

CHELLASTON STANDING ANGELS WITH SHIELDS AT ASTON ON TRENT: THEIR WIDER DISTRIBUTION 1400-1450

By COLIN RYDE

This paper is dedicated to the memory of the Reverend John Tranter, Rector of Aston on Trent from 1968 to 1983, a man steadfast in faith and unfailing in charity.

‘The feather, whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
Dropped from an angel’s wing.’¹

In Volume XCVII of this Journal I gave details of the Standing Angel with Shield pattern used by the Chellaston firm of alabaster tomb makers, Prentys and Sutton, as the principal feature of the chest of the altar-tomb of Ralph and Katherine Greene.² During a period of a little more than a year this elaborate monument of alabaster was carved, painted and gilded, and by 1420 was erected in the Church of St Peter at Lowick in Northamptonshire. The same Standing Angel with Shield pattern also may be seen on the walls of another altar-tomb of alabaster, commemorating an unidentified Civilian and Lady, in the Parish Church of All Saints at Aston on Trent in Derbyshire, only two miles or so from the site of the Chellaston quarry.

The tomb at Aston on Trent now stands in the North aisle, abutting upon the North wall of the church, in the region of the Nave/Chancel crossing. (Plate 1). The three-sided chest presents three Standing Angels bearing Shields on its South side, two Hovering Angels supporting a Shield to the West, and has a plain wall, not of alabaster, at the Eastern end. The effigies of the Civilian and his Wife irregularly face the West end of the church. As at Lowick, the right hand of the Lady is clasped by the right hand of her husband, an arrangement that has its equivalent in some incised brasses of the later 14th and earlier 15th centuries. The Charges of the four Shields are carved in careful and sensitive relief. Such tangible heraldic detail helps to determine that the present location and disposition of the tomb were not ever thus.

Locations of the Tomb

Around the year 1710 the monuments in the church at Aston on Trent, together with those of other Derbyshire churches, were visited and described by Francis Bassano, a Herald Painter then working in Derby. Plate 2 is a photographic copy of that section of his ‘Derbyshire Church Notes’ which refers to the tomb in question.³ He says that it was then standing ‘between 2 pillors’ under an arch between the Chancel and the North Aisle. At this part of the church are two similar and adjacent arches and only one true architectural pillar whose springing they share. Their other supports are complexes of wall and pier to West and East. Sufficient space exists beneath both arches for the tomb to have been accommodated. Cox says that it ‘used to be (as we learn from several MSS., Bassano, Meynell, etc.,) under the arch nearest the west end between the chancel and the north chapel’.⁴ These two sources of Bassano and Meynell⁵ do not specify the westernmost site. Neither does Lysons’ account of 1817⁶, nor Glover’s description of 1831-33⁷, nor the Rawlins Manuscript of 1820-40⁸. Any precise evidence of this, however likely, I have not yet seen.



Plate 1 The alabaster tomb at Aston on Trent

Bassano 1710

Wherever the tomb stood in 1710, Bassano's Notes provide evidence of the design of the tomb-chest at that time, then free-standing and so four-sided. Figure 1 is a reconstruction of the layout of the Shields of Arms according to his Manuscript notes of Plate 2.

He describes the Shields held by three Standing Angels on the North wall of the chest, three Shields on the South side each held by a Standing Angel, and one Shield of Arms to the West without mention of the two Hovering Angels supporting it. The East side is ignored; perhaps this had suffered loss by the time of Bassano's visit, or had been plain from the outset. In Figure 1 I have given an 'A' to 'G' reference to the seven Shields of Arms noted by Bassano, beginning at the Western end of the South side and proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction, in plan, around the walls of the tomb. In the same Figure 1 the proper orientation of the Civilian (C) and the Lady (L) effigies is also shown.

We may be sure that originally the tomb was richly painted and gilded. Indeed, traces of colour are still discernible on the effigies and accessories. Such painted colour must have been added to the carved Charges of the Coats to complete their achievements, but by 1710, either these tinctures were lost, or Bassano failed to record them. He mentions no names and no dates. In his descriptions of the six Shields then apparent with a 'chevron and escallops' element he includes the word 'ingrailed' of the chevron in three cases, and omits it in the remainder. These textual omissions are arrowed at Shields 'E', 'F' and 'G' in Figure 1, though we may assume that 'ingrailed' applies in all six Coats as illustrated. His notes on the three Shields of Arms on the South side at that time provide no certainty as to their West/East sequence; Shield 'A' might have been in the position of Shield 'C' in the reconstruction of Figure 1, and vice versa.

(7)

Between 2 pillars and an Arch between of Church
 of North Side, is a worthy raised Tomb of Chelaston &
 upon it are 2 Images of a Man & his wife hands in hand
 the Man's Gown hanging to his feet, being which please
 and of Wood of it coming up wards to his Ears, his hair
 above his Ears like a small rowle. & a Copp of 2 or 3
 foules (or rowles like) upon his head.

Upon y^e South Side of y^e Tombe are 3 Angels holding of Shields before
 them, and upon y^e first Shield is an Impaled Coat (viz)
 a Chevron impaled between 3 Escallops. impaling
 Wars

On y^e 2^d a Chevron between 3 Croscants.
 3^d is of Chevron impaled between 3 Escallops

On y^e West End of y^e Tombe, 2 is of Chevron & 3 Escallops impaling
 the Chevron & 3 Croscants.

On y^e North Side of y^e Tombe is an Angels holding of Shields upon those
 brackets. On y^e first Shield to y^e East End is y^e Chevron impaled
 between 3 Escallops wth an Impalm^t not charged

On y^e 2^d Shield is only y^e Chevron & Escallops
 On y^e 3^d is y^e Chevron & Escallops impaling Wars (or
 - voice

In a brass huna us in Church

Plate 2 Bassano's 'Derbyshire Church Notes', folio 7, reproduced by permission of the College of Arms.

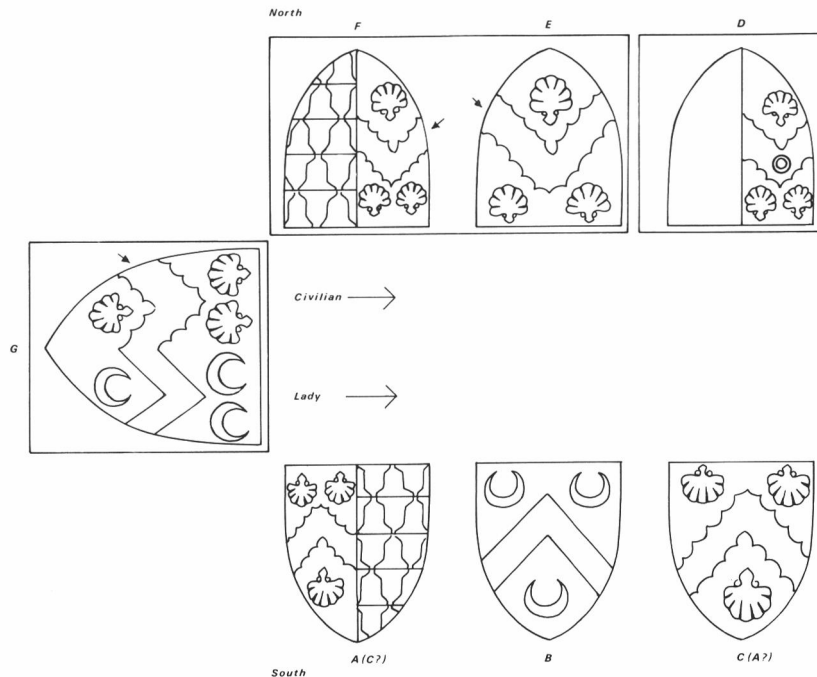


Figure 1 Layout of tomb-chest at Aston on Trent according to Bassano's Notes.

