanning $\mathrm{AD} 1682-\mathrm{AD} 1754$. Evidence for this dating is given in the $t$-values of Table 5.

Brief details of these four site chronologies thus created are sumarised below, showing the number of new samples obtained, and the combined number of rings and date span of only these newly acquired samples.

| Site <br> chronology | Saxple area <br> (new samples only) | Number of <br> new samples | Number <br> of rings | Date span <br> (new samples) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| WORCSQ01 | Lady Chapel, north/south aisles <br> (including horizontal brace) | 23 | 289 | AD 1484-1772 |
| WORCSQ02 | Lady Chapel, north aisle | 6 | 191 | AD 1095-1285 |
| WORCSQ03 | Lady Chapel, south aisle <br> Choir, south aisle | 4 | 131 | AD 1294-1424 |
| WORCSQ04 | Lady Chapel, south aisle | 2 | 90 | undated |
| WOR-C169 | Lady Chapel, south aisle | 1 | 73 | AD 1682-1754 |

## Interpretation

## The Lady Chapel - north aisle

Five of the dated samples from the north aisle of the Lady Chapel, WOR-C144, C145, C146, C151, and C153, retain complete sapwood, that is, they have the last growth-ring produced by the tree before it was felled. On all five such samples the last measured complete sapwood
ring date is the same, AD 1772 . This is thus the felling date of the trees represented. The relative position of the heartwood/sapwood boundary on a sixth sample from this area of the roof, WOR-C149, would strongly suggest that this represents a tree felled at this time too.

The north aisle, however, also contains timbers which were felled centuries earlier, an illustration of the relative position and dates of each group of samples from within this roof being shown in Figure 10. Three samples, WOR-C150, C154, and C156 have heartwood/sapwood boundary dates of $\mathrm{AD} 1218, \mathrm{AD} 1204$, and AD 1211 respectively. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary date of these three is AD 1211 . Using a $95 \%$ confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks in this part of England of 15-50 rings would give the timbers represented by these three samples an estimated felling date in the range $\mathrm{AD} 1226-61$.

It should be stressed, however, that it is not certain that the trees represented by these three samples were felled at exactly the same time. The spread of the relative position of the heartwood/sapwood boundary on each, ranging from AD 1204 to AD 1218 , is perhaps a little wider than might be expected on timbers with an identical felling date. Whilst all three timbers were certainly felled in the early to mid-thirteenth centuries, it is possible that they were felled at slightly different times. It is possible, for example, that the timber represented by sample WOR-C154 was felled as early as AD 1219 whilst that represented by sample WOR-C150 was felled as late as AD 1268.

This possibility is emphasised by the fact that another timber from the north aisle of the Lady Chapel, though early, was almost certainly felled later than the three timbers discussed above. This later timber is represented by sample WOR-C152. This sample has a last measured ring date of AD 1285. It does not, though, have a heartwood/sapwood boundary, and thus its felling date cannot be estimated. It is unlikely, however, to have been felled before AD 1300 , some 32 years or so at least after the latest possible felling of any of the above mentioned timbers.

Two other apparently early timbers, represented by samples WOR-C155 and C158, are also without a heartwood/sapwood boundary and their felling dates cannot be reliably estimated. It is unlikely that the timbers they represent were felled before AD 1188 and AD 1211 respectively.

## The Lady Chapel - south aisle

The south aisle of the Lady Chapel also contains timbers with a variety of felling dates. The latest felling is represented by sample WOR-C169. This has a heartwood/sapwood boundary date of AD 1751 . Using a $95 \%$ confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks in this part of England of $15-50$ rings would give the timber represented by this sample an estimated felling date in the range AD 1766 to AD 1801 . It is perhaps most likely that this timber has a felling date very similar, if not identical, to that of the latest timbers of the north aisle, that is, AD 1772.

Other, apparently reused, timbers from the south aisle are earlier. Probably the earliest dated timbers are represented by samples WOR-C160 and C163 These have almost identical
heartwood/sapwood boundary dates, AD 1398 and AD 1399 , and probably represent a single phase of felling. Using the same sapwood estimates as above would give the timbers represented an estimated felling date in the range AD 1413-48.

The felling dates of the timbers represented by samples WOR-C162 and WOR-C166 on the other hand cannot be reliably estimated because neither of them have a heartwood/sapwood boundary. It is unlikely, however, that they were felled earlier than AD 1593 and AD 1611 respectively.

