

ALL'ANTICA CARVING OF THE EARLY TUDOR RENAISSANCE AT ST MARY'S CHURCH, OLD BASING, HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

In volume 62 (2007) of Hampshire Studies, the early Tudor Renaissance tomb at Sherborne St John and the work of Thomas Bertie were described, alongside a discussion of dating and the implications for the adoption of the all'antica style in Hampshire. This paper takes that research further, by exploring the earlier Paulet chapel at Basing, built c. 1519, which also displays traces of the early Tudor Renaissance. Researching the Paulet chapel reveals important connections to contemporary work in Winchester Cathedral, and sheds light on the evolution of the Tudor decorative arts.

INTRODUCTION

St Mary's Church in the village of Old Basing (Fig. 1) has been the subject of a paper by John Crook (2002), who demonstrated the overall development of the church as part of a survey following the discovery of some incised lines in the plasterwork of the south chapel. He provided a commentary on the Paulet chapel, and the Paulet tombs that lie between this chapel and the chancel (Fig. 2). However, he did not describe the roof corbels of the north chapel and their parallels with similar corbels in Winchester Cathedral (formerly the Priory of St Swithun), nor did he mention the spandrels of the monumental arches over the Paulet tombs. In particular, the presence of *all'antica* detail in one of these spandrels is not discussed. It should be noted that this detail had eluded other architectural historians, the present author included, until Mr Rodney Hubbuck drew this author's attention to its presence.

Old Basing is the modern name for a village

that was until modern times known simply as Basing, as it was also to the Paulets, and this is the name that will be used here.

THE PAULETS AND BASING

A notable feature of the fabric of St Mary's Church is the presence of many shields, both inside the church and affixed to the exterior, that display the heraldry of families associated with the honour of Basing and who were connected to the Paulets by marriage. The lords of Basing had, from the Norman Conquest and down to the 14th century, been the St Johns. Their line failed in 1347 with the death of Edmund St John, and the estate eventually passed to his younger sister, Isabel, wife of Sir Luke de Poynings; thence to their son, Sir Thomas de Poynings, who died in 1428. His heirs were the daughters of his son Hugh, who had predeceased him (Table 1). The Basing portion of the Poynings inheritance went to Constance (née Poynings), the wife of Sir John Paulet of Nunney, Somerset (VCHH IV, 123–6; and see GEC *Complete Peerage*, under Winchester, Marquessate). This Sir John Paulet died 1436/7; he was succeeded by his son John (d. 5 Oct 1492) who, with his wife Eleanor (née Roos), was buried in Basing Church. Their son, also named John, was born c. 1460. He married his cousin, Alice Paulet of Hinton St George, Somerset. Paulet died on 5 January 1525 (Loades 2008, 166, quoting the *Inquisition Post Mortem* records) and, with his wife (who outlived him), was buried in the church at Basing in the tomb within the chapel that he had had built. He was the father of William Paulet, the first marquis of Winchester who is famed for the longevity of