From Bassano 1710 to Cox 1875

In spite of the few minor deficiencies, Bassano's account of the heraldry of the tomb is sufficiently detailed to be regarded as authentic. The subsequent comments of Meynell, Lysons, Glover and Rawlins are incomplete and obscure, and mostly seem to rely on Bassano rather than personal study of the tomb. By the time of Cox's publication of 1875 the monument had suffered relegation, abbreviation and disorientation. Its new location against the North wall meant the loss of one of the two long sides of the chest. Cox's interpretation of the heraldic information of Bassano is perplexing, but his observation of the disposition of the Shields of Arms as they survived by 1875 is correct as at present, and this is illustrated in Figure 2.

The moving of the tomb was a vandalic affair. The West side of a Shield of Arms held by two Hovering Angels retains its earlier position. The East side is plain, as seems to have been the case at the time of Bassano's visit, and is not of alabaster. The three Standing Angels with Shields as recorded by Bassano on the North side (as at 'D', 'E' and 'F' in Figure 1) are now on the South side. There they replace the Standing Angels 'A(C?)', 'B' and 'C(A?)', in that same Figure 1, seen by Bassano, but now missing. At some time during the period 1820-40, Rawlins, presumably at first-hand, described the tomb as 'enriched with figures in bas-relief, of Angels holding mutilated shields of arms'. His use of the word 'mutilated' might have been simply a reaction to the loss of tinctures in general, or perhaps to particular damage to the earlier South side trio of Angels sufficient for them to be rejected when the tomb was moved and had to lose a side. One hesitates to accord any such discernment to those who banished the monument, inflicting major breakage and loss made worse by grotesque repairs, and abandoned the effigies in a reversed East/West position where still they lie.

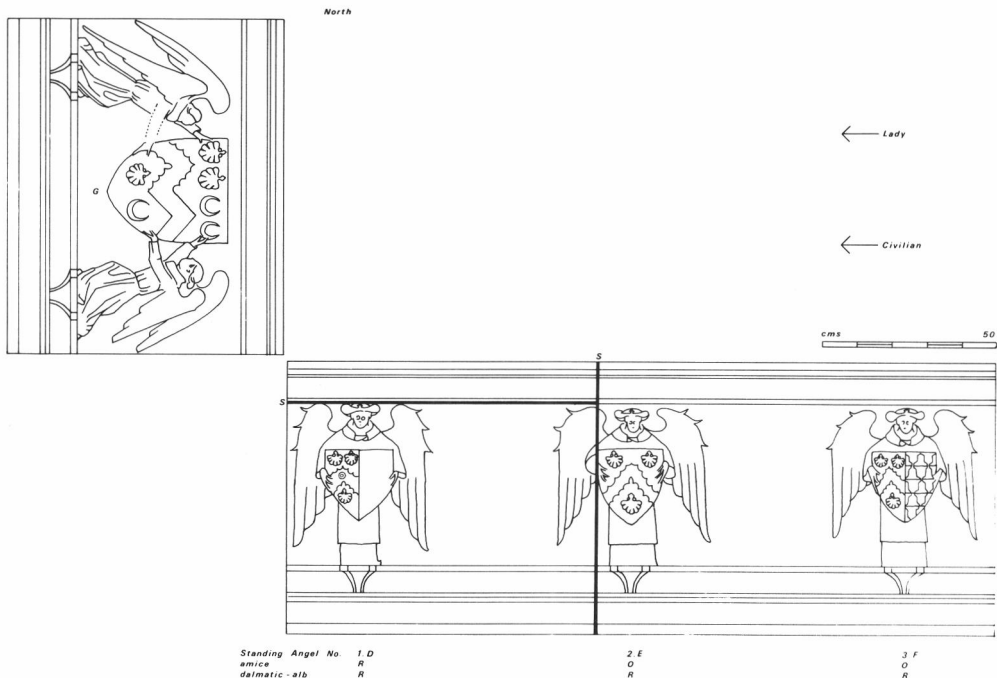


Figure 2 Layout of tomb-chest at Aston on Trent as at present.

In spite of this tribulation, the depleted assembly of Angels with Shields of Arms on just two sides of the chest survives in relatively good condition, and complements and extends the evidence of Lowick. These two memorials, at Lowick and Aston on Trent, are of pivotal importance in establishing the Chellaston shop as the primary place of altar-tomb manufacture during the first thirty years of the 15th century, and inevitably beyond. The West side motif of two Hovering Angels presenting a Shield of Arms is a second Chellaston Angel pattern of particular significance. It confirms the primacy of Chellaston, and will be analysed in a separate paper, together with a third Angel element of alabaster tomb design — that of the Attendant or Soul-Bearing Angel frequently incorporated at either side of the head of the effigy.

Identity of the effigies at Aston on Trent

Though the problems of identification of the family commemorated by the tomb at Aston on Trent are not the primary concern of this paper, it is necessary to discount the false attribution still in circulation. This leads to wrong dating of the tomb, and whimsical speculation to explain it all away. The heraldic Charges on the four Shields of Arms are carved in the best tradition of the early 15th century. As we have noted, the sculptural evidence is well preserved but the original tinctural fulfilment is lost. Documentary references to this are inconclusive. That is the limit of present knowledge, but conjecture is ever ready to rush in.

The most irrational misconception is that a Memorial with Inscription in marble of 1625 to Thomas and Alice Hunt, now on the North wall of the church above the tomb, refers to the tomb itself. That Glover misleads has been suggested. It is true that his section on 'Arms and Inscriptions in the Church' is a minimal listing of 17 paragraphed entries in which the references to the alabaster tomb and the Hunt Memorial are consecutive at 14 and 15, but this proximity of two items is no reason for making them one. However, a relationship of some kind does exist between the two monuments, albeit at a distance of two centuries, as is established by the heraldic links.

The two principal Shields of the tomb, excluding mention of tinctures, are the male Civilian Coat of 'a chevron engrailed between three escallops' seen in isolation at 'C (A?)' and 'E' in Figure 2, and the female Coat of 'a chevron between three crescents' seen at 'B', also in Figure 2. The impaling of these at 'G' in the same Figure confirms the marriage of the male Civilian (his Coat being to the viewer's left and to the North) to the Lady (whose Coat is to the right and to the South). This was in vertical keeping with the heads of the effigies above Shield 'G' when their orientation was not disturbed.

The Hunt Memorial of 1625 is described at folio 5 of Bassano's 'Derbyshire Church Notes'. This record reveals that the mural tablet has been moved to its present site on the North wall above the tomb from its position at c.1710 'upon a Pillor in ye Northe Isle'. It also reminds of Bassano's obscure use of the word 'pillor', since no true architectural pillar in the North Aisle is remotely large enough to have carried the Memorial.

The monument consists of a Latin inscription surmounted by a carved image of the Arms of Hunt. Bassano blazons these as:

'First is arg: a bugle horne arm'd & Stringed or upon a chief gules 3 Mullets of ye first'.

He goes on to give the quarterings of this Shield as:

'2d. Sab. a Cheveron engraed ermine between 3 Escallops ar.

3d. ... a Cheveron g. between 3 Crescants or.

4th. or, a Gray hound in fess current S. colloed or'.

Clearly, the second and third quarterings of the Hunt Memorial derive from the two principal

Shields of the alabaster tomb, impaled at 'G' in Figure 2, and in both cases Bassano's record of the Arms of Hunt includes some, but not complete, information of the tinctures. He made no identification of the families of these Coats in his notes on the tomb (Plate 2); he makes no mention of their descendants when the same Coats are described in the Hunt quarterings. Only one conclusion can reasonably be reached: the Hunt family who acquired Aston on Trent possibly in the earlier 16th century, descended in the female line from the family whose effigies and Arms without tinctures survive on the altar-tomb below the wall Memorial. At this point, with present knowledge, the enquiry is halted for these reasons:

1. The two Shields of Arms of the 'cheveron engrailed and escallops' and the 'cheveron and crescents' are not explained by the Hunt pedigree. Neither can any of the female-line families from which Hunt descended be regarded as having them.
2. Though Bassano's specification of the 2nd quartering of the Hunt Coat is complete with tinctures, The College of Arms has no record of such a Coat.
3. Bassano's description of the 3rd quartering of the Hunt Coat lacks the first word (i.e. the tincture of the field), and the 'g.' after the word 'cheveron' is ambiguous. Ironically, this Coat of the 'chevron and three crescents' is not uncommon in the College records, but without certainty of tinctures identification is impossible.