The last two dated timbers from the south aisle of the Lady Chapel are represented by samples WOR-C168 and C171. These have similar heartwood/sapwood boundary dates, AD 1605 and AD 1609 respectively, and again probably represent timbers of a single phase of felling. Using the usual sapwood estimate for this region would give the timbers represented an estimated felling date in the range $\mathrm{AD} 1622-57$.

## Choir, south aisle

Like the north and south aisles of the Lady Chapel the south aisle of the Choir has timbers of different felling dates, the relationship of these again being shown in Figure 10. The earliest material found in this analysis is that represented by sample WOR-C177. This sample has a heartwood/sapwood boundary date of AD 1406, and retains 18 sapwood rings. Given that its last measured ring date is AD 1424 , this would give an estimated felling date in the range AD $1425-56$, using a $95 \%$ confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks in this part of England of $15-50$ rings

It is likely that the timbers represented by samples WOR-C179 and WOR-C180 are of a single phase of felling, such an interpretation being based on the fact that the relative position of the heartwood/sapwood boundary on each sample is very close to each other, varying by only one year. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary date of these two is AD 1610. Using a $95 \%$ confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks in this part of England is $15-50$ rings again would give the timbers represented by these an estimated felling date in the range AD 1625-60.

The latest certain felling is represented by samples WOR-C186 and C188. Both of these samples have complete sapwood, the last ring dates of both being the same at AD 1742. This is thus the felling date of the timbers represented. Other samples in this group, WOR-C181, C182, C184, and C185 have their heartwood/sapwood boundary in relative positions consistent with all these timbers being felled in, or very close to, AD 1742 also.

Less easy to determine is the felling date, or dates, of a number of timbers from the horizontal bracing structure. One of the samples from this structure, WOR-C192, retains complete sapwood, with a last measured ring date of AD 1727 , this being the felling date of the timber. This sample, however, has only 13 sapwood rings, less than the $95 \%$ confidence limit of 15 50 rings used here. It also has the earliest heartwood/sapwood boundary date, AD 1714 , of any sample from the bracing structure. If the other samples from the bracing structure were to have been felled in AD 1727 too, they would have to have even fewer sapwood rings. While this is not beyond the bounds of possibility it would be unusual.

The average heartwood/sapwood boundary date of those four samples from the bracing structure without complete sapwood, WOR-C189, C190, C191, and C193, is AD 1718. Using the same sapwood estimate as above would give a felling date range of AD 1733 - 68 . It is thus probable that the brace structure uses timber felled some time within this date range as well as a piece felled in AD 1727.

The latest possible material may be represented by the individually dated sample WOR-C169. This has a heartwood sapwood boundary date of AD 1751 . Using the same sapwood estimate as above would give the timber represented an estimated felling date in the range AD 1766 to AD 1801. Given that there is no other evidence for work after the early AD 1770 s it is more probable that this timber was felled at about this time rather than later.

The felling date of the final dated timber, represented by WOR-C187, cannot be estimated because it does not have the heartwood/sapwood boundary. However, given that its last measured ring date is AD 1387 , it is unlikely to have been felled before AD 1402.

This preceding interpretation may be summarised below:

| Sample area <br> (Lady Chapel) | Sample numbers | Felling date or estimated <br> felling date range |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| north aisle | $\mathrm{C} 144, \mathrm{C} 145, \mathrm{C} 146$, | AD 1772 |
| south aisle | $\mathrm{C} 149, \mathrm{C} 151, \mathrm{C} 153$ | C 169 |
| south aisle | $\mathrm{C} 168, \mathrm{C} 171$ | $\mathrm{AD} \mathrm{1766-AD} \mathrm{1801}$ |
| south aisle | C 166 | $\mathrm{AD} 1622-57$ |
| south aisle | C 162 | not before AD 1611 |
| south aisle | $\mathrm{C} 160, \mathrm{C} 163$ | not before AD 1593 |
| north aisle | C 152 | $\mathrm{AD} 1413-48$ |
| north aisle | $\mathrm{C} 150, \mathrm{C} 154, \mathrm{C} 156$ | not before AD 1300 |
| north aisle | C 158 | $\mathrm{AD} 1226-61$ |
| north aisle | C 155 | not before AD 1211 |
|  |  | not before AD 1188 |