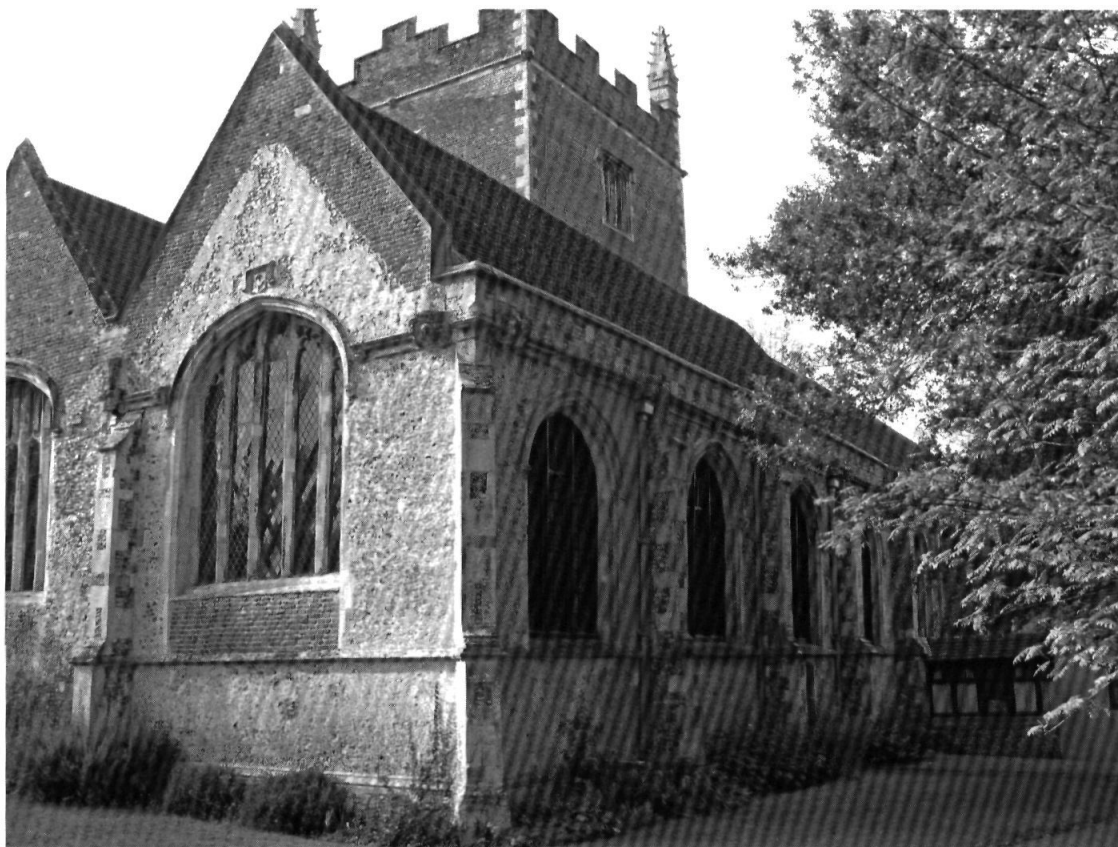


Fig. 1 St Mary's Church, Basing. Exterior of the Paulet chapel from the northeast

his life and his ability to survive the internecine politics of the Tudors from the reign of Henry VIII through and into that of Elizabeth.

The great brick-built mansion at Basing was apparently the creation of William Paulet who was granted a licence to crenellate in 1531. While this is taken to indicate that he built a fortified mansion, it is clear from remains on the ground and the presence of earlier Paulets buried in the nearby church, and taking account of their prominent role in the affairs of Hampshire in the previous century, that a house of some size must have stood here before William's prodigy house was erected (Allen and Anderson 1999). That this should be so can be adduced from the activities of Sir John Paulet, who in 1519 created

a new chapel and a pair of monumental tombs to hold the remains of his parents, and those of his wife and himself (Fig. 2). It therefore seems likely that it was this Paulet who made the decision to make Basing the main home for the family, which, alongside the castle and estate at Nunney and elsewhere in Somerset, also held lands in Sussex and Wiltshire, besides an extensive estate in Hampshire. The most likely reason for this choice would have been the proximity of Basing to London, and thus to the court of Henry VIII, combined with an aspiration to involve the family more closely with politics and local government in Hampshire. It should nonetheless be noted that Paulets had been sheriffs of Hampshire during the 15th century – Sir John Paulet who died