In all probability a female descendant of the family commemorated by the alabaster tomb subsequently married a male of the Hunt family by 1625. The identities of the Civilian and Lady in effigy are not known. They were not of the Hunt family.

Standing Angels with Shields 1, 2 and 3 at Aston on Trent

In Figure 2 the Standing Angels with Shields, as they now appear on the South side of the tomb-chest at Aston on Trent, are numbered 1, 2 and 3 from West to East. Plate 11 is a photograph of Standing Angel 3, and Plate 12 is a photograph of Standing Angel 1. All three Standing Angels emerge from a flat surface with mouldings above and below, and are not contained in canopied niches as in the more elaborate tomb at Lowick. Figure 2 shows the seams of this South side by use of a heavy line and an accompanying letter 'S'. The side is made up of three pieces of alabaster, requiring that Standing Angel 2 is divided between adjoining slabs. One suspects that the value of a usable piece successfully quarried was sufficient to override any inconvenience of carving a figure 'across the seam'.

The distribution of the Angels on single panels at Lowick revealed to me no clear signs of the work of different craftsmen.⁹ At Aston on Trent the vertical joint between the piece containing Angel 1 and that which includes Angel 3 and most of Angel 2 coincides with a difference in the working of the lower vestment part of the pattern, as we shall see, but again the characteristics of the sculptural handwriting remain consistent throughout the South side of the chest. Standing Angel 1 measures 41cm laterally, 48cm vertically, and is 6cm in maximum depth. Standing Angel 2 is equivalently 46 x 46 x 6.4cm, and Standing Angel 3 is 42 x 46 x 6cm.

Hair of Standing Angels — Lowick and Aston on Trent

At Lowick the carving of hair styles afforded a little scope for variations on the theme of the central dome with a surrounding hollow and an outer roll of hair. That this part of the Angelic realization might have taken some account of a contemporaneous instance of mortal fashion is confirmed at Aston on Trent by the roll formation of hair appearing beneath the hat of the male effigy lying on the tomb-chest (Plate 3).¹⁰

Figure 3a, b, c, d, and e provides a summary of the Lowick set of five variations. The more



Plate 3 The head of the Civilian effigy at Aston on Trent

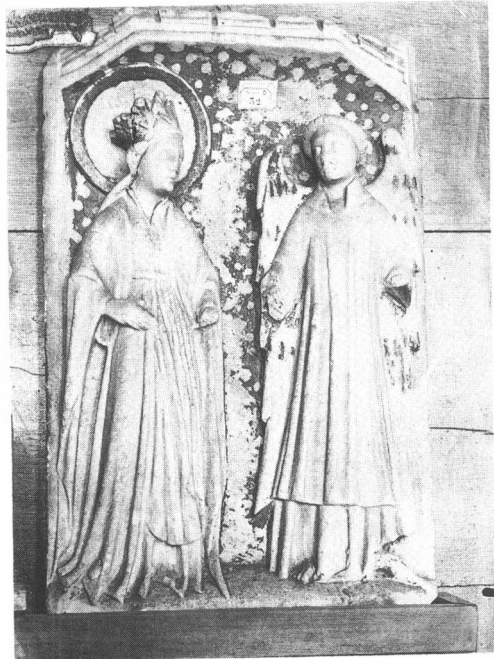


Plate 4 Alabaster relief panel of the 'Annunciation' reproduced by permission of the Musée Départemental de l'Oise, Beauvais

copious elaboration of the outer roll common to all three Standing Angels at Aston on Trent is illustrated at Figure 3f. Here the circlet with a frontal cross is standard, the central parting lines persist, and the lateral hair-lines are cut neatly in alternating doubles and singles in Angel 1, and rather more casually in Angels 2 and 3. The modelling of the outer rolls is related to the most ornate examples at Lowick, but at Aston on Trent is quite distinctive, and more reminiscent of the earlier flamboyance of such things in the fourteenth century. Figure 3f shows these side rolls sub-divided into three twisting formations per side, each of which is embellished with an undulating scheme of engraved single and double lines in parallel. These hints of a more florid resolution may imply a slightly earlier date than Lowick, but the state of the commercial process of the time permitted patterns and variations to come and go, perhaps due to a customer's request, or the caprice of a craftsman, or simple economic expediency.

Heads, Wings, Shields and Hands of Standing Angels — Lowick and Aston on Trent

The ball-like eyes with no carving of lids, the sensitive realisation of nose and chin, the gentle countenance, the ear formula of two drilled holes linked in 'figure of eight' formation with an outer rim chamfered back to the head are all features at Aston on Trent which accord with the Lowick type.

Likewise the wing structure subscribes to the Chellaston pattern. Each wing of all three Standing Angels at Aston on Trent has three tips projecting from the upper rim. Each primary feather has a bevelled section, and is distinguished from its neighbour by a shallow step. These primary feathers number five per wing, with the innermost minimal in size and obscured by the sleeve of the alb.

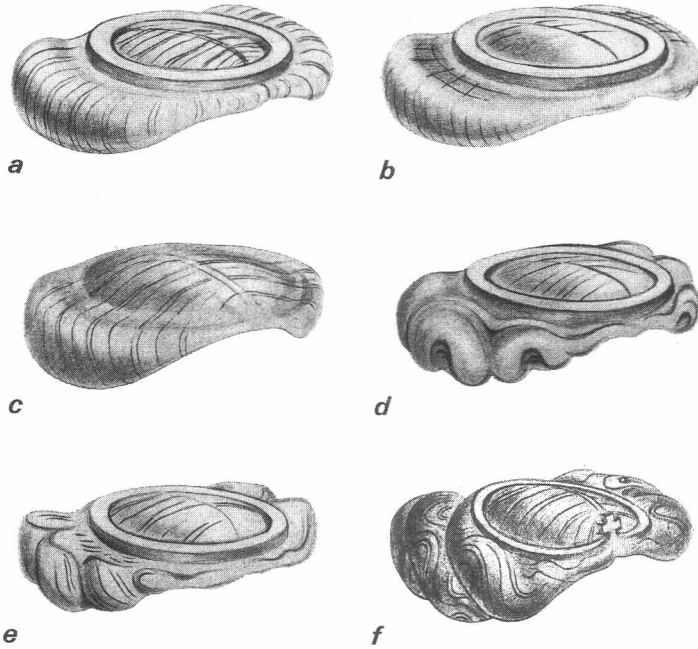


Figure 3 Variations of hair-style at Lowick and Aston on Trent.

Upon the Shields of heater shape, as we have seen, the Charges are elegantly carved. In keeping with this personal delicacy of workmanship is the delineation of the fingers holding the Shields, again a little more sinuous than at Lowick.

Vestments of Standing Angels — Lowick and Aston on Trent

We noted at Lowick that the only departures from a lateral symmetry about a central, vertical axis in the Standing Angel with Shield occurred at the crossing of the amice, and in the lower region of alb and dalmatic fold-section below the Shield. To these could be added whatever asymmetrical designs might have been displayed by the painted Charges on the now barren Shields. The same restrained departures from the symmetrical apply at Aston on Trent, though here the heraldic diversity survives in low relief.

At this stage it may be most helpful to refer to Figure 4 in total. It shows the lower, asymmetrical drapery formations of four particular Standing Angels — two from the Lowick set, and two from Aston on Trent. Figure 4a is that of Lowick Standing Angel 9; Figure 4b is that of Lowick Standing Angel 12. Figure 4c is the equivalent part of Standing Angel 3 at Aston on Trent, and Figure 4d is the corresponding portion of Standing Angel 1 at Aston on Trent.

