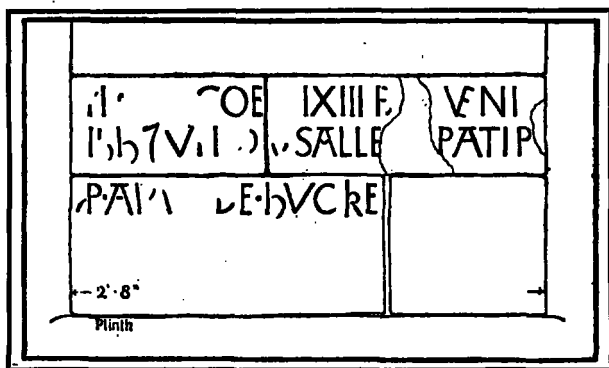


A POSSIBLE FOUNDATION STONE.

By T. D. ATKINSON.

ON the easternmost of the south buttresses of Bishop Lucy's retro-quire, against that interesting corner just outside Langton's screen, there are the faint remains of a medieval inscription. If any of the old historians noticed it, none of them has left any record of the fact, still less a copy. Probably a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago, when people were so much interested in the Cathedral that they were busy making all the alterations to it that they could think of, it was fairly legible. Much stonework has perished in the last century and a half due to the great increase of coal smoke, and the inscription is now so indistinct that no antiquary I have consulted has thrown light on it. The inscription is immediately above the plinth which is 2ft. 6ins. high. It is in three lines, occupying the whole width of the buttress and is in letters 2ins. high. Some letters are black and presumably all were so originally. It is here given so far as it can be made out.¹



WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

In the first line the IXIII should probably be read I XIII. In the second line the figure like an arabic seven may be a contraction or symbol, but it has not been recognized. The third line seems to begin with PRO ANIMA contracted; the middle part of the line is very clear (this stone is of better quality than the others); the end of the line has perished (the stone is bad).

We may, I suppose, safely assume that every church and very many secular buildings had a ceremonial Laying the Foundation Stone or Stones and that the ceremonial was of a religious character. Medieval Pontificals contain the bishop's Form of Blessing the

1. I am indebted for help in deciphering the inscription to my friend Mr. Eric Sharpe.

stone.² I know of no picture of the ceremony. There are a fair number of representations of the Consecration of a church; that would naturally be the more popular occasion.

Returning to our Winchester stone, we should naturally like to think that the inscription records the laying of the stone by Bishop Lucy. It is in what seems to be a likely place for a foundation stone: just above the plinth at a conspicuous angle on the south side, where it would be constantly seen by the monks. One has to say 'seems' a likely place for we know so little about medieval foundation stones. But one of the very few of which the position is known, that of the chapel of Queens' College, Cambridge, laid in 1448, was also placed at the south-east corner. It bore the inscription: "Erit domine nostre regine Margarete dominium in refugium et lapis iste in signum," which has been translated: "The power of our lady Queen Margaret shall be our refuge and this stone (laid in her name) the sign of her protection" (Willis and Clark, II, 7). The foundation stones of Eton College and King's College had been laid by King Henry VI in person: that of the gateway of the First Buildings at Cambridge in the right or south turret of the gateway towards Clare Hall on Passion Sunday (2 April) 1441 (Willis and Clark, I, 321). That of the chapel was laid at the high altar on St. James' Day (25 July) 1446 (*ib.* I, 465). At Ely there is a small stone, not in position, which must have been the foundation stone of Bishop Alcock's chapel. It is marked like an altar with five crosses, central and near the corners, for consecration, and at the four edges is the inscription:

"Johannis Al/kok epūs Elieñs/hanc fabricam/m.cccc. ^{xx}iiii. viii fieri fecit."

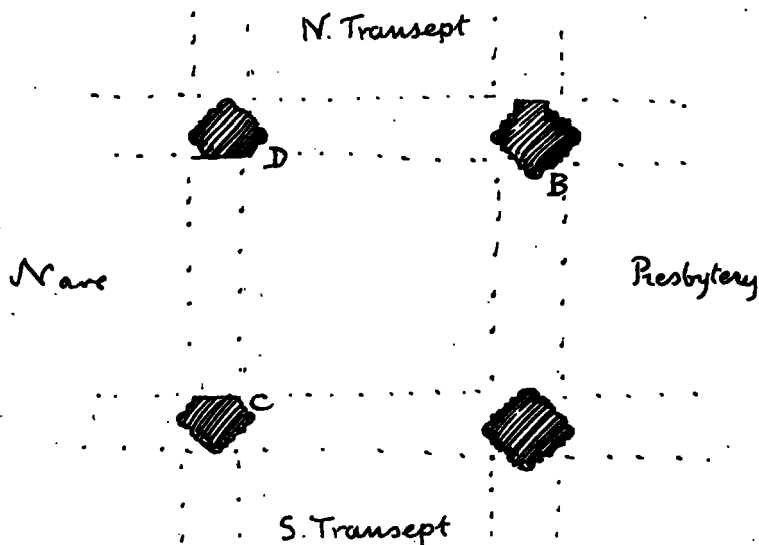
The foundation stone of the Lady Chapel was laid by Alan of Walsingham, the Sacrist, on Lady Day, 1321.

