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NORFOLK & NORWICH  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

## Saxon Remains

IN THE

### CLOISTERS OF NORWICH CATHEDRAL.

COMMUNICATED BY

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IN the reign of Edward the Confessor Norwich was a flourishing town. According to the Domesday Survey it possessed 1,320 burgesses in the time of King Edward, and not less than twenty-five churches, among which was the church of St. Michael, held by Stigand, and the church of the Holy Trinity, held by twelve burgesses in King Edward's time and by the Bishop William Belsagus, at the survey, of the gift of King William.

The record of so many ancient churches led Mr. Richard Taylor to remark (*Index Monasticus*, page 6) that "in a town which contained such a multitude of churches and chapels as early as the Conqueror's time, it is somewhat singular that so few traces of ancient architecture are discoverable in the early parochial churches." The discovery, therefore, of Saxon remains, which forms the subject of this Paper, in the west wall of the cloisters of the Norwich Cathedral, is in accordance with probability; and our late respected Secretary, Mr. Harrod,

states in his excellent work, *Gleanings among the Castles and Convents of Norfolk* (page 235), that evidence exists which seems to him to go very nearly to prove that the church of Herbert was built on the site of a yet more ancient one, dedicated also to the Holy Trinity. In proof of this he cites from Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus ævi Saxonici*, vol. iv., p. 282, the following very conclusive extract. Sifed made his will "when he went over the sea" some forty years before Herbert's time, and devised, among other things, "and ic an into Nordwick to Cristes Kirk iiiij recheren and to into Sancte Marian."

And what and where was this Christ's Church in Norwich? It appears that this title was continued from the original monastic church, called in Domesday Survey the church of the Holy Trinity, to the Cathedral, built by Herbert, and so dedicated by him and continued from his time to at least the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Indeed these titles seem to have been convertible, the one being used by the upper and the other by the lower classes. Harrod observes that, although in the wills of the upper classes the Cathedral is referred to as the church of the Holy Trinity, in those of the lower it is constantly called Christ's Church. Of this he cites numerous instances from Wills, from the Corporation Accounts, and the Session and Assembly Books also. He inserts also a very droll account from the anecdotes by L'Estrange, published by the Camden Society, which unmistakably connects and identifies Christ's Church with the Cathedral. He refers also to some parallel cases which are very confirmatory;—the church of the Holy Trinity in York is stated in the Domesday Survey to be held by Richard, son of Erfast; and in the enumeration of his lands in the Survey, all the lands held by him in right of this church are named as held of Christ's Church. The priories of Christ's Church, London, and Christ's Church, Hampshire, were both dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

I have purposely refrained from adducing as evidence the statement made by Ingulphus, the chronicler of Croyland, that when he was installed there in 1076 (twenty years before the foundation of Norwich Cathedral) he found one hundred "comproffesi," or monks from other monasteries, of whom fourteen were from Christ's Church, Norwich, because doubts have been raised as to the genuineness and the date of his Chronicle so called. It appears to me that, however little value may be attached to this account of the migration of the monks from Norwich, and whatever may be the date of the Chronicle, it serves to prove that Christ's Church was a title given, at some time or other, to a monastic establishment in Norwich. I pass by also Blomefield's observation that this title could not have belonged to the present Cathedral, because it was not then founded by Herbert de Losinga, but that it belonged to the church of St. John's Maddermarket, which he identified with that of Holy Trinity mentioned in Domesday Survey, notwithstanding there is no record relating to St. John's Maddermarket church prior to the fourteenth century.

Since the above was written, Dr. Bensly has set the question at rest by producing a copy of the "sanctuary map" of Norwich of 1541, from the Public Record Office, in which the Cathedral is called "Cristechurch." Mr. Thomas Hancock, the City Treasurer, in his rich collection of maps of Norwich, has one about 1575, in which it is described as "the Cathedrall Church called Christes Church." From the above facts it is evident that a "Cristis kirk" was in Norwich before the time of Herbert de Losinga, which was identical with the church of the Holy Trinity recorded in the Domesday Survey, and also that the Cathedral dedicated by him to the Holy Trinity retained the name of Christ Church.