In each of the four examples of Figure 4, the lower half of the illustration reveals an accurate cross-section of the alb, combined with a true elevation of the folds stemming from it to ground level. This cross-section, made at the junction of the alb and dalmatic, is divided into six sectors identified as 'A' to 'F', and founded on the plan of the half-hexagonal console. It appears in what we may call the obverse position at Figure 4b, ('A' to 'F' from the spectator's left to right), and in the reverse position at Figure 4a, c, and d, ('F' to 'A' from the spectator's left to right).

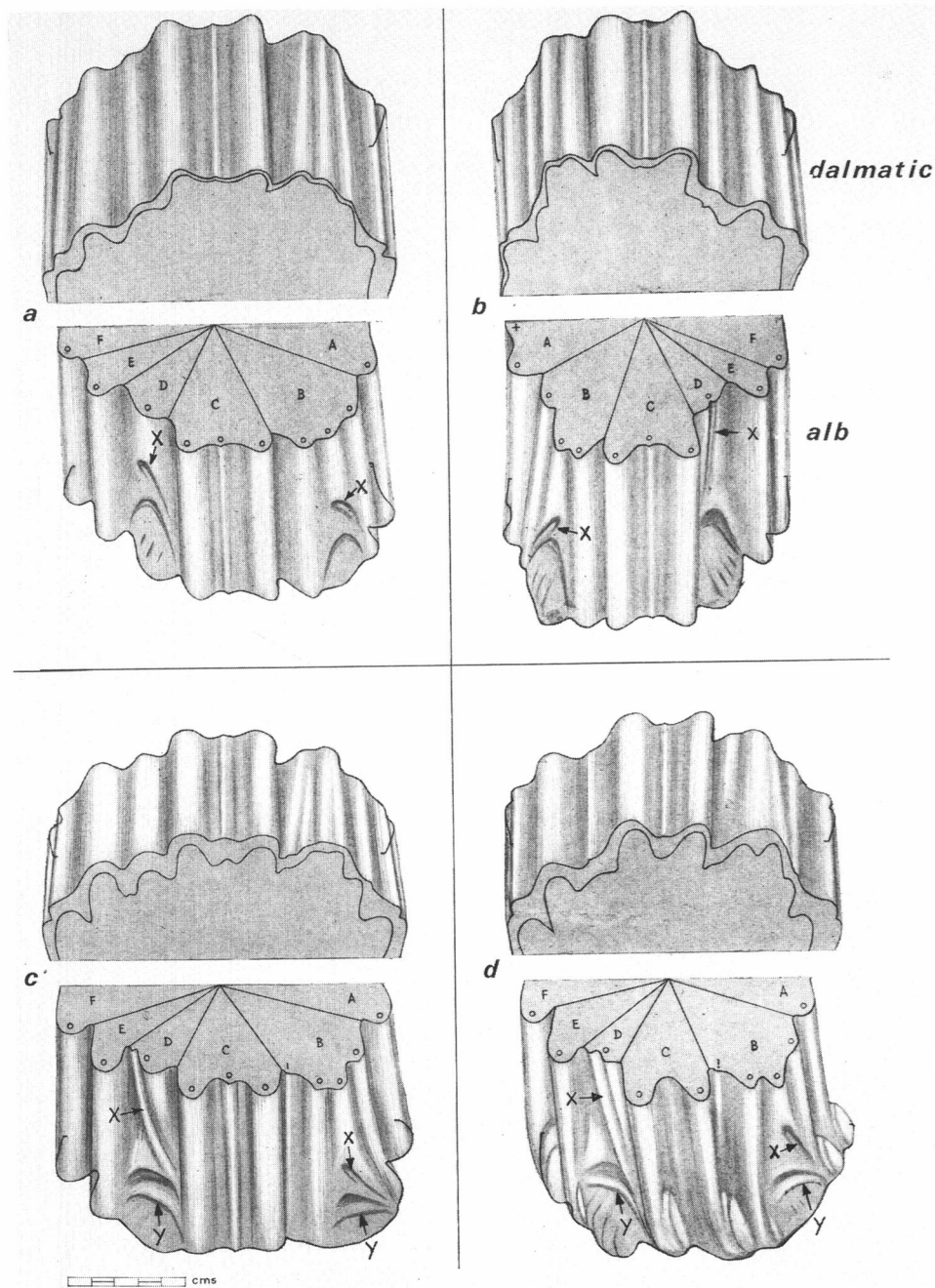


Figure 4 Alb and Dalmatic formations at Lowick and Aston on Trent

- a. Lowick Standing Angel 9
- b. Lowick Standing Angel 12
- c. Aston on Trent Standing Angel 3
- d. Aston on Trent Standing Angel 1

- 'A' contains a single, outer fold.
- 'B' is the complex above the advancing foot, and contains three folds normally, with occasionally the hint of a fourth.
- 'C' is the central and foremost sector. It is commonly of the three folds of a bracket-section, but may, at times, present only its two principal, convex folds and dispense with the lesser ridge at the centre.
- 'D' is a single fold sector, worked above the retreating foot.
- 'E' contains one fold to the outer side of this receding foot.
- 'F' identifies the single outer fold, terminal to the cross-section.

The upper half of each of the four illustrations of Figure 4 simply reflects how this cross-section of the alb is echoed in the wider design of the dalmatic above. I have repeated the alb profile within that of the dalmatic to show their conformity. The elevation of dalmatic folds is shown rising above.

The lower vestment formations of all three Standing Angels at Aston on Trent are in the 'reversed' position ('F' to 'A' from left to right) indicated by the letter 'R' in Figure 2.

Thus in the drapery formation of this pattern are the vestiges of the asymmetrical, so characteristic of the figure-sculpture of the previous century. The workings illustrated in Figure 4 reveal a little more evidence of the earlier preference for variety and elaboration lingering still. In all four instances of Figure 4 the formula includes the common element of an oblique incision or rudimentary crease across the fold above each foot. These indentations are arrowed and marked by the letter 'X'. Lowick Standing Angel 9 at Figure 4a is typical. However, Lowick Standing Angel 12, at Figure 4b, shows this groove in the 'D' sector so much inclined and lengthened as to suggest the division between two more vertical folds. Such severe obliquity of this groove occurs at Lowick in Angels 1, 3, 12, and 16. At Aston on Trent this feature is present in all three Standing Angels, and more deliberately and meticulously wrought than at Lowick. In addition, the hem of the alb is defined at Aston on Trent as it trails across the feet of each Angel, marked by the letter 'Y' in Figure 4c and 4d. Again we are aware of either a less perfunctory working of the pattern, or the evidence of a slightly earlier and less abbreviated phase of it.

Standing Angel 1 at Aston on Trent (Figure 4d and Plate 12) is further distinguished by the carving of the termination of the convex alb folds at ground level. Each fold of the alb, except the one immediately above each foot, is extended horizontally with an elaborated turn of drapery. The other Standing Angels at Aston on Trent, numbers 2 and 3, (Figure 4c and Plate 11), are of the simpler alb termination consistently present at Lowick — i.e. tubular folds of the alb without augmentation as in Figure 4a and 4b and Plate 5. This kind we may describe as 'Type AD', 'A' referring to cylindrical alb folds to ground level with no extension, and 'D' for the dalmatic. The variation displayed by Standing Angel 1 at Aston on Trent (Figure 4d and Plate 12) we may call 'Type AxD', 'Ax' signifying the alb with embellishment of folds, and 'D' again referring to the dalmatic of parallel cross-section above. I am not convinced that this feature of Standing Angel 1 at Aston on Trent indicates the work of a craftsman other than the one responsible for Angel 3 and most of Angel 2 on the adjoining and separate slab. The Lowick Angels and those at Aston on Trent seem the work of different hands, but each tomb-chest preserves a high degree of sculptural uniformity consistent with the labours of a single craftsman. If indeed the three Standing Angels at Aston on Trent were the work of one man, then he was experienced in the carving of both Types AD and AxD.