| Sample area <br> (Choir) | Sample numbers | Felling date or estimated <br> felling date range |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| south aisle | $\mathrm{C} 181, \mathrm{C} 182, \mathrm{C} 184$, | AD 1742 |
| Crace structure | $\mathrm{C} 189, \mathrm{C} 190, \mathrm{C} 188$ |  |
|  | $\mathrm{C} 192, \mathrm{C} 193$ | AD 1727 |
| south aisle | $\mathrm{C} 179, \mathrm{C} 180$ | and $\mathrm{AD} \mathrm{1733-68}$ |
| south aisle | C 177 | $\mathrm{AD} \mathrm{1625-60}$ |
| south aisle | C 187 | $\mathrm{AD} \mathrm{1425-56}$ |
|  |  | not before AD 1402 |

## Conclusion

Analysis by tree-ring dating has produced three site chronologies, WORCSQ01-03, comprising a total of 33 dated samples, with one further sample being dated individually, plus one undated site chronology of two samples, WORCSQ04. This has provided felling dates, or estimated felling date ranges, for timbers from the north and south aisles of the Lady Chapel, and the south aisle of the Choir. As suspected on carpentry and structural ground, tree-ring analysis has shown that these timbers have a wide range of felling dates and, along with a terminal date for works, indicate the extensive reuse of earlier timber. An attempt to show the relationship between the dated timbers found in these roofs is shown in Figure 11.

The latest firmly dated material is that from the north aisle of the Lady Chapel, these timbers being felled in AD 1772. This appears to represent some of the latest repair work at Worcester Cathedral identified by tree-ring dating. It is possible that a small amount of material from the south aisle of the Lady Chapel is of this date too. The dating of the timber in this roof to the AD 1770 s, in conjunction with other similarly dated material analysed earlier suggests that a large and extensive programme of roof repairs was undertaken at Worcester throughout the eighteenth century.

Some work had been undertaken on the roof of south aisle of the Choir, using timbers felled prior to that discussed above, in AD 1742 . It is possible that the horizontal brace structure was put in place at this time, using one piece that had already been felled, in AD 1727 , though it is possible that the brace structure is later and more closely associated with the AD 1770s work to the roof

An earlier phase of felling is represented by small groups of samples, WOR-C179 and C180, from the south aisle of the Choir, and WOR-C162, C166, C168, and C171, from the south aisle of the Lady Chapel. While the felling date of two of these cannot be reliably estimated, the group appears to represent the felling of timbers in the early to mid-seventeenth century.

There is then a further group of timbers, represented by WOR-C177 and C187, from the south aisle of the Choir, and WOR-C160 and C163, from the south aisle of the Lady Chapel. Again, while the felling date of one of these cannot be reliably estimated, the group probably represents the felling of timbers in the early to mid-fifteenth century.

It is not possible to estimate the felling date of the timber represented by sample WOR-C152, except to say that it is unlikely to have been felled before AD 1300 .

The earliest phase of felling detected in this analysis is represented by samples WOR-C150, C154, C155, C156, and C158. Again the felling date of all the timbers represented by this group of samples is not certain, but they appear to indicate the cutting of timber in the early to mid thirteenth century. These conclusions may be summarised over page.

| Sampling area | Sample numbers | Felling date |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Lady Chapel, north aisle | C144, C145, C146, <br> C149, C151, C153 | AD 1772 |
| Lady Chapel, south aisle | C169 | probably no later than |
|  |  | AD 1770s |

The dating of the timbers from the Choir and Lady Chapel aisle roofs is highly consistent with that obtained for the other roofs at Worcester that have been analysed using dendrochronology. For example, the St John Chapel roof and the connecting roof use timbers felled in the early to mid AD 1740s, a date very similar to that of the material used in the Choir south aisle. The St John Chapel roof also contains timber felled in the mid-seventeenth, and early- to midfifteenth centuries.

Analysis of timbers from the high roofs at Worcester Cathedral have also produced felling dates in the AD 1720 s , the mid-seventeenth century, and the mid- to late- thirteenth century. All such felling dates are echoed in the results obtained in the material from the aisle roofs undertaken here.

Some observations may now be made of this analysis. It is perhaps noticeable from Table 1 that most of the main structure of the Lady Chapel north aisle roof, the principal rafters, tiebeams, purlin, post, is made of the timber felled in AD 1772. Only one late timber is used as a common rafter, most of these being made of earlier timber reused.

