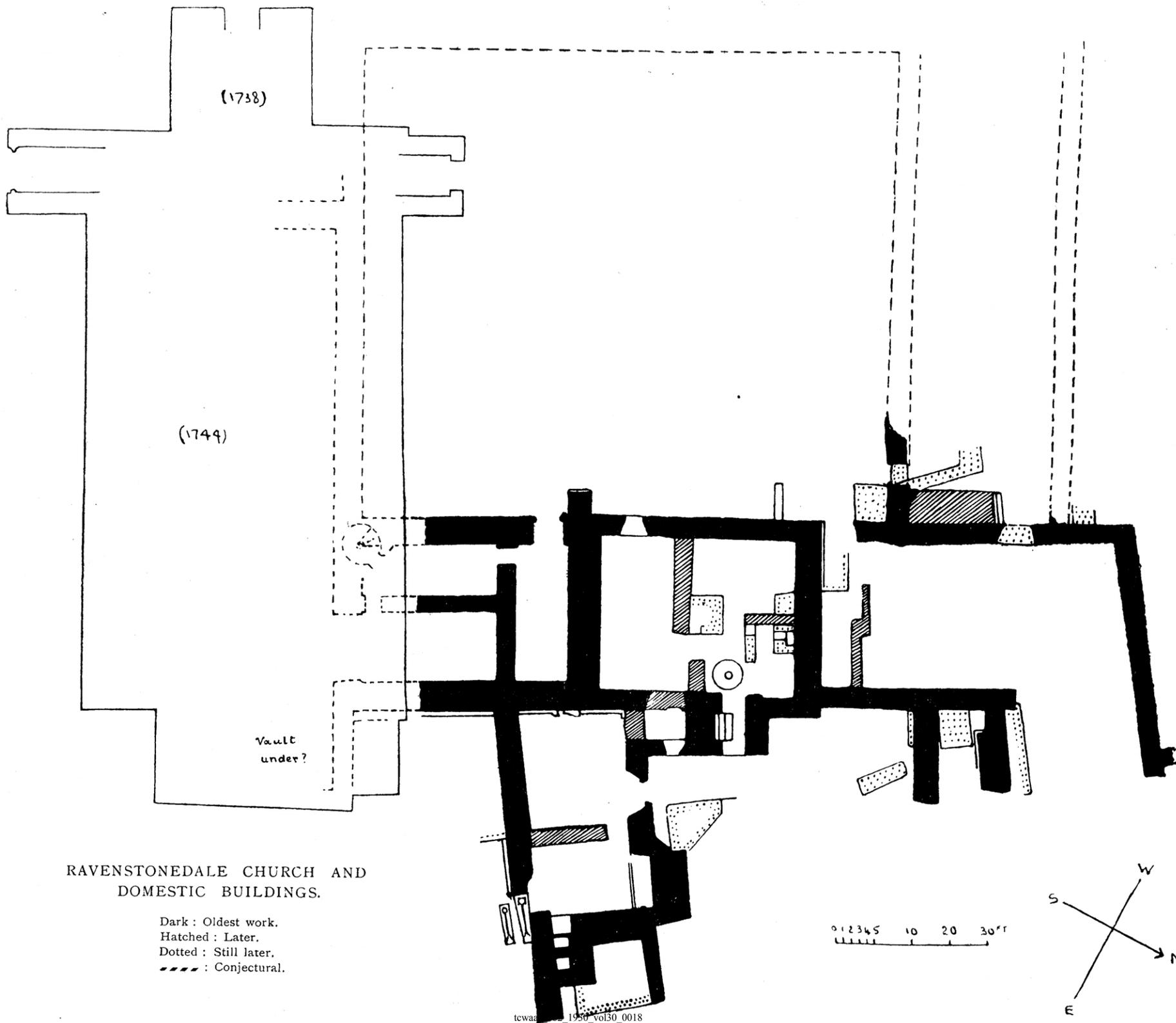


ART. XVI.—*Explorations in Ravenstonedale (II)*. By  
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DURING the present year further excavations have been made on the site of the medieval building adjoining Ravenstonedale Church. The tower and two attached wings have been almost entirely cleared to floor levels, but the two small chambers in the southern half of the tower have been filled in again in order to allow for a cart road to the church furnace. The building which stood north-west of the main domestic block has also been further investigated, but little seems to remain of it beyond the east wall. Under a staircase built against this wall, and probably of later date, is a heap of grey ash in which was found a piece of partly smelted lead. It has a hollow socket made by the bar on which it has been withdrawn from a molten mass. It seems probable that the two quadrangular structures inside the North Wing, both containing stoke holes, are the bases of lead smelting furnaces which have been built into the ruins before they became choked with debris. Other late work may be seen in foundations and paving at a higher level, both in the destroyed building mentioned above, and further north in the Church Orchard.

As regards the main building, there is much evidence that it has been constructed in part of old materials and that it has been remodelled at some later date. The original flagged floors seem to have been overlaid with clay which contains a few dressed fragments. Above the clay comes debris of stones, mortar, bones, shells and other refuse, and finally a stratum of soil which may have been



RAVENSTONEDALE CHURCH AND  
 DOMESTIC BUILDINGS.