The Chellaston Standing Angel with Shield — elementary variations

The certain Chellaston Angels at Lowick and the most probable ones at Aston on Trent provide



Plate 5 Lowick St. A.4



Plate 6 Ashwellthorpe St. A.1

evidence of a few variations of detail:

- a difference of alb termination — either Type AD or Type AxD,
- some improvisations on the hair-style theme,
- a choice of carved (and painted) Charges on the Shields of Arms, or those achieved by paint alone.

To these may be added two other variables found elsewhere:

- a rectangular Shield rather than one of heater shape, and surely a matter of customer choice, and
- the carving of more detail of wing-feathers (and painted) rather than those purely pictorial.

Doubtless then as now, the greater wealth of carved detail and its finest resolution, and the richest elaboration of painting and gilding resulted from the superior skills and prolonged working that only money could command.

Wider use of the pattern — a primary set of nine tombs

These variations within the Chellaston Standing Angel with Shield pattern permit a set of nine tombs of the period c.1415 to c.1445 to be identified as of likely similar provenance. Upon the chest walls of each of these alabaster altar-tombs the Standing Angel motif is the dominant feature. The Table at Figure 5 gives some details of these nine tombs. In this Table the effigy symbols are: K - Knight; L - Lady; and C - Civilian. Attributions and dates are those commonly applied. Lowick alone is certain in the identities of the deceased and the date of manufacture of the tomb; the Canterbury attribution is beyond any reasonable doubt, but the date of its making is not known. Apart from these two of the set of nine tombs, no other is guaranteed in name or time. A pair of Hovering Angels supporting a Shield is part of the heavenly assembly of the Harewood tomb-chest, as is the case at Aston on Trent.

Place	Effigies	Attribution	Shield type ('c'- charges carved in relief; others painted only)		Numbers of Standing Angels with Shields		Hovering Angels with Shields
			rectangular	heater	Type		
					AD	AxD	
Lowick	K, L	Ralph Greene : tomb 1418-19		H	18		
Ashwellthorpe	K, L	Sir Edmund de Thorpe d.1417		H	8		
Harewood	C, L	Sir William Gascoigne d. 1419		H.c	12		2
Bures	K, L	Richard, Earl of Oxford c.1417	R.c		12		
Wadworth	K, L	Sir Edmund Fitzwilliam d.1430		H	9		
Lutterworth	C, L	?		H	3		
Aston on Trent	C, L	?		H.c	2	1	2
Ashbourne	K, L	Sir John Cockayne d.1447		H		8	
Canterbury		King Henry IV d.1413 and Queen Joan d.1437	R.c			2	
9 tombs	18 effigies		2	7	64	11	2x2
					75		

Figure 5 The primary set of nine tombs c.1415 to c.1445

Derivation of the pattern

This quite stereotyped pattern is the most popular tomb-chest subject of the first generation of alabaster altar-tomb makers. We have noted that its costume origins lie within the less standardized sculpture of the 14th century which had preferred the curvilinear rhythms of implied mobility and intricacies of drapery in abundance. The Chellaston Standing Angel formula is one of transitional character between those periods known in English Medieval architecture as 'Decorated' and 'Perpendicular'. In the imagery of the later 14th century the products of the other side of the alabaster trade — the devotional relief panels and some free-standing statuary — are notable. They take their place in the gradual move away from the particular and fanciful towards the more simple and austere. In an elementary way the one asymmetrical feature of vestment was retained, and combined with the emerging preference for balance and parallelism in the rest of the Standing Angel figure to produce the Chellaston model.

Of particular interest is an alabaster devotional panel of 'The Annunciation', now in the Musée Départemental de l'Oise at Beauvais, reproduced here at Plate 4. It is no longer on exhibition there, having been damaged and discoloured in the Museum fire of 1940. The relief carving is of the 'Canted and Embattled' type discussed by Hildburgh¹¹, and generally thought to have been made in the later 14th century. Prior and Gardner suggest a date of c.1400.¹² The figure of the Angel Annunciate shows that within the alabaster panel repertoire existed a close relative of the Angel soon to be equipped with a Shield of Arms for the tomb designer's purpose.

The aptness of the motif

The rising popularity of the altar-tomb and the scope for sculptural display upon the walls of the chest coincided with a newly emergent class of patron, described by Stone as 'the smaller landed gentry, together with a scattering of business and professional men'.¹³ The Angel holding a

Shield of family Arms had strong appeal. The colourful spectacle of the heraldic badges of the deceased, and those of associate members of the chosen race, was a shrewd and impressive way of establishing in some perpetuity the distinction of the recently affluent. That these symbols be presented to the world by Angels showed a proper regard for things divine and gained heavenly confirmation of earthly status at the same time.

Personal transcriptions of a workshop pattern

I am indebted to the Editor, Dudley V. Fowkes, for enabling me to include a comprehensive range of photographic examples of Standing Angels with Shields from each of the nine tombs listed in the Table of Figure 5. So often such pictorial coverage is essential to writer and reader, but seldom is it made possible. These examples in Plates 5 to 14 remind us of the principles of the pattern already dealt with. It is important to assess the duality of similarity and variation that these images present.

It seems that a preliminary variety was decided upon by the customer in consultation with the manager. From the catalogue of alabaster tomb elements a selection was arrived at according to preference and cost. Since my concern is with just one of these, the wider range of tomb features is not in debate at this stage.

The first persuasion towards variety arises from the working conditions of the alabaster tomb-making shop in the early 15th century. These are not at all clear from the documents to hand. We are unsure as to the roles of Prentys and Sutton themselves. That Thomas Prentys carried out managerial functions is confirmed by the contract of 1414.¹⁴ This tells us that he conducted negotiations for the sale of raw alabaster to Alexandre de Berneval and others, and for its transportation along the River Trent to Hull, and thence to France to be carved in some way for the Abbey of Fécamp. In this matter Nottingham is mentioned only as a place where business meetings were held. Though Prentys and Sutton are described as 'kervers' in the Lowick contract, we know not of their personal practise in quarrying or sculpture, nor how many craftsmen were employed in whatever specialised capacities, nor for what periods of time. We can be more confident that, at any given time, the proven expertise of some carvers and painters was recognised and valued. In this regard it is possible that the effigies would have the attention of the most able and experienced. The working atmosphere of the Chellaston shop seems to have been reasonably easy. The carver of the Lowick Angels was free to indulge in some hair-style empiricism, and at Aston on Trent the inclusion of two Types of the Standing Angel vestment pattern on a single tomb was not thought disruptive. This flexible attitude to some personal shifts in repeated workings of the pattern finds a concomitant in the assembling of the elementary blocks and slabs, when practicalities and economics are in evidence. The patchwork make-up of the tomb-chest at Aston on Trent (Figure 2) suggests that substantial alabaster was to be 'taken as you find it', and that purist concerns to keep the Angel figure whole, and also maintain some symmetry in the construction of the wall were of little consequence. At Ashbourne the symmetrical composition of the pieces of the two long walls is indeed preserved, but with an alarming alternative instance of 'matter over mind'. The craftsman had the daunting task of carving a half-Angel figure, with half-face, at the vertical boundaries of four separate panels.

The second, and most misinterpreted kind of variation, results from individual carvers transcribing the pattern by a process of eye and hand. It is evident in all of the examples illustrated in Plates 5 to 14, and in all of the other sixty-five Angels listed in Figure 5. The personal characteristics that distinguish the handiwork of each person, plus those peculiar to every supposedly repeated working by the one person, are always naturally precipitated. Any and all

creations by hand bear these unique features. Those limited to the planar format and the linear image cannot hide them; the sculptured resolution, in relief or in the round, is equally revealing. We are faced with the manifestations of that mysterious force of life which determines a perplexing duality — one of principle and variety combined. An everyday example is the personal signature. This always has factors of visual sameness peculiar to the individual, yet also shades of visual difference that can never be exactly repeated, even by that same person. Such variations between the carved images from the same hand, and yet more from the transcriptions of divers craftsmen, are what the spectator singles out, rather than the principles of pattern beneath.