On the other hand, on the basis of tree-ring dating, the south aisle of the Lady Chapel appears to have less late material in it than the other roofs. This roof appears to be made up largely of reused material. Such an interpretation appears to be consistent with the timber survey (see Fig 4b).

Turning to the principal timbers of the south aisle of the Choir these are again also made from later timbers, this roof appearing to have only a small amount of reused material in it.

The dating of the timber in the aisle roofs to the AD 1770 s , in conjunction with other similarly dated material analysed earlier suggests that a large and extensive programme of roof repairs was undertaken at Worcester throughout the eighteenth century. In these repairs new timber appears to have been felled specifically for the principal structural timbers, with the older material being used for the lesser members.

Ungrouped and undated samples account for 14 of the 50 cores obtained. Half of these 14 undated individual samples have between 54 and 60 rings which is just about a sufficient number for satisfactory analysis. Other ungrouped and undated individuals samples are longer, the longest being WOR-C178 with 77 rings. Some of these undated samples, WOR-C148 for example, might have slight distortions to their rings, a feature which might account for their not cross-matching and dating. None of the other undated samples appear to have any problems which might make dating difficult. Given the extensive reuse of timbers in these roofs it is possible that some of the undated samples represent singletons of diverse date. Singletons are often difficult to date, particularly when they have lower numbers of growthrings.

Eight of the 14 ungrouped and undated samples come from the south aisle of the Lady Chapel, a roof which contains a lot of reused material with different felling dates. Two other undated samples (WOR-C167 and C175) come from ex situ timbers in this roof, and it is likely, given their $t$-value cross-match, that they are from the same tree.

Using this analysis it may be possible to refine the tree-ring dates obtained with further documentary research into the repair or modification of the roofs. This may aid in the identification of the source roof, or roofs, of the reused material. The documentary sources may also provide information about the woodland sources of this timber.

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Table 1: Details of samples from the Lady Chapel north and south aisles, and the Choir south aisle, Woreester Cathedral

| Sample number | Sample location | Total rings | *Sapwood rings | First measured ring date | Last heartwood ring date | Las measured ring date |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Lady Chapel north aisle - later timbers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| WOR-C144 | Lower purlin, east gable to P1 | 80 | 20 C | AD 1693 | AD 1752 | AD 1772 |
| WOR-C145 | Post, P2 | 82 | 18 C | AD 1691 | AD 1754 | AD 1772 |
| WOR-Cl46 | Principal rafer P2 | 100 | 23 C | AD 1673 | AD 1749 | AD 1772 |
| WOR-C147 | Tiebeam, P3 | 55 | 10 | $\cdots$ | +4+ | --- |
| WOR-Cl48 | Upper strut, P4 | 67 | 18 C | - | $\square$ | - |
| WOR-C149 | Post P4 | 64 | 10 | AD 1697 | AD 1750 | AD 1760 |
| Lady Chapel north aisle - reused timbers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| WOR-C150 | Common raher no 4 (from east end) | 110 | W/s | AD 1109 | AD 1218 | AD 1218 |
| WOR-C1S1. | Common ralter no 5 | 64 | 20 C | AD 1709 | AD 1752 | AD 1772 |
| WOR-C152 | Common rater no 6 | 143 | no h/s | AD 1143 | - | AD 1285 |
| WOR-CI53 | Common rater no 7 | 54 | 17 C | AD 1719 | AD 1755 | AD 1772 |
| WOR-CIS4 | Common rafter no 11 | 54 | W/s | AD 1151 | AD 1204 | AD 1204 |
| WOR-C155 | Common rafter no 13 | 79 | no h/s | AD 1095 | $\underline{\sim}$ | AD 1173 |
| WOR-C156 | Common rafer no 15 | 64 | h/s | AD 1148 | AD 1211 | AD 1211 |
| WOR-CIS7 | Common rafter no 17 | 54 | $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | ---- | - | --m |
| WOR-C158 | Common rafer no 19 | 98 | no b/s | AD 1099 | $\square$ | AD 1196 |