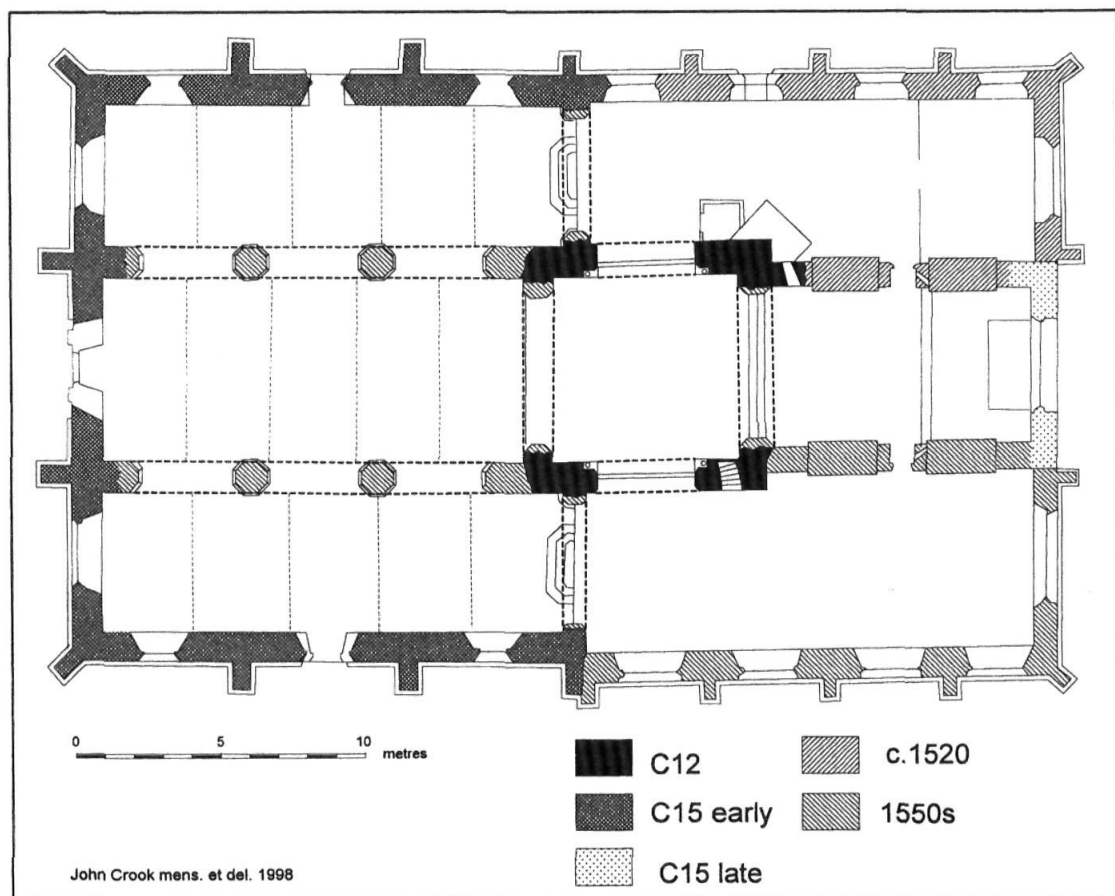


Fig. 2 St Mary's Church, Basing. Phased plan (after Crook 2002)

in 1492 being sheriff in the reigns of Henry VI (36 Henry VI) and Edward IV (2 and 3 Edward IV). His son, who died in 1525, was sheriff twice in the reign of Henry VII (7 and 16 Henry VII), whilst his son, William, comes to notice from the start of Henry VIII's reign as listed for the office of sheriff in 1509 and 1510, becoming sheriff in 1511 (Table 1; Berry 1839, viii-ix).