Dark : Oldest work.  
 Hatched : Later.  
 Dotted : Still later.  
 // : Conjectural.

heaped over the ruin when the foundations were dug for the new church in 1744. It seems clear that the walls of the existing church are just outside the line of the medieval church, so far as the north wall is concerned, so it is possible that a vault under the old chancel is still intact within the new building. This would probably be the vault found towards the end of the last century, the whereabouts of which has now been forgotten.

Evidence for the age and architecture of the buildings has been supplemented by the following finds:

(1) A thirteenth century grave slab with chalice and floriated cross. This was probably the threshold of the main doorway approached by a steep flight of steps over the 'prison' room.

(2) A thirteenth century lancet head which had been laid on its side as a walling stone.

(3) A stone which Prof. Hamilton Thompson thought to be a sedilia capital.

(4) A stone which Prof. Hamilton Thompson thought to be a scratch dial.

These relics suggest that the chancel at least of the church was rebuilt at the same time as the domestic buildings (possibly after the complaint in 1405 of inefficient administration by Watton), hence the stones brought out of the church and used in the living house.

Relics which are not definitely to be associated with the church are chamfered jambs and arch stones, splayed plinth and cornice stones, ribs, sills of single light windows and a two inch slit, springers of arches, parts of battlements, and parts of a polygonal chimney shaft. These stones have the appearance of fifteenth or late fourteenth century work, but an obtusely cusped head, similar in form to the work in Brougham Castle Oratory, may be earlier.

As to the relative ages of the different parts of the building, the tower is almost certainly later than the East

Wing and is probably later than the North Wing also, though this latter may have been remodelled when the tower was built. The tower is based on a sort of haphazard plinth of dressed stone and earlier foundations which must have been largely concealed by the clay filling above the paved floors in the adjacent wings. There is some evidence that the North Wing has been partly refaced with dressed sandstone in keeping with the tower. This work may possibly be contemporaneous with the later features of the tower, as for example the buttress and the three-light window now in the north wall of the belfry of the present church tower. This window, according to Prof. Hamilton Thompson, dates from about 1500, whereas the tower doorway (still in situ) was considered by Mr. Curwen to be late fourteenth century work.

That there was an earlier tower may perhaps be inferred from the finding of a piece of staircase newel below the clay floor level beside what looks like a step in the tower plinth.

As regards the East Wing, a splayed plinth has been found on the front towards the beck, and both the fireplace and the garderobe turret seem to be insertions in older walls. In widening a trench on the south side of the East Wing another grave slab was found within six inches of the slab discovered in 1927 which perhaps formed a threshold for a narrow door adjoining the garderobe. The new slab is of a simpler design but finer in workmanship than the other. It bears a raised floriated cross with four non-intersecting circles on a stepped calvary, and is probably of thirteenth century date. Skeletons embedded in clay and resting on the living rock, exist under both these grave slabs. There would thus seem to have been an early cemetery to the north east of the medieval church.

In the space between the beck and the wall bounding the destroyed range of buildings extending westward



EXPLORATIONS IN RAVENSTONEDALE,  
Grave Slabs adjoining the East Wing.

*Photo. by E. P. Frankland.*

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EXPLORATIONS IN RAVENSTONEDALE.

North wing with grave slab, lancet head and base of staircase.  
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*Photo. by E. P. Frankland.*

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parallel to the church, has been an L shaped building attached to but not communicating with the North Wing. It measures 38 feet 9 ins. by about 32 feet internally, and has been entered by a doorway from the courtyard at the north-west corner of the North Wing, and by another, now blocked, in the wall mentioned above, beside which were found parts of an arched hood. No wall has been found closing the limb of the L towards the beck, but further south are two parallel walls which may have flanked a descent to the water. One of them has a splayed plinth and a boldly chamfered angle, and some of the facing stones have masons' marks. This portion of the building has the appearance of being a fragment of some earlier structure incorporated with inferior work. Adjacent is a massive sandstone base, presumably of a lead furnace, and there is the site of another furnace near the north-west door. A flagged drain runs through the building towards the beck, but is evidently of later date. On the whole this L shaped building would seem to be an addition to the original plan, but there is some evidence that it was pulled down nearly to the foundations before the main building was reconditioned. It is noteworthy that the sandstone face of the North Wing shows no trace of mortar bond with the wall impinging on it, or of the south door cheek at the courtyard door.

There remains a difficulty of explaining the reconstruction of the old tower as contracted for in the middle of the west end of the medieval church. As there was a central arcade, the insertion of the tower arch would have involved very serious structural alterations, of which there is no indication in the original contracts. May we not suppose that the tower was erected a little to the west of the church and that the new church was attached to it when rebuilding took place a few years later? This might account for the tradition that the tower stood originally

detached from the church and on the other side of the path through the churchyard. The path may have been replaced by the flagged passage between the north and south porches in the new building. The south porch is clearly the original thirteenth century porch, but it is not necessarily in situ, and the old nave perhaps did not come further west than the present oak screen under the gallery. The bases of the round piers of the arcade still exist under the church floor, and could their positions be determined we should have a better idea of what was done during the eighteenth century rebuilding.

Various finds of pottery have been submitted to the British Museum authorities, who date the green glaze fragments from the 15th century and other wares from the 17th and 18th centuries.

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