It is important to mention that the Conqueror is said, in *Domesday Book*, to have given to Arfast (1086), fourteen

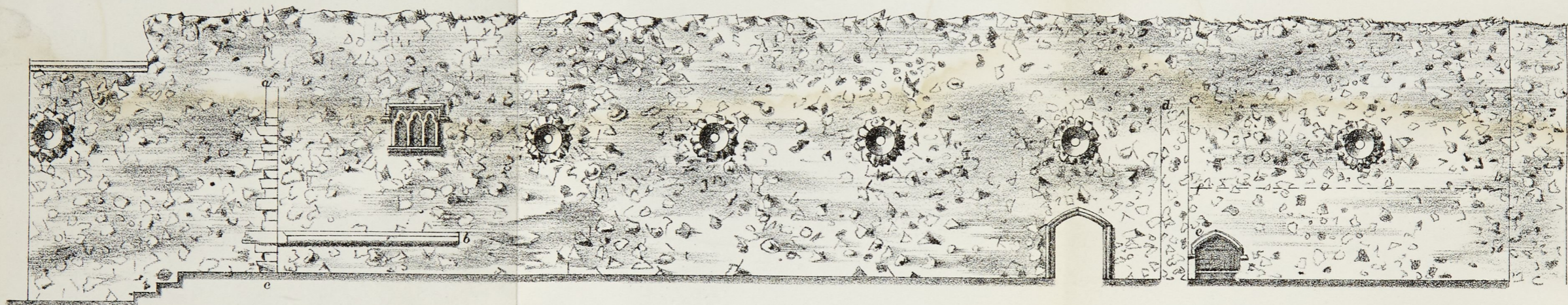
mansuræ, or tenements, for the building of the principal See; and this plainly indicates that he contemplated the erection of a See at Norwich previous to the time of Herbert's installation.

The absence of any allusion by Herbert, in his Foundation Charter, to any pre-existent monastic church, impresses me with the conviction that the removal of the monks, if at all, had taken place previously, and that the old monastic buildings had been pulled down to make room for the new Cathedral. And the coincidence of such previous demolition with the migration of monks from Christ's Church, Norwich, mentioned by Ingulphus, seems to be corroborative of the reality of those events, and of the truthfulness of the chronicle.

There was also the Church of St. Michael, as we have noticed, mentioned in the Survey. It is admitted on all hands that Herbert was installed in it, and that it stood near Tombland, but it has since been demolished. It is evident, therefore, that portions of these Saxon buildings, which were sufficiently strong, and available from convenience of site, might have been retained and utilized in the present Cathedral or Priory. And it is my object in the above remarks to show, not merely the possibility, but the probability that such was the case, and endeavour to invest with a degree of interest such ancient relics which connect the past with the present.

However interesting such archæological details may be, the reality of the Saxon remains in the west wall of the cloister does not depend upon them, but those remains must undergo the severe scrutiny of architectural knowledge and experience, and to these tests I beg to submit the following description of the wall in question.

It extends on the west side, covered and masqued by the recently-restored Locutory, at right angles with the south aisle of the nave, 180 feet to the south-west angle of the



External Wall West side of Cloister.

Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an Inch to a Foot.

cloisters. This entire length of wall is quite undisturbed, except where it has been pierced for more recent doorways, or for the junction of walls of buildings, as of the Strangers' Hall, at right angles to it. On the northern extremity of the Strangers' Hall it has been cut away for the reception of a coining of ashlar (*a*) and for an internal Decorated string (*b*) which is let into the old wall about twelve inches with a return on the north side. On searching with the spade, Mr. Spaul hit upon the foundation of the north wall (*c*) corresponding exactly with the coining of ashlar and the strings, and marking the true boundary of the Strangers' Hall on the north side. The string dies out about 17 feet 9 inches against the west wall, and I would suggest that this was at the termination of the dais, or raised and most ornamented part of the hall.