HISTORIOGRAPHY

As Crook has shown, important information relating to St Mary's Church was recorded from

the 18th century onwards. Much of this provides information on the heraldic carvings in and around the church. Principal among these are notes compiled by William Bingley, in the years 1807–13, for his *Collections for the History of Hampshire*, an unpublished collection now in the Hampshire Record Office (HRO MS 16M79/2). This was followed by an *Architectural Memoir* published in 1891 that offers an explanation of the Paulet heraldry (Cayley and Salter 1891), but which, as Crook remarks, offers an architectural interpretation that should be treated with caution (Crook 2002, 94). The description of the church in the *Victoria County History* provides

Table 1 A family tree of the Paulet family during the 15th and 16th centuries

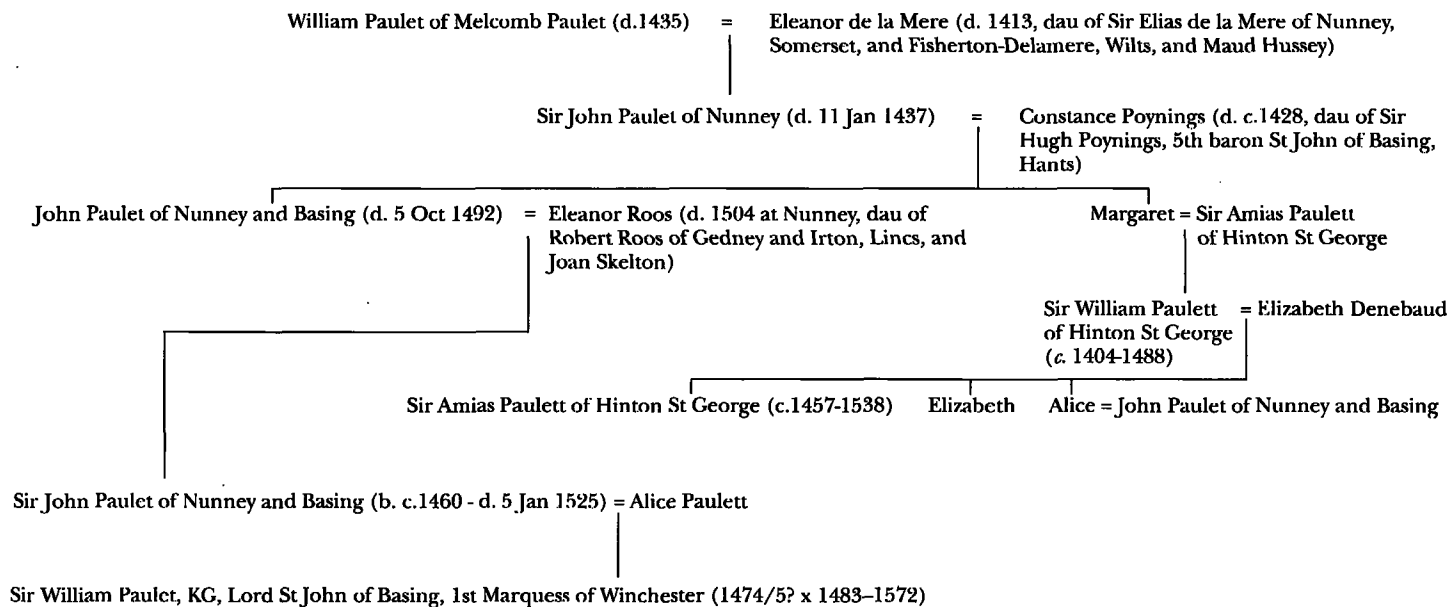




Fig. 3 St Mary's Church, Basing. Inscription on the donor panel set on the west face of the arch that separates the north aisle from the Paulet chapel

a helpful account of both its history and its architecture (VCHH IV and see Roffey 2007).

THE NORTH OR PAULET CHAPEL

It is entirely probable that Basing church was originally built in the 11th or early 12th century by the de Port family, who then held the honour of Basing. The church may have been cruciform in plan, resembling the layout of East Meon church, and would have had transepts adjacent to the centrally-placed tower (Fig. 2). Much of this early church has vanished following successive programmes of rebuilding, but the ground plan of the Norman church influenced the manner in which this rebuilding was effected. It is possible that much of the Norman church survived until the earlier 15th century, when the entire structure of the church west of the tower and its transepts was rebuilt. Crook shows that the windows in this work bear comparison with those in Winchester College, created by William Wynford *c.* 1400, and another at Harmondsworth church of 1396–8 (Crook 2002, 102–3). This is too early to