It happens that the two best known examples of medieval foundation stones are at no great distance from Winchester and at no great distance from Lucy's time. Lucy laid his foundation about 1190. Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury, the son of a bishop of Winchester, began his church at New Sarum in 1220, and Netley Abbey was founded in 1239. There are practically no remains of the church of Beaulieu founded in 1204, but as it was the parent of Netley it is likely that it had similar foundation stones.

The foundation stones of Salisbury Cathedral are, I believe, not visible or have not been identified, but we have a full description of the ceremony on the feast of St. Vitalis (28 April). Bishop Poore laid three stones: one as proxy for Pope Honorius III, one as proxy for Stephen Langton Archbishop of Canterbury, and one on his own behalf. The fourth stone was laid by William Longsword Earl of Salisbury, a fifth by Ella his wife. Other stones

2. Wordsworth and Littlehales, *Old Service Books of the English Church*, p. 223.

were then laid by nobles and clergy present, and when the great body of the nobles returned with the King from Wales, many of them visited Salisbury "and each laid his stone, binding himself to some special contribution for a period of seven years" (Murray, *Handbook*, p. 93).



At B:

shield appears to have the
three leopards.

H : D̃I : G R A  REX ANGL

At C:



At D:



At Netley, on the other hand, we see three foundation stones in position. They are in the bases of the piers of the crossing. That in the N.E. pier has the inscription

"H : D̃I : G R A : : REX ANGL."

Between GRA and REX is a shield surmounted by a cross. On the N.W. pier there is a bishop's mitre of early form (the peaks at the sides instead of front and back), surmounted by a pointed oval from which rises a cross. On the S.W. pier is a shield surmounted by a banner of three points with a cross head. (*The Builder*, 6 April, 1895.) Netley was founded in 1239.

The foundation stone of Winchester College was laid at the Chapel by the Founder himself on 26 March, 1387.

There is an inscribed stone, perhaps hardly a foundation stone, in the church of Warnford, Hants (*Archae. Journal*, Vol. II, 1846). See also Pegge's Sylloge of inscriptions relating to building churches (*Bibliotheca Topog. Britann.*, No. xli, pp. 11, 25).

At Egham and Great Bookham, Surrey, there are inscriptions recording the building of the chancels by Abbot Rotherwick of Chertsey. (Information from Mr. F. C. Eeles.)

Inscriptions over west doors which may refer to either foundation or consecration (from *Handbook to Engl. Ecclesiology*, Ecclesiastical Soc., 1847, p. 157): (a) at Angmering, Sussex, "Anno d'ni mill'mo quingentesimo sept'mo"; (b) at Stawley, Somerset.

"le of Henry	Anno dni	} On the 6th and 7th in a series of 12 panels.
w Hine & A wyffe	† † †	
so -gnes his	MCCC	
ehtrofyar P."		

"cxxii" on the 9th panel, 'in which there can be no doubt that a century has been inadvertently omitted.'

So the inscription should run: "Pray for the sowle of Henry Hine and Agnes his wyffe, Anno domini 1522."

Dundry Church, Somerset, has the date 1482 on W. side. St. Michael's Church, Gloucester, has two merchant's marks on N. wall. (*Ib.*, p. 158.)

The foundation stone of Wolsey's College at Ipswich bore the inscription: "In the year of Christ, 1528, and the twentieth of Henry VIII, King of England, and on the 15th of June, laid by John, Bishop of Lincoln." (Nina Frances Layard on Wolsey's College, Ipswich, in *Archae. Jour.*, 2nd Ser., Vol. VI.)

St. Stephen's Church, Walbrook, in London, was begun 11 May, 1429, and hallowed on St. Erkenwald's Day, 1439. "Eight memorial stones were laid by important people: one by Master Thomas Mapilton 'the King's mason, then being master mason of the said church.'" (Lethaby, *West. Abb. and King's Crafts*, 206, quoting *Trans. Lond. and Mids. Archae. Soc.*, Vol. V.)

On one of the walls of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, I think the outside of the south wall, there is a piece of sculpture which may mark the foundation ceremony. It is not on one single stone, but on three.¹

1. See St. John Hope's *Windsor Castle*.

The laying of the foundation stone of the Chapel of Henry VII at Westminster in 1503 is recorded by Holinshed, who more correctly calls it "our ladie chapell." The ceremony took place on 24 January, at 2.45 p.m. The stone was laid by the hands of Abbot Islip, Sir Reginald Braie, K.G., Dr. Barnes Master of the Rolls, Dr. Wall King's Chaplain, Hugh Oldham Chaplain to the Countess of Derby and Richmond the King's mother, Sir Edmund Stanhope Knt., and divers others. It bore a Latin inscription recording the circumstances. (G. G. Scott, *Gleanings*, 71.)