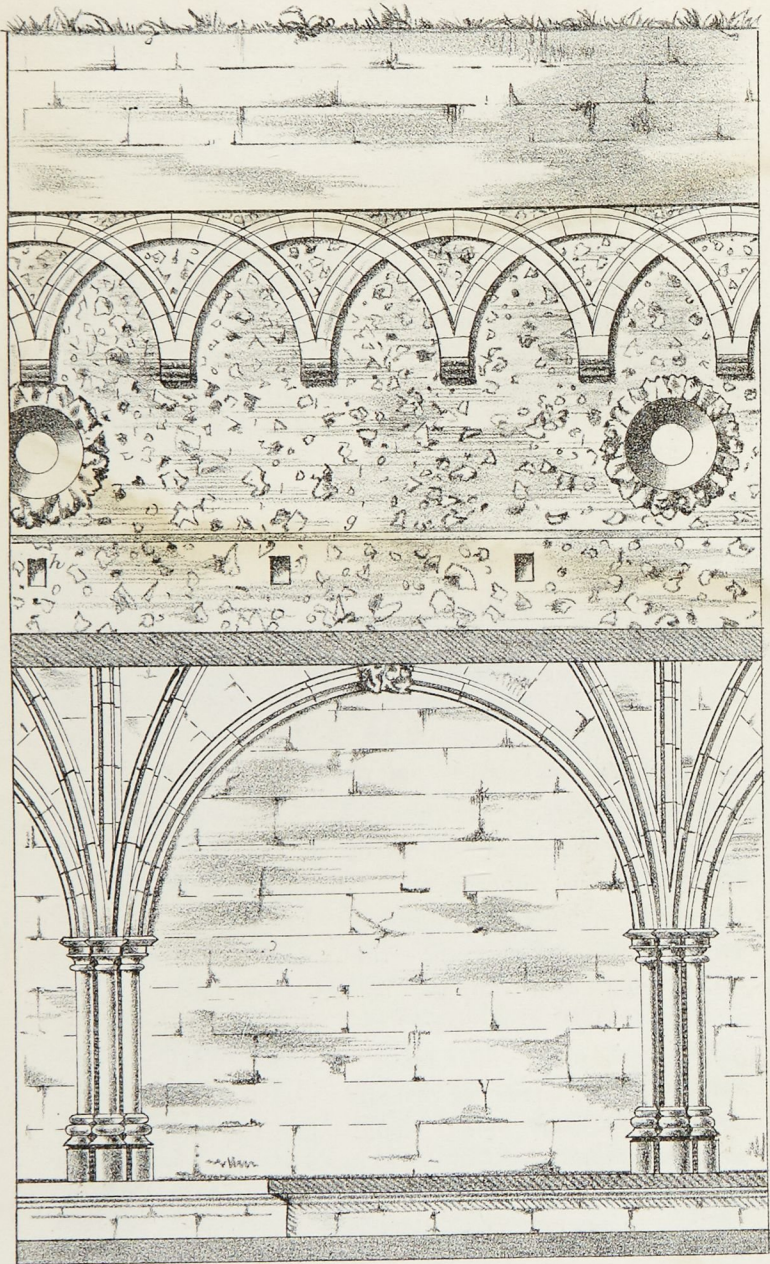
I propose to finish the notice of this more recent addition before I proceed to continue the description of the wall.

Besides the discovery of the north wall, Mr. Spaul observed a staircase, or rather remnant of one, at the south-west angle of the cloisters, which is not figured in Harrod's plan. The entire length assigned to the Strangers' Hall seems disproportionate to its width. Besides, at (*d*) the junction of a wall may be traced, which appears to have formed the southern termination of the Strangers' Hall, and to have separated it from another room. At the north-west angle of this room is a singular recess (*e*) under a depressed arch, which is truncated next the Strangers' Hall for want of space. It has been supposed that this recess held a cistern of water, which would have been conveniently placed to supply the lavatories adjoining. A set-off in the wall (*f*) has been added, apparently to cover the lavatories and the niches above them, which would otherwise have nearly pierced through the wall. The set-off does not extend beyond this room into the Strangers' Hall—a circumstance which marks the boundary of the rooms.

What were the uses of this room and of the staircase adjoining, and also their extent, require to be ascertained by further excavations; and we may rejoice that no pains will be wanting to elucidate and ornament the Cathedral, or *Christ Church*, under the Presidency of the Very Rev. the Dean, who has manifested such a faithful and loving care in its preservation.

To return to the Saxon remains in the old wall. On the east side, at intervals of 14 feet, there are circular apertures about 20 feet high from the pavement and floor of the cloisters. These are continuous throughout the extent of the wall, except where one has been removed for the insertion of a larger window above the string course of the Strangers' Hall, and another, probably, is concealed by recent flint-work adjoining the late Canon Wodehouse's residence. These circular windows are about the usual size of Saxon work, two feet outside, with a double splay contracted to one foot in the centre, in a wall three feet thick. There is one and a most important point, upon which all professional persons who have inspected the work are agreed, namely, that these windows have not been made in the wall after it was built, but have formed part of the original masonry. They are formed of flint uncut or worked, and scarcely a piece of freestone can be detected. They were plastered originally, as was also the west side of the wall, except where it has been refaced or repaired; and here also very rarely any freestone can be found throughout it, except in recently repaired parts, in the coinings and jambs.