attribute to the Paulets, and is more likely to be work undertaken by the Poynings. Also by this date it is possible that the tower transepts had been altered, the Romanesque arches giving access to them from the chancel having been reformed with the insertion of Gothic work. Of interest is a (now blocked) squint cut through the north wall of the chancel and allowing a sight-line into the north transept (Fig. 2). It is feasible that this represents vestiges of an earlier chapel, perhaps the Holy Trinity chapel (Roffey 2007, 170), which was swept away in the early 16th century when the Paulet chapel was erected.

Donor panel

Entry into the Paulet chapel from the west is provided through an arch that marks the east end of the north aisle (Fig. 2). It may be that the walling of this arch is a remnant of the Norman north transept, rather than an introduction made in the 16th century. Of significance is a donor panel set on the west face of this arch, which identifies both patron and date for the Paulet or north chapel (Fig. 3). On this panel,

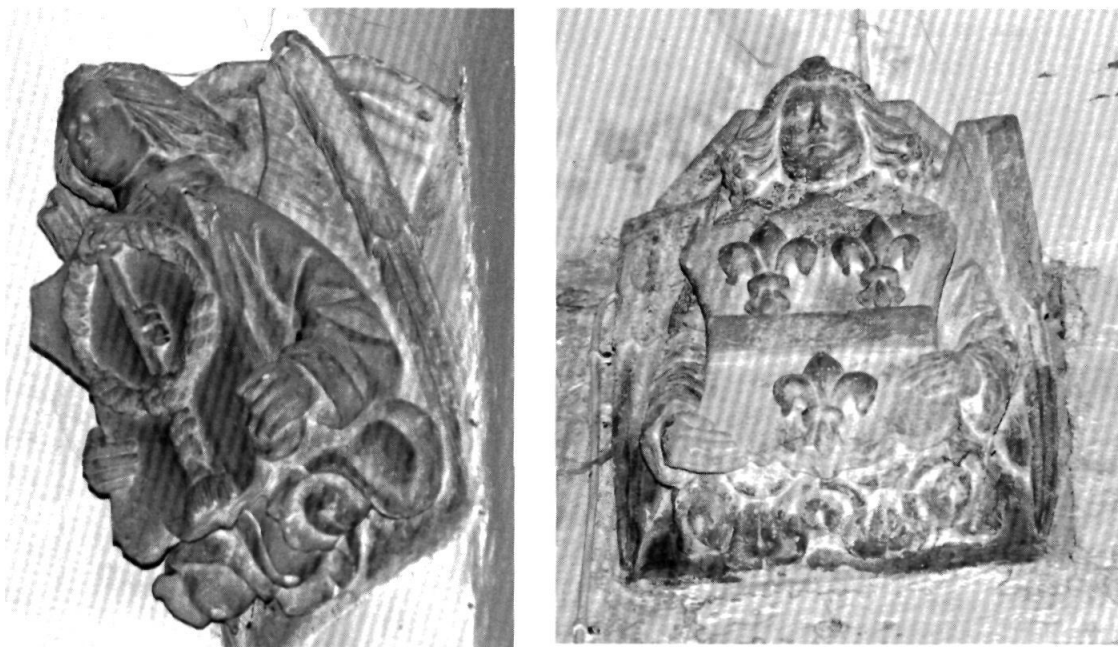


Fig. 4 St Mary's Church, Basing. Angel corbels with shields in the Paulet chapel: corbel N1 (left), with the Paulet's key on a wreath badge, and corbel N2 (right), armorial bearings of Skelton