These models wrought by the hands of men carry, in addition, the tertiary and evolving differentiation brought about by nature's perpetual forces of change. These include the effects of human nature's attentions, always capricious and frequently maleficent. The only sensible approach to these survivals of creed and craft is protection and preservation, a path both straight and narrow. To one side of this lie the dangers of wilful destruction, relegation and neglect. On the other are the well-meaning but misguided attempts at a mythical 'restoration' with equally injurious results. Isolation from the action of water and mineral acids and shielding from damage is much to be desired, and preferably with the guidance of the scientifically enlightened conservationist. Replacements of missing or ravaged parts and re-paintings by self-styled 'sculptors' and 'painters' are unpardonable offences.

Interpretation of the evidence

The 20th century has furthered a too polarized interpretation of this visual complexity, based on a single and simplistic premise. Our society has pursued mechanical methods of making objects which, to our vision, have a very high degree of uniformity. We have striven to exclude the personal of the human element and the variable of nature's materials to produce vast quantities of duplicated articles by machine processes.

My own records of surviving memorials making significant use of alabaster in the period from 1300 to 1450 provide this summary of production: 1300 to 1360 — 12 monuments; 1360 to 1400 - 51 monuments; 1400 to 1425 - 65 monuments; 1425 to 1450 - 42 monuments. This total of 170 includes mere fragments of effigies, alabaster effigies without tomb-chests, alabaster effigies on chests of other materials, alabaster chests surmounted by alabaster slabs either incised or inlaid with brasses, the later and more developed altar-tombs complete with effigies and accessories, and the few documentary records of alabaster memorials that have perished. Perhaps some have vanished without trace; a few others still in existence might have escaped my notice.

However much this shop production intensified in the later 14th and earlier 15th centuries relative to previous practice, it was far removed in the quantity and character of its sculpture from the mass-manufacture of anonymous units of our own time. A first reaction of the 20th century mind to the repeated working of a shop-pattern by the makers of alabaster tombs some six centuries ago is to expect copies as identical as those of the contemporary assembly-line. When, quite naturally, this is not the case, the visual assessment seeks a wider classification solution, but one still founded on machine-age attitudes.

An attempt is made to attribute each secondary variation arising from the hand-working of the pattern to a distinct regional source, as though that place, alone and always, was responsible. This leads to the apportioning of quite personal traits to diverse origins, compelled to use speculation and even prejudice in support. The shifting terminology of shops, cities, centres, schools, counties and regions of alabaster tomb-making flourishes. Over the years these secondary nuances of sculptural handwriting have gained a wider credence. This, however fanciful, has



Plate 7 Harewood St. A7



Plate 8 Bures St. A. 10

become entrenched by repetition, and needs to be put aside.

I suggest that in the earlier 15th century the shop having both the mineral resource and the tomb-carving capability was a rarity, and so of major importance; that such a shop employed few rather than many craftsmen, and, with regard to the number of monuments already given, was able to command the largest share of the market. Beyond this, the subsidiary source of supply was the individual sculptor, working alone or with a little assistance. He bought the raw material as required and carved the monument according to the prevailing design principles, with whatever personal traits that might arise. The net result was a restricted manufacturing base, with the major supplier having patterns for customers to approve and carvers able to replicate, but loosely supervised and allowing modifications, improvisations, inventions, and even reversions as expediency and whim might determine.

The Chellaston Standing Angel with Shield — Nine tombs of the period c1415 to c1445

Thorough analysis of all of the seventy-five Standing Angels of the nine tombs listed in the Table of Figure 5 is not possible here. It is sufficient to say that, as was the case in my analysis of the Lowick set, and, above, of those at Aston on Trent, the principles of the pattern are maintained in all of them. This collection of nine tombs may be sub-divided into two groups — the first of the Type AD examples, the second of Type AxD, with Aston on Trent providing a link between them. The Table of Figure 5 is so ordered.

Group 1a consists of Lowick (Northamptonshire), Ashwellthorpe (Norfolk), Harewood (Yorkshire), Bures (Suffolk), Wadworth (Yorkshire), and Lutterworth (Leicestershire). These form a cohesive lot with Lowick the only fixed anchorage at 1418-19.

The coexistence of Type AD and Type AxD at Aston on Trent (Derbyshire) establishes an alliance with the other monuments of

Group 1b, at Ashbourne (Derbyshire), and Canterbury (Kent).

The following 'Notes on the Plates' are in the order of this list. In the captions to Plates 5 to 14 the numerical reference to the Angel is consistently that of beginning at the West end of the South side of the tomb-chest and proceeding in plan in an anti-clockwise direction around it, restricting the numbering sequence to Standing Angels with Shields only, and not other Angel motifs. In Plate captions and in Note headings 'Standing Angel' is abbreviated to 'St. A.'.

Notes on Plates 5 to 14

Plate 5. Lowick (Northamptonshire). St. A.4

On more recent visits to Lowick I have become aware of a vertical seam to the right of Standing Angel 11, and am persuaded that Angel 12 is carved on a slab unto itself, and is not part of the panel containing Angels 10 and 11.¹⁵ However, this advances not the case for the Angels of the tomb-chest being the work of more than one craftsman. In the company here of photographs of Standing Angels from eight other tombs it is possible to see the careful staidness of the Lowick carver's style.

Plate 6. Ashwellthorpe (Norfolk). St. A. 1

The eight Angels of this tomb-chest are carved on four panels, two Angels per panel. Each of these pairs includes one obverse vestment formula and the other in reverse position. On two panels, (the one with Angels 1 and 2, the other with Angels 7 and 8), the shafts of the primary wing feathers are resolved as ridges of rectangular section rather than implied by bevels. The number of primary feathers per wing is generally four, and the outward-curving points, extended and sharpened, are three on each and every wing. Hair styles remain faithful to a simple working of the variation with no circlets, as at Lowick in Figure 3c. What appear to be traces of the original painted feathering, both primary and secondary, have survived, and provide scope for analysis. The more recent 'restoration' of the painted Shields of Arms is regrettable. The authenticity of the Charges is not certain, their garish incongruity is visually disturbing, and whatever evidence might have been retained for scientific investigation has been obliterated. In several areas the texture survives of the use of a very fine-toothed chisel or scraper. This achieved an adequate smoothness of surface and provided a suitable key for the pigment solution. The hair of Angels 2 and 7 bears the vestiges of gilding. This transcription achieves rather more liveliness by the broader resolution of formal parts and the angular emphasis of line.

Plate 7. Harewood (Yorkshire). St. A. 7

Erosion of the whole tomb-chest is well advanced. In the Table of Figure 5 I have described the Charges as carved in relief. This is still evident in the Shield held by two Hovering Angels at the head of the monument to the West, where the Royal Arms quartering France Ancient linger as an ever more ghostly reminder of the Royal office of Judge Gascoigne. I remember that thirty years ago the decay of the Standing Angels with Shields was severe, but I thought then that sufficient evidence of their Charges being carved was discernible. Sadly the deterioration of the chest goes on. The primary feathers are mostly three to each wing, with occasional hints of a fourth. External points of the upper wings are consistently three. As at Ashwellthorpe the hair style is the simpler version, so far as the condition permits analysis, with central parting lines, lateral hair lines in twos across the dome and outer roll, and no circlets. One other feature traceable in the dissolving images of the North side is, or was, a curious elaboration of the outermost folds of the dalmatic at both sides. Perhaps this was a truly inventive departure in place of the standard working of the vent incision in sector 'A' and 'F' of the dalmatic fold cross-section.