Table 1: continued

| Sample number | Sample location | Total nings | *Sapwood nings | First measured ring date | Last heartwood ring date | Last measured ring date |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Lady Chapel south aisle - reused timbers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| WOR-C159 | Tiebeam, P1 | 67 | h/s | ------ | ------ | ------ |
| WOR-C160 | Principal rafter, P1 | 84 | b/s | AD 1315 | AD 1398 | AD 1398 |
| WOR-C161 | Wall plate, P1-P2 | 67 | h/s | -----1 | ------- | ------ |
| WOR-C162 | Lower purlin, P1 - P2 | 95 | no $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | AD 1484 | ----- | AD 1578 |
| WOR-C163 | Principal rafter, P2 | 106 | h/s | AD 1294 | AD 1399 | AD 1399 |
| WOR-C164 | Lower purlin, P2 to east gable wall | 55 | $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | ---3. | --- | --- |
| WOR-C165 | Common rafter no 7 | 72 | 23 | ---- | ------ | ------ |
| WOR-C166 | Lower purlin, P1 to west gable wall | 75 | no $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | AD 1522 | ----- | AD 1596 |
| WOR-C167 | Ex-situ horizontal wall timber | 90 | h/s | ------ | $\cdots$ | --- |
| WOR-C168 | Common rafter no 6 | 54 | 15 | AD 1567 | AD 1605 | AD 1620 |
| WOR-C169 | Strut at rafter 6 | 73 | 3 | AD 1682 | AD 1751 | AD 1754 |
| WOR-C170 | Common rafter 8 | 56 | 15 | ------ | ------- | ------- |
| WOR-C171 | Common rafter 15 | 73 | 15 | AD 1552 | AD 1609 | AD 1624 |
| WOR-C172 | Common rafter 16 | 54 | $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | $\cdots$ | *-m.** | $\cdots$ |
| WOR-C173 | Common rafter 18 | 57 | 20 C | - | - | - |
| WOR-C174 | Ex situ timber | 64 | 12C | ---- | $\cdots$ | --- |
| WOR-C175 | Ex situ timber | 60 | no h/s | $\square$ | ------ | - |

Table 1: continued

| Sample <br> number | Sample location | Total <br> rings | *Sapwood <br> rings | First measured <br> ring date | Last heartwood <br> ring date | Last measured <br> ring date |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Choir south aisle - reused timbers |  |  |  |  |  |

Choir south aisle - later timbers

| WOR-C183 | Wall post, P4 |
| :--- | :--- |
| WOR-C184 | Principal rafter, P4 |
| WOR-C185 | Principal rafter, P5 |
| WOR-C186 | Wall post, P6 |
| WOR-C187 | Strut, wall post - purlin, P1 |
| WOR-C188 | Principal rafter, P3 |


| 11 | ------ | ------- | ------- |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 15 | AD 1685 | AD 1724 | AD 1739 |
| 12 | AD 1686 | AD 1727 | AD 1739 |
| 12 C | ------- | ------- | -----1 |
| no $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | AD 1304 | - | AD 1387 |
| 16 C | AD 1681 | AD 1726 | AD 1742 |

Table 1: continued

| Sample number | Sample location | Total rings | *Sapwood rings | First measured ring date | Last heartwood ring date | Last measured ring date |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Choir south aisle - horizontal brace structure at east end |  |  |  |  |  |
| WOR-C189 | North strut | 54 | $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}$ | AD 1663 | AD 1716 | AD 1716 |
| WOR-C190 | North brace | 57 | 6 | AD 1666 | AD 1716 | AD 1722 |
| WOR-C191 | King post | 69 | h/s | AD 1653 | AD 1721 | AD 1721 |
| WOR-C192 | South brace | 98 | 13 C | AD 1630 | AD 1714 | AD 1727 |
| WOR-C193 | South strut | 55 | h/s | AD 1665 | AD 1719 | AD 1719 |

*h/s = the heartwood/sapwood boundary is the last ring on the sample
C - complete sapwood on sample, last measured ring date is felling date of the timber

Table 2: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ01 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1484 and last ring date is AD 1772

> Reference chronology
Span of
chronology $\quad i$-value

East Midlands
England
Quenby Hall
St Hugh's Choir, Lincoln Cathedral
Bolsover Castle, Derby (Riding house)
England, London
26 Westgate Street, Gloucester
Wales and West Midlands

| AD | $882-1981$ | 13.6 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | (Laxton and Litton 1988) |  |
| AD | $401-1981$ | 11.3 | (Baillie and Pilcher 1982 unpubl )