carved in black letter script, is an inscription which reads: *In laudem xp[ist]i et mari[e] matris sue per Ioh[ann]em poulet milite hec erecta concistu[n]t an[no] d[omi]ni 1519*. Crook suggested that this should be translated as 'To the praise of Christ and Mary his mother these [buildings] stand through [the benefice] of Sir John Paulet, 1519' (2002, 104–5). The Sir John Paulet referred to in the panel died in *c.* 1525 and is buried in the chapel beyond. The authors of the article on Basing church in the *Victoria County History* opined that this panel related to the reconstruction of the church nave and aisles, but as Crook has demonstrated, this work must have taken place around a century earlier. The Paulet donor panel therefore relates to works carried out to the east of this arch; in other words, to the construction of a chapel on the north side of the chancel. That this interpretation might be valid can be seen from the style and workmanship of the Paulet tombs, alongside other details within the chapel itself, and it is to these we must now turn.

Chapel layout

The chapel is a direct continuation of the north aisle, and provided a space of four bays with an internal area of *c.* 5.5 m × 15.2 m. The external walls of the chapel were raised in flint and mortar, with buttresses, window hoods and labels, and parapet in Caen stone (Figs 1 and 2). Attached to the window framings and parapet are a series of heraldic shields that provide a detailed genealogical exposition of the marriage alliances of the Paulets and their antecedents, demonstrating how this Somerset family came to inherit Basing (Cayley and Salter 1891; VCHH IV, 124–6). The roof of this chapel was raised in the later 16th century (Fig. 1), when also the east window was truncated and its sill reset at a higher level, presumably to provide a symmetrical appearance to the east front of the church (Crook 2002, 105, 110). The stone tracery in the east window is consistent with a date in the early 16th century, while the side windows – which are of wood – may