I will next direct your attention to the east side of the wall. On ascending the staircase leading from the locutory, now used as a school, the supposed dormitory is reached, part of which, abutting upon the late Canon Wodehouse's house, is concealed by plaster, but the northern extremity discloses one double-splayed circular window, 19 feet 9 inches above the floor, and on the southern side of the recent window





already mentioned there is a continuous line of five double-splayed circular windows. The ancient wall may here be studied to advantage, as there is scarcely any plaster upon it. About seven inches above these windows, stretching the whole extent of the wall, is a line of interlacing Norman arches of the same pattern as in the three westernmost bays of the south aisle of the Cathedral. These interlacing arches rest upon corbels set upon the old wall without jambs, as in the rest of the Cathedral, indicating that the wall beneath had been built before the interlacing arches were designed, and there is an evident line of demarcation between the Norman and the wall beneath, giving an unmistakeably more modern appearance to the upper portion.

Another and important point is, that beneath the Norman interlacing work there is no appearance of ashlar work, except at the termination of either end of the old wall, where, on the northern extremity, next the Cathedral, it has been made good with freestone and united with ashlar work to the wall of the Cathedral, and also on the southern the like finishing of the walls with ashlar may be seen.

Beneath these double-splayed windows there is a continuous line of attachment (*g*) of a floor apparently, or lean-to roof, but the design of it is not evident, and also there are apertures or holes (*h*) in the wall,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $5\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet apart from each other. These were parts of the original structure, and were designed probably for corbels. They indicate that buildings had been attached to the east side of the wall, which in Saxon times was internal, whereas the Norman interlacing arches were external, as were also the Norman arcades on the south side of the cloisters abutting on the refectory. Long observation of similar double-splayed windows convinces me that they are Saxon, and that we have here the remnant of building of the Saxon period. It might have served as an outer wall of boundary or defence. The double splay of the window was well

calculated for archery, as it commanded an extensive view without exposing the combatant to attack, and the aperture was too small to admit of the ingress of an enemy. It has been observed by Rickman that the early ecclesiastical buildings were framed for defence against invaders.

But it is not within my province to account for the position in this place, or for the uses the building might have been applied to, or, indeed, to point out its possible connection with any other adjacent buildings. Were history altogether silent on the subject, or were there no clue whatever to the pre-existence of any edifice to the foundation of the present Cathedral, still the architectural evidence is so strong, that, independently of any other, it would convince me of the certainty of the Saxon origin of this piece of masonry.

Of the various characteristics of Saxon work, none is more decisive than the double-splayed window without the use of freestone. Herring-bone masonry is common to every period, and is had recourse to in building with rough materials at the present day as well as in Saxon times. The strait-sided window is not uncommon in later work. The use of flint and stones gathered from the land may be found in the meanest modern buildings. Short and long, and pilastered work, occur in towers of Saxon character; and balustered shafts, are all of wrought freestone, and may have been (as I remarked in an article on Beeston S. Lawrence church, read at the meeting of the Institute at Norwich, and printed in the report, page 217,) continued in Norman times by Saxon masons, as probably is the case at Great Dunham church. But the difference between circular Norman and Saxon windows is very obvious. The Norman is formed of freestone, well cut and wrought; the other, of rude flints and stones. The Norman has a single splay, or none at all; the Saxon has almost invariably the double splay; and so persistent is this cha-

rafter that in the ruined church of Shotesham St. Martin (so called on the Ordnance Map) there is a double splay in a small window in the north wall, which is only fourteen inches thick. It is singular that this characteristic, perhaps then not generally known from its rarity, is omitted in the *Glossary of Architecture*.

In Norwich, from the changes and enlargements churches have undergone, no Saxon characteristics have been retained; the small churches in country villages may be said to abound in them. Framingham Earl still retains most interesting relics of this description, pointed out at a meeting of our Society by our respected Secretary, Mr. Manning. In a circular double-splayed window there, he observed the remnant of a rim of oak, and also an oak board, curiously closed, probably by leather thongs passed through oblique holes in the rudest manner, to serve as a window—before glass was in general use. At Coltishall church, coupled with coinings of Roman tiles, and also at Witton church, near the sea, are to be seen good examples of these windows over the north doors precisely corresponding with those under our immediate consideration. These were described by me in a Paper printed in the *Journal* of the Institute, vol. vi., page 359.

I do not think it necessary to enter into further particulars, and I will conclude this, I fear, necessarily tedious paper, because in order to make good my views I have dwelt upon extreme minutiae.

I beg to thank our venerable President, the Dean, for every facility he has afforded me in conducting my search; and Mr. Spaul for the excellent plan, drawings, and measurements he has supplied me with, and the valuable assistance he has rendered me.