Table 3: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ02 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1057 and last ring date is AD 1285

| Reference chronology | Span of <br> chronology | $t$-value |  |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :--- |
| Salisbury Cathedral, Wilts | AD $1155-1228$ | 7.1 | (Howard et al 1991) |
| Angel Choir, Lincoln Cathedral | AD $912-1248$ | 6.9 | (Howard et al 1985) |
| East Midlands | AD $882-1981$ | 6.2 | (Laxton and Litton 1988) |
| Brecon Cathedral, Powys | AD $996-1227$ | 6.2 | (Howard et al 1994 ) |
| England | AD $401-1981$ | 6.0 | (Baillie and Pilcher 1982 unpubl) |
| England, London | AD $413-1728$ | 5.9 | (Tyers 1999 unpubl) |
| Southern England | AD 1083-1589 | 5.8 | (Bridge 1988) |

Table 4: Results of the cross-matching of site chronology WORCSQ03 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1294 and last ring date is AD 1424

| Reference chronology | Span of <br> chronology | $t$-value |  |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :--- |
| The Post Office, Oxhill Warwick | AD 1322-1447 | 8.5 | (Alcock et al 1989) |
| Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwicks | AD 1319-1462 | 8.5 | (Alcock ef al 1991) |
| East Midlands | AD $882-1981$ | 8.3 | (Laxton and Litton 1988) |
| Mercers Hall, Gloucester | AD 1289-1541 | 8.1 | (Howard et al 1997) |
| Sinai Park, Burton on Trent, Staffs | AD 1227-1750 | 7.3 | (Tyers 1997) |
| Southern England | AD 1083-1589 | 7.0 | (Bridge 1988) |
| England | AD $401-1981$ | 6.9 | (Baillie and Pilcher 1982 unpubl) |
| England, London | AD $413-1728$ | 6.9 | (Tyers 1999 unpubl) |

Table 5: Results of the cross-matching of sample WOR-C169 and relevant reference chronologies when first ring date is AD 1682 and last ring date is AD 1754

## Reference chronology

Catholme, Staffs
Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwicks
East Midlands
Grimston Bell-frame, Grimstone, Leics
Bolsover Castle, Derby (Riding house)
Span of $t$-value
chronology

| AD | $1649-1750$ | 7.2 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | (Howard et al 1992 unpubl) |  |
| AD | $1646-1813$ | 6.2 | (Howard et al 2000)

Figure 1: Map to show gencral location of Worcester Cathedral

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Figure 2: General plan of Worcester Cathedral to show areas of sampling


Figure 3: Illustration of a typical truss from the Choir south aisle roof


Figure 4a: Long-section of Lady Chapel north aisle roof to show probable phasing of timbers and location of timbers sampled (viewed from the north looking south)


Figure 4b:Long-section of the Lady Chapel south aisle roof to show possible phasing of timbers and position of timbers sampled
(viewed from the south looking north)


Figure 4c: Long-section of the Choir south aisle roof to show probable phasing of timbers and location of timbers sampled (viewed from the south looking north)


Figure 5: Photograph of the horizontal brace structure at the east end of the Choir south aisle roof


Figure 6: Bar diagram of cross-matching samples (WOR-C144-193) in site chronology WORCSQ01, in last measured ring position

white bars $=$ heartwood rings, shaded area $=$ sapwood rings
$h / s=$ heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample
$\mathrm{C}=$ complete sapwood retained on sample, the last measured ring date is the felling date of the timber

Figure 7: Bar diagram of cross-matching samples (WOR-C144-193) in site chronology WORCSQ02, in last measured ring position (all samples from Lady Chapel, north aisle)
Off-
Oet
set
white bars = heartwood rings
$\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}=$ heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

Figure 8: Bar diagram of cross-matching samples (WOR-C144-193) in site chronology WORCSQ03, in last measured ring order


white bars = heartwood rings, shaded area $=$ sapwood rings $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}=$ heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

Figure 9: Bar diagram of cross-matching samples (WOR-C144-193) in site chronology WORCSQ04, in last measured ring position (all samples from Lady Chapel, north aisle, ex-situ timbers)

white bars $=$ heartwood rings
$\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}=$ heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample

Figure 10: Bar diagram of all dated samples (WOR-C144-193) split into Choir and Lady Chapel roof groups in last measured ring position

white bars $=$ heartwood rings, shaded area $=$ sapwood rings. $\quad h / s=$ heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample
$\mathrm{C}=$ complete sapwood retained on sample, the last measured ring date is the felling date of the timber

Figure 11: Bar diagram of all dated samples (WOR-C144-193) sorted by sampling area in last measured ring position

white bars = heartwood rings, shaded area = sapwood rings. $\quad \mathrm{h} / \mathrm{s}=$ heartwood/sapwood boundary is last ring on sample $\mathrm{C}=$ complete sapwood retained on sample, the last measured ring date is the felling date of the timber
660
658
658