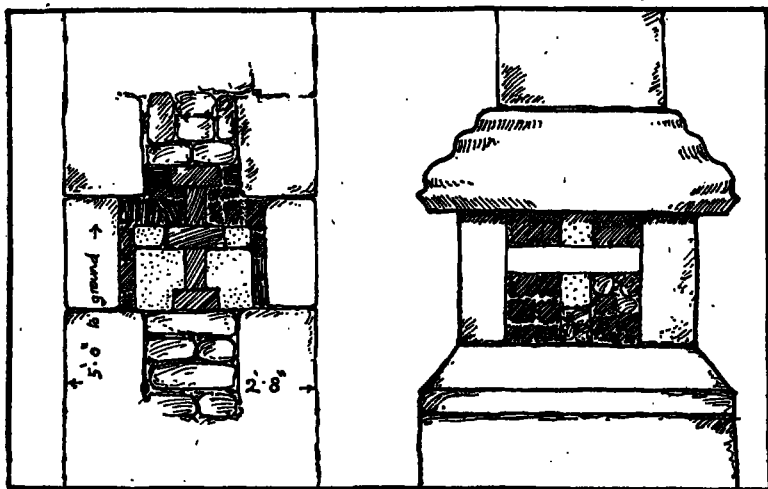
The foundation stone of Boston tower was laid in 1309. "On the Monday after the Feast of St. John the Baptist the first stone was laid by Margaret Tilney, assisted by Richard Stephenson, a merchant of Boston, and the Rector of Boston, John Truesdale, each of whom placed £5 upon the stone thus laid towards the erection of the proposed tower." (E. Trollope, "Boston and other Churches" in *Rep. and Pap. Assoc. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. X, Pt. II, p. 177, on the authority of Stukeley.)

St. James's Priory Church, Freiston, Lincs. Here stood a parish church which on 17 March, 1114, was given by the patron Alan de Creon to the Abbot of Croyland on the occasion of his laying one of the foundation stones of his new abbey. On that occasion Alan placed his title to the patronage of Freiston Church on the stone he had laid. Muriel his wife, laid that of Toft Church on the next stone which she laid; Maurice their eldest son, that of Butterwick Church on the next; Maud their daughter, that of Boston Church on the next. (*Ib.* p. 210.)

There is a stone in Dryburgh Abbey which I think looks like a foundation stone. It is on the north side of the presbytery close to the east end, just above the plinth and 4ft. 9ins. from the present ground level. It is marked with a plain cross in a circle 5½ins. in diameter. I have no sketch of it.

In East Anglian churches there are instances of well-marked stones, generally on the tower buttresses, which I used to think were Consecration Crosses but now think more likely to be foundation stones. They are generally on the plinth or a little above it: a good height for a foundation stone but low for a consecration cross. Here are two from Needham Market, Suffolk; it is not unusual to find several such stones on one building. Many East Anglian examples of crosses worked on buttress faces in stone and flint are too high for foundation stones and may provisionally be called consecration crosses.

It will be noted from these instances that it was a common practice to lay a number of foundation stones in the same building. The custom of the Free Churches at the present time is therefore more in accordance with medieval use than is the Anglican practice of having a single stone.



NEEDHAM MARKET, SUFFOLK.
Possible Foundation Stones.

At St. Michael's Church, Bath, a new Lady Chapel was begun in 1425, and the churchwardens' accounts show a charge of one penny for placing the foundation stone in position. (J. C. Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 79.)

The tower of Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, was begun in 1491. The foundation stone was laid. (Cox, see Sandars, C. A. S., and J. E. Foster, C.A.S.)

Gloucester. First stone in 1089 by Bishop Robert of Hereford, "by the agency of the Lord Abbot Serlo." (Mr. L. F. Salzman, MS. Notes.)

Meux Abbey. Foundation stone by Abbot, 1197. (*Ib.*)

Godstow, near Oxford. King Stephen and Queen Maude and their son Eustace were present at laying of the first stone, 1138.

I have not heard of a foundation stone being removed and do not know if one should expect to find it hollow and containing relics of any kind. I believe it is now common to place some coins in a cavity in the stone, and I fancy I have heard of a bottle of wine being put in. It is difficult to imagine what idea, if any, underlies this act; probably it is merely traditional, coming down from ancient times with no meaning or a new one attached to it. If it was at one time the custom to make a human sacrifice when a building was begun and to bury the corpse in the foundations food would be placed along with it, to nourish the spirit on its journey, hence the wine, and a coin to pay for its being ferried across the river.