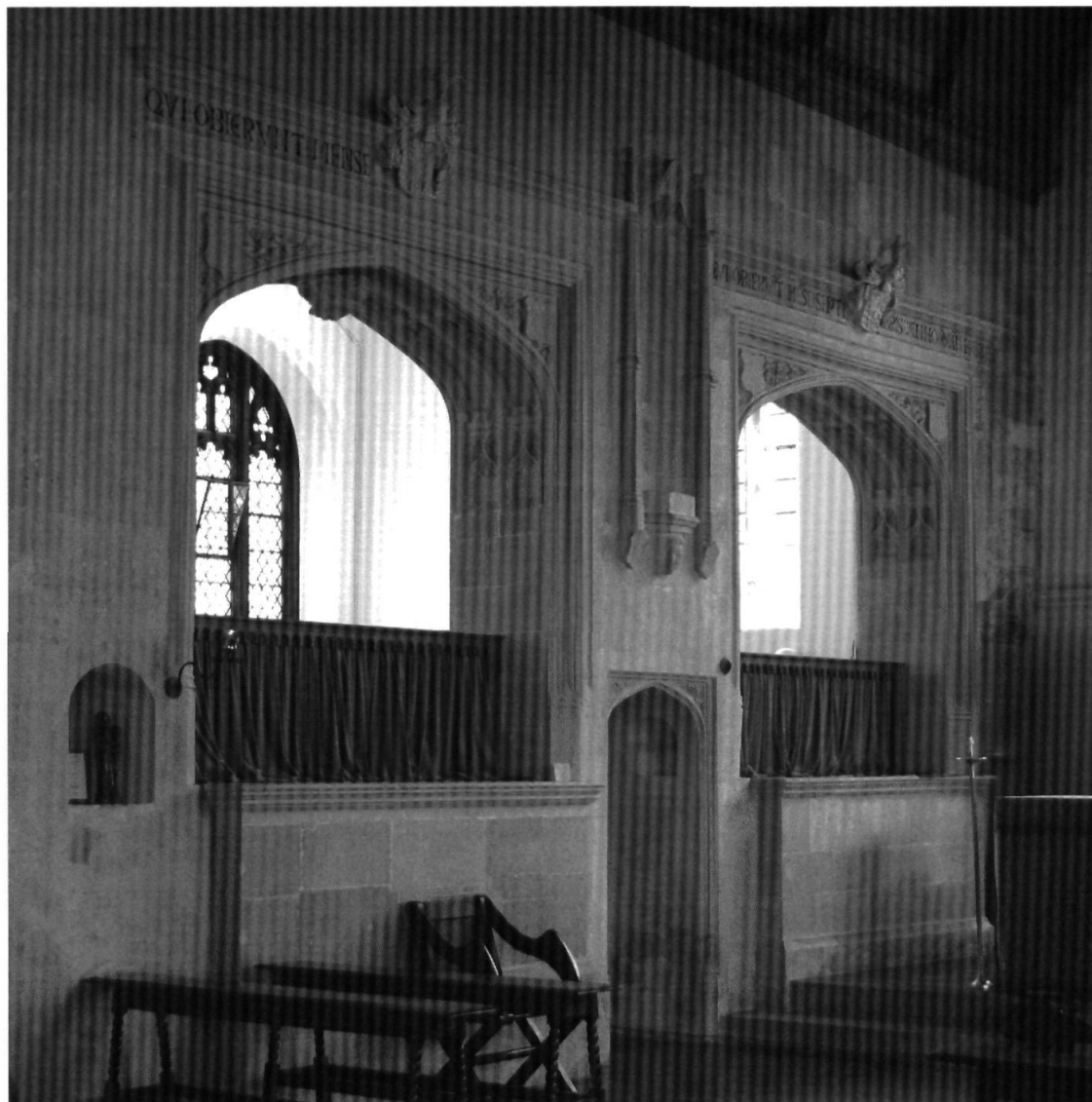


Fig. 5 St Mary's Church, Basing. The Paulet tombs erected in 1519, viewed from the south-west. Squints from the north chapel can be seen to the left of the west tomb, on the right of the photograph, and cutting through the west jamb of the east tomb

be Victorian replacements. The chapel roof was originally supported on a series of stone corbels that were carved in the form of angels bearing heraldic shields (Fig. 4). Five of these survive along the north wall, with a sixth corbel

in the south-west corner in a position somewhat lower than the former, indicating that this corbel has probably been relocated. The style and workmanship of these corbels is especially close to a series of similar corbels in Winches-



Fig. 6 St Mary's Church, Basing. The west tomb (tomb of Sir John and Alice Paulet) from the north

ter Cathedral, and the import of this will be discussed below.

The tomb screen

One of the main reasons for the creation of this chapel was presumably to provide space for a monumental tomb for Sir John Paulet and his wife Alice, together with a tomb for his parents. This was achieved by the removal of the chancel north wall and its replacement, in Caen stone, by a tomb screen that is pierced by a central door (Figs 2, 5, 6). The presence of inscriptions in the stringcourse above the tombs and heraldic carvings clearly identify for whom these tombs were built: the eastern tomb for John Paulet (d.

1492) and his wife Eleanor (d. 1504, not 1488 as is inscribed on the tomb canopy; see *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*), that on the west for Sir John Paulet (d. c. 1525) and his wife Alice, who outlived her husband but whose date of death is unknown (Figs 5, 6). The development of the north chapel and tomb screen would have come about because, as adumbrated previously, the Paulets decided to make of Basing their preferred place of burial (previously they were buried in a chapel on the north side of the church at Nunney, Somerset, close to their castle home). It is quite possible that by the early 16th century the chancel floor was already filled with burials of de Ports, St Johns and perhaps Poynings too. Thus, in 1519, it appears that

the overall intention of Sir John Paulet was to provide a place of burial for himself and his parents, alongside provision of a space for the burial of his descendants and other members of his family. Rather than providing recesses cut into the north wall of the chancel, and within which Paulet and his parents would be buried, this additional consideration called for an arched screen to be inserted in place of the chancel north wall. A further requirement seems to have been that services within the new chapel would, or could, be taken alongside services conducted at the high altar. This was in part achieved by the provision of a squint cut through the west jamb of the east tomb (Fig. 2), although the provision of high arches spanning the tombs would have provided some additional visual and aural contact between chancel and chapel (Fig. 6). This arrangement echoed the layout at Nunney church, where the Paulet chapel is provided with a squint that permits a view of the high altar from within the chapel itself.