Data of measured samples - measurements in 0.01 mm units

## WORC144A 80

480422266307306286180316359249260282187279256272212142155157 171124114145144107146177207207155262289283176239198229194335 256308375324197315321177191128308254164304269207272228211237 235325216299274278367275223164243267212230263476294345224356 WORC144B 80
487431274340289302220354405207294328196298264214241153162160 19612912516213913199184239214161271287277172230187230206320 291301353324203310323176220117279265150312269208273248195226 232328225305243285358271226181260260204276254450285344257318 WORC145A 82
595393444418334331337355284328359349394369206265244222258251 352371445300344310338224314278347239188275207244214238210213 2613633283574533031882592351681248616311381174175190197215 238226332246252229176311184197182174280274292224224278193204 152199
WORC145B 79
588382440422319347342352287341353339393355196269255230242271 349363427328331309349214323253358237198277197226223252201217 2623503243684543041782552361621299316512588149165179195189 246230319245244243169305206201180167270270295213254280136 WORC146A 100
2171471609715199219282284314282187145130134143157208254190 1701501381561291311131091221031041881511491751991916965161 191184258247219240224186247199213300224236187137113141171204 184187195216156180161162179145195187214244217136127137173177 1642261271281481661541069073187206158174126148108136116154 WORC146B 100
21114515893144113178327273297269210151123145157159207254206 162143132158138142109100127971181921401471872081806177135 203199238247237230232184239202196320226234188130115144175205 195189200227151179159158176136203198220231211145137135164170 1722131281171441851561117996179202174160126144108146107136 WORC147A 55
436550364504468389314330352395362333393375449325312345344311 315271320382363253315369259245177178159155232276238294239280 292258329248247185197127102179268262235204243
WORC147B 55
383557354493441406337307363393348297401405410307332341355241
322256306399372278329360244252180178158161248274234294236293
30024733323624619919611998195258268225183251
WORC148A 67
201178175163167202252247215249236231327270282290273314307301
351384275362361246270352216212234293322270318290184274224257
246207177224233154175203200168176167152149127182194236196225 281218216154183168150
WORC148B 67
178219168185158182270245208252232242322277282273268302297305 348375279380345249247359217209241297325273323292190272218255 247194189235235153169197201184196172142155123172190238170208 290212182159183165152

WORCL49A 64
278518345298394332380432242294386445374299330385457266323385 372300311260302219282401311351363272315299353273253299391378
321282245211243226245290197222271272285182188183207210153116 163214188227
WORC149B64
294497332308390318376411223293392422372291351401444277378320
361300308261297240255417264355365296316273364258273292491268
302290260201238214274267188247256276250195181207200195170106
169216184260
WORC150A 110
1071261019921822221514512095106166183258270200204206168151 $691261661501449880521095974671341016359.4079 \quad 98122$
172147180189190103107121174185192217133154144102164161228236 20018514676971091341821381288648601181429211111415383 $114101696652101861351239665535233 \quad 956999647260$ 758447583964649480108
WORC150B 110
1091249711619324820214512586101167187257240205208214161140 7114617114714410369561086273641301047467.45 .82116134 16717117918819792136101176174176227136150131129143165211236
21019713680911115318113811310147581261439611011216576 $12486.85574910290124130107 .634651 .3988748876 \quad 6564$ 817358563776677699114
WORCISIA 64
354282368401509403370379356228355247245256212308286297210244 198217214270191186221338275249252274239197186184141150126138 15917515816613515912599113114959795961481319310084127 132118156148
WORC151B64.
347294362397512402371357350235332269238241213308273307222231
202226201284190199196349242278250263244201182176167148131139
17417416315315015511911798118101.99103911381319110182128

133127147160
WORCIS2A 142
526210093101139132114190124100110136157154177178167168106 $1161691941861782472502181201321511541451069958 \quad 5584104140$
7895991277976876453621191121441251261059683100125
$114929083 \quad 67848850645464 \quad 759378 \quad 60 \quad 6875 \quad 58 \quad 3870$
$8576 \quad 818487867543444136.6849 .675842 .495451 .69$
$637542635046414055526277 \quad 745639465277 \quad 55 \quad 47$
65514655474310111610398967852506174989110888
122159
WORCES2B143
46526310794100137132123196110115108133171141181184164174 $1041241502041901702502502091001341411471371049668 \quad 52 \quad 65129$
14083997114094789665556310612413012214299939090
1331001138976769481745051617288896464714755
$67817976.957385784246 .4631605671 \quad 584350 \quad 53 \quad 53$
$66 \quad 578656.634643 \quad 39 \quad 535147627471 \quad 61 \quad 40 \quad 43 \quad 548156$
$50.555238544556 \quad 9412010395111755056687410572114$
90115165