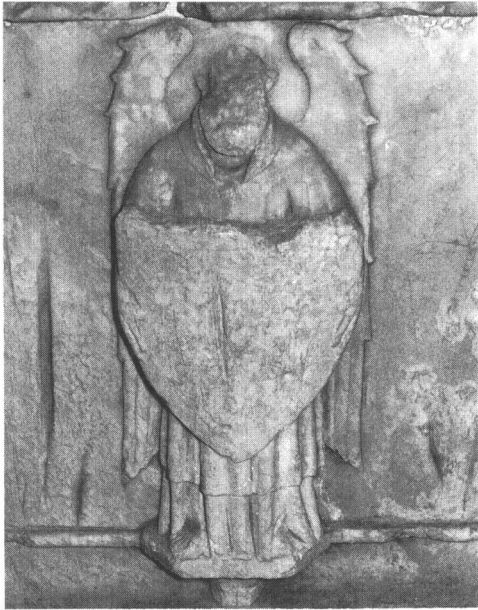


Plate 9 Wadworth St. A.8



Plate 10 Lutterworth St. A.1

Plate 8. Bures (Suffolk). St. A. 10

This tomb has undergone changes both of structure and location in its troubled career. It now rests happily in the 13th century Chapel near Bures in Suffolk.¹⁶ The vestment fold of the 'C' division is inconsistently carved. Perhaps the relatively short length of alb emerging below the rectangular Shield encouraged a more casual approach to its solution, but beyond the lower boundary of the Shield the dalmatic hem and vent are always present. The primary feathers, bevelled and stepped, number three per wing and the external points of the upper wing are four and four in Angels 3 to 12, six and six in Angel 1, and four and three in Angel 2. The hair-roll working again provides a range of five variations and the circlet is present in four cases. Atmospheric influence has brought about a general blurring of the tomb-chest and a loss of the precise carving focus. This is an obstacle to a fair appreciation of the sculptural hand-writing other than to point out the obviously tighter containment of the figure and the more restricted and summarised working.

Plate 9. Wadworth (Yorkshire). St. A. 8

This chest is in poor condition. All Standing Angels are headless, and the slab containing Angels 3 and 4 is missing a large diagonal portion. Primary feathers of the wings fluctuate in number between three and four, and the projecting tips of the upper rim are increased mostly to six, and occasionally five, per wing, as best can be seen. The elongation of the figure is noticeable, and that with no pressure from the free space of plain wall to either side.

Plate 10. Lutterworth (Leicestershire). St. A. 1

The Lutterworth tomb occupies a recess at the East end of the North aisle. It stands beneath a stone canopy, and reveals only one side of the chest to the South. Standing Angels 1 and 2 are in poor condition made worse by replacement heads. The panel with Angel 3 and its niche and



Plate 11 Aston on Trent St. A.3



Plate 12 Aston on Trent St. A.1

canopy is a 'restoration' in total, and the other niches have been vandalised by the insertion of bogus parts crudely designed. Each Angel wing has three primary feathers and the remains of two upper points.

Plate 11. Aston on Trent (Derbyshire). St. A. 3

These Standing Angels are expansively poised in the freedom of the plain wall. Their curvilinear ease and subtlety of form is noteworthy, and much to be admired and protected. The surface of the wall retains the finely worked texture as at Ashwellthorpe. I remind that this example, like all in the sequence thus far, is of the vestment termination Type AD.

Plate 12. Aston on Trent (Derbyshire). St. A. 1

Here the elaboration of the alb is preferred. This instance of Type AxD provides the link with the two other tombs of Group 1b within the set of nine, all sharing the vesture of alb, dalmatic and amice.

Plate 13. Ashbourne (Derbyshire). St. A. 1

The tomb at Ashbourne, attributed to Sir John Cockayne who died in 1447 and his first wife Joan, incorporates eight Standing Angels of the Chellaston pattern Type AxD. If the monument was carved at that time it is evidence of the survival of the pattern well into the second generation of 15th century tomb making, by which time a number of modifications of the image had become more common. However, reversion to the earlier standard was quite possible in the alabaster industry. Equally the time of manufacture of the tomb-chest might have been earlier. Whenever, a thorough and confident working is apparent.

The Standing Angels are decayed and damaged, but traces of most of the Lowick hair style variations of Figure 3 can be found. Primary wing feathers vary in number from three to four,



Plate 13 Ashbourne St. A.1

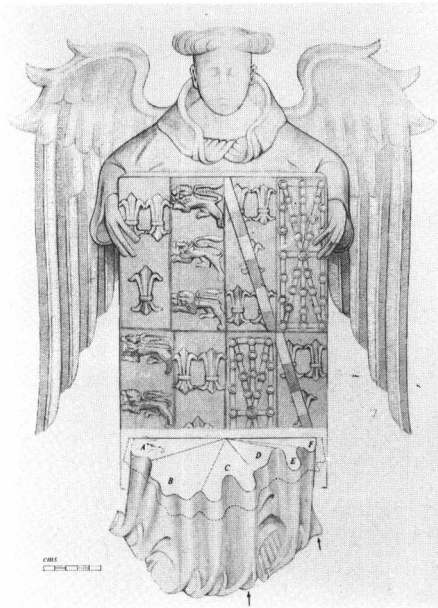


Plate 14 Canterbury St. A.2

but the external wing tips are consistently three to each wing. The Type AxD termination of the alb is present throughout, and survives in best condition in Angel 1. In this can be traced two extra little elaborations of the alb-fold turns which are present also in the next and final example of the primary set of nine tombs, that at Canterbury.

Plate 14. Canterbury (Kent). St. A. 2

Of all surviving alabaster tombs of the first half of the 15th century, none provokes more dispute and speculation than that of King Henry IV and Queen Joan in the Cathedral Church of Canterbury. That Royal commission was the opportunity for the catalogue of alabaster tomb ornament to be put on show, and the revered setting has provided a high degree of protection. Its authorship promotes conflicting and subjective debate, not uncommon in questions of royalty versus reality. The distance of twenty-four years between the death of the King in 1413 and that of Queen Joan in 1437 extends the scope for argument to the time of manufacture of the monument. Dates ranging from 1409, when the King made his will, to 'some years after the death of Queen Joan' are all available.¹⁷

To restrict one's attention to the two Standing Angels with Shields of the Chellaston pattern Type AxD that are present on the tomb-chest, one at the East end and the second at the West, is not without its problems, though these are of a more practical kind. The tomb stands with the Eastern wall of the chest almost in contact with, and much obscured by, a cylindrical column of large diameter. Between the West end of the chest and the next such column to the East is a metre or so of space, but this is occupied by church furniture. An extra obstacle is the protective metal grate around the South, North and West sides of the tomb.

I have studied the Standing Angel with Shield 2, to the West, at closest quarters, but any photographic record of it cannot but include parts of this iron grate. Plate 14 is an accurate elevational drawing of this Angel, including a cross-section of the lower vestments. In the latter

the 'A' to 'F' sectors of the alb are revealed, and the wider and related profile of the dalmatic is shown by a broken line. One other adjustment was necessary. The present 'head' of the more accessible Angel 2 at the West end is a meaningless plaster replacement. My drawing at Plate 14 incorporates the evidence of the head and hair of Standing Angel 1 from the East wall of the chest. This appears to be original and intact, though seen only with difficulty by the use of electric torches and mirrors. The tomb was 'cleaned' in 1937 by Tristram.¹⁸ This seems to have been a restrained operation, but the report is not sufficiently detailed to give one confidence as to what was and what is. It is not reassuring to read there that 'the tomb is of purbeck marble and the effigies of alabaster'.