WORC153A 54
231210294221214287336281243231237296273303289263296339310272 266236237220230220191230204237301228224229208220189187158143 199176168125244242188171166247213191180160 WORC 153 B 54
245205300280201301328288241238235298270313276266292352268292 269228242214227207186239212230301218229234205224190190159136 194175170133216256210167164236211194171169
WORC154A 54
283320237256232160320256248288275245339503525417341425524371
509402356344314335228356320268245306284219363242328185263273
290189206193237274226198182209184207126166
WORC154B 54
288318247263216170317249252299249269315494535424333413520381
525381372337300340221357311276230341285222354224333176264290
289183193203236260247193183197203192172164
WORC155A 79
1693303861501711913293173882092512902372911871107488157190 16291968016519714622822816017317014811198166142129142110
82912471961361191187461597290132149210157183237242157 22217824829326224517719416213518224218723424919119910897 WORC155B 79
1913253621501582023303173992122582992332861811088387159192 1609588821741791512002271451791611351269016813514515698
99922332121341201169555536192137158196150200236254172
213172247279272236182183160149174242185230234214190111107 WORC156A 64
299282179405193275192234217238208186250201202211251291256206 240310225304205193230158183147188294217284248201148228235256 143177250219157221206236263237211193202145141152193191255125 250222235228
WORC156B 64
313291162502179276200223263249206190248198222193266276250236 253299230318202186245146201121205293199277233208146234220266 145180256196167205211227270241219174184139159146194196259113 241245216269
WORC157A 54
259265410429368301356418394523401322240290431330422381285325
397439249440295424220209295290214338251372295292302204255253
127280263285248289281155152265196220138153
WORC157B 54
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WORC158A 94
487184748910111388771046686949391117107132167153
207180180158149169108181156115154134169168140162185195213162 163136150152136164201134231140203136171158155140145143143129 1031221291001081289110089999410470929011211689104111 887811210679758099969111810293115

## WORC158B 95

7210986909787138141115156130939211682116112100113145 9316015416620018417214516317579187162139139130168164130177 174157183171157138183160144164206143196136200150167171128148 16615314011010212610810511610210490999310096729690116 12086841269082124878761799110079106

## WORC159A 67

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## WORC159B 67

351286212141901239920493162107112118118861401338411259
12212588265292317281187214166123122153174203251213158179166
147967715522218818121416014178170145112149202220222146150 174278228228193137229
WORC160A 84
1381731348313313914012115814974118137106115164116120124132 1048468911029289941049613615913718521212314084135196 97125164102138941132472132519616311971170183107144129155 1071712051822192571591921311451211858055487173715571 848586122
WORC160B 84
1541871398713314714611715114791114140126109139125116123112 102787288101978680857614415914520020710813788116174 1131521191001597510125722124310716810495174168105149138153 11717919419722025316417513615211818382525170931575570 927289134
WORC161A 67
10488869996104961131271661341411011217179127102127149 14410777118141174145113182123146160273208200255190147193201 19814014011311711910410268101155261170159205165336272347215 288339222200404424442

## WORC161B 67

1088388831039811112112116512716081127628614495113156
1519391104127179147114184126156146271221198245208174162198
2041441481121201288810570100150262169166210162331269347210
289334233193395451424
WORC162A 95
183161203300147272329263254269285251295205208262213163145113
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217233226131149193164218136172194208192172172202211205131188
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## WORC168B 54

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## WORC174B 64

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## WORC178B 77

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## WORC182A 63

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 6155133230

## WORC187B 84

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WORC188A 62
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WORC191B 69
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## WORC192A 98

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[^0]:    Many CfA reports are interim reports which make available the results of specialist investigations in advance of full publication. They are not subject to external refereeing, and their conclusions may sometimes have to be modified in the light of archaeological information that was not available at the time of the investigation. Readers are therefore advised to consult the author before citing the report in any publication and to consult the final excavation report when available.