Plate 14 shows all the features of the Chellaston pattern Type AxD. The rectangular Shield is both carved and painted with the quartered Arms of France Modern and England impaling those quarterly of Evreux and Navarre. The lower vestment formula is presented in the obverse position, and within the alb terminations occur two additional embellishments referred to at Ashbourne and arrowed here in Plate 14. Further elaboration is present in the carving of wing-feather detail. The shafts of each of the four primary feathers per wing are reserved as ridges of rectangular section, and the vanes suggested by the 'wriggled' working of a flat-faced chisel pushed and rocked across the surface of the soft material. This convention for shaft and vane is extended to the three rows of half-lapped secondary feathers of the upper wings, and even to the segments of the rim with their projecting points. I have some doubts as to the original feather realisation in relief and/or paint of the upper wings; the attentions of 1937 might have been rather fanciful. (If the replacement 'head' was either added or not subtracted at that time my anxiety increases.) However, in the wider context of the carving of wing feathers of chest Angels Standing and Hovering, and Attendant Angels beside the effigies, none of the chased detail at Canterbury is exceptional.

The wider context of the pattern — 1400 to 1450

Figure 6 is a tentative chronology of all tombs of the period 1400 to 1450 employing the Standing Angel with Shield motif upon the walls of the chest. The place-names are displayed in three sets, each bounded by heavy lines and numbered 1, 2 and 3. Set 1 is sub-divided by a broken line into Group 1a, the Type AD members of our primary set based on the Lowick anchorage at 1418-19, and Group 1b below, which encompasses the Type AxD minority of the primary set, which stems from Aston on Trent, here placed on the line of divide by virtue of its having Angel feet in both Group 1 and 2.

This summary of Figure 6 shows that the combination of alb and dalmatic of both divisions of the primary set is confined to the nine places, and to the period from c.1415 to c.1445. The distribution of Type AD stretches in time from Aston on Trent at 1415 to Lutterworth at 1440. My preference for an early date for the tomb at Aston on Trent is based on its own quality of carved delicacy and on its links with Lowick. Since this 'link' tomb is also a member of the more exclusive Group 1b of Type AxD Angels, a considerable distance in time occurs between it and its Derbyshire neighbour of Group 1b at Ashbourne, dated at 1445. Canterbury's potential to swing either earlier or later as the arrows of Figure 6 imply provides no greater security. However, pending a specialised analysis of the fascinating perplexity of the Royal monument, I think its present state of suspension preferable to yet another unforced error.

The tombs of place-names in Group 2 of Figure 6 may be said to provide a formative phase of the Chellaston pattern. The Standing Angels with Shields of these all subscribe to the principles of that pattern with the single difference that they are clad only in alb, and amice,

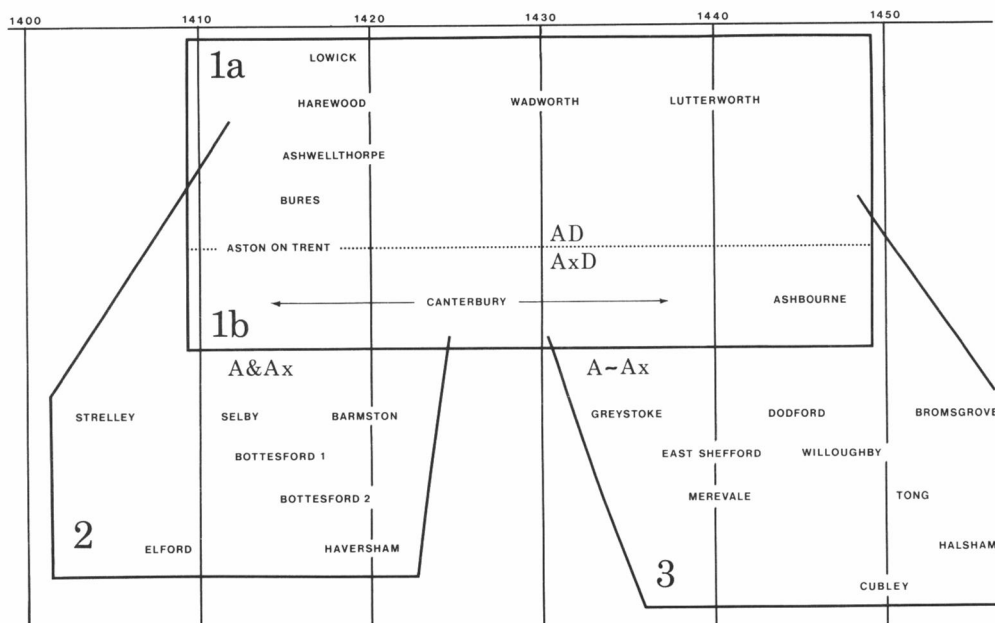


Figure 6 The distribution of the Standing Angel with Shield — 1400 to 1450

without the dalmatic. Still, in the seven tombs of Group 2, the distinction between the alb with simple hem-line, which we may call Type A, and that with the intricacy of turned drapery, Type Ax, is clearly maintained. The details of Group 2 are:

Strelley (Nottinghamshire), 14 Angels Type A,

Selby (Yorkshire), 8 Angels Type A,

Barmston (Yorkshire), 14 Angels Type A

Bottesford 1 (Leicestershire), attributed to William, Lord Rous, 7 Angels Type A, 1 Angel Type Ax,

Bottesford 2 (Leicestershire), attributed to John, Lord Rous, 7 Angels Type A, 1 Angel Type Ax,

Elford (Staffordshire), 1 Angel Type A, 11 Angels Type Ax, (and 10 Weepers),

Haversham (Buckinghamshire), 5 Angels Type Ax, (and 2 Weepers).

The total of Standing Angels of all Types — AD, AxD, A, and Ax — in Groups 1 and 2 is 143.

By 1430 the second generation of Standing Angel production is underway. I have placed the first nine instances of this on the time-scale of Figure 6 in Group 3. They are Greystoke (Cumberland), East Shefford (Berkshire), Merevale (Warwickshire), Dodford (Northamptonshire), Willoughby in the Wolds (Nottinghamshire), Great Cubley (Derbyshire), Bromsgrove (Worcestershire), Tong (Shropshire), and Halsham (Yorkshire). Of course, this stream continues through the second half of the 15th century, and the tendencies emerging in the Group 3 examples persist. The pattern is less thoroughly worked; a more summarised and abbreviated Angel with Shield image results. Simplification leads to less distinction in the alb termination; the hem of the alb may be lifted to ankle-height to avoid complexity; the alb cross-section moves towards a symmetrical and nondescript series of vertical folds. Elongation of the figure reduces the size of the Shield, increases the visible elevation of the alb, and heightens the circlets on the head. The wing undergoes a parallel economy and is thinned and lengthened; feather depiction

becomes ever more scanty, and the formerly outward-projecting points are turned inside the wing profile. A few whimsical oddities arise, mostly extracted piece-meal from earlier usage.

Whatever the problems of establishing an accurate chronology of the products of a busy and unceremonious tomb industry of the first half of the 15th century, I have fewer doubts as to its source. The Canterbury monument is a convenient platform. It stands as a show-piece of the alabaster tomb-makers' craft. The many features within it can be found repeatedly in their works elsewhere. More specifically, the persistent replication of the Standing Angel with Shield pattern implies that the Royal tomb, together with all of the other twenty-four of the Table of Figure 6, emerge from the heart of a well-established, centralised and continuing industrial base. A common and reasonably precise source is likely. The importance of Chellaston within this is beyond dispute.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- 2 Colin Ryde, 'An Alabaster Standing Angel with Shield at Lowick — a Chellaston Shop Pattern', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XCVII (1977) pp. 36-49. A few misprints in this article need correcting. On the 'Illustrations' page these are: 5 The hair of Angel 15. 9a Section and elevation of the alb and dalmatic of Angel 1. 11b Sections of the alb and dalmatic of Angel 14. On page 39 the caption to Fig 5 ought to be 'The hair of Angel 15'.
- 3 Francis Bassano, 'Derbyshire Church Notes', c.1710, folio 7, Manuscript at the College of Arms, London.
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- 5 I am indebted to Godfrey Meynell for providing a copy of the relevant section of his ancestor's notes from a manuscript which is part of the Meynell family library.
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