It is quite clear that the Paulet chapel and tombs are all of one build, and that the scheme was devised as an integrated whole. The screen comprises a pair of chest tombs set beneath four-centred arches. The soffits and jambs of the arches are panelled with blind tracery, whilst the arch spandrels are filled with carved detail that emerges from behind shields that are now plain but which may originally have been painted. A coved stringcourse runs across the top moulding of the arch with, in each case, a centrally positioned mantled shield. In the hollow of the stringcourse there is an inscription (Figs 5, 6). Placed in the centre of the screen is a small doorway that exhibits, in miniature, the same style as the tomb arches, right down to the provision of shields with decorative carving in the door-head arch spandrels (Fig. 6). Above the door, and placed between decorative pilasters that terminate in Gothic-styled crockets either side of a canopy, is a (now empty) niche, at the bottom of which is a corbel formed from a sculpted head (Fig. 6). Either side of this corbel, and supporting the pilasters, are a further pair of shields. The south face of the screen is replicated in the north face, the only differences being those of detail. The two chest tombs are

very plain, the tomb fronts being devoid of any carved detail. There are no effigies set on top of the tomb chests, although there may have been originally.

The west tomb has an angel that clasps a heraldic shield suspended from the apex of the tomb arch (Figs 5, 6). The heraldry on this shield clearly shows that it depicts the marriage of Sir John Paulet to his cousin Alice Paulet of Hinton St George (Table 1). What is particularly noticeable is that this shield is quite damaged; close inspection of the figure of the angel suggests that this is not wholly original work, but that the head and shoulders of the figure have been extensively retouched and repaired. It also the case that the tracery in the underside of the arches of both tombs shows extensive if minor damage: small pieces of tracery are missing; the tracery itself is chipped in many places, whilst the blank fields within the tracery have also been knocked about. This damage may have occurred in the mid-17th century.

The English Civil War and Basing

Basing church was used by Parliamentary forces during the siege of Basing House, which was held as a Royalist stronghold, in 1644. The church is known from contemporary and subsequent records to have suffered significant damage at the hands of Parliamentary forces (VCHH IV, 126; Crook 2002, 117–8). The exact scale of destruction at Basing remains a matter of both dispute and conjecture, as, by its very nature, the historical record is open to question. However, it can be readily understood in the context of the times that Parliamentarians might have felt fully justified in demonstrating their antipathy towards the Paulets by defacing the tombs of their ancestors. The *Victoria County History* suggests that the Parliamentary troops melted down the lead coffins of the Paulets (VCHH IV, 126). Close examination of the north tomb screen suggests that the Parliamentarians also struck at the fabric of the tombs, as noted above. Additionally, it is the case that the centrally placed shields in the stringcourses on either face of the tomb screen were probably also knocked about at the same time – the mantling and crests

are all the same and replicate those on the south tomb screen that were perhaps carved a half-century later, although these too are more likely to be later 17th-century replacements (Figs 5, 6). Moreover, the mantling around these shields was cast in plaster, not carved from stone. This problem will be explored further below. This leaves the question of effigies. There are effigy tombs of Paulets at Nunney, set within a chantry chapel that dates from the 15th-century or earlier, and this might indicate that it was customary for the family to bury their dead in chest tombs with effigies. Closer to Basing, it is clear that some of the Hampshire gentry chose to erect tombs with effigies in this period: such as Lisle at Thruxton (Riall 2007b), Pexall at Sherborne St John (Riall 2007c), and but not Sandys at Basingstoke (Howard 2007, 34). It would seem likely that at Basing there were effigies on the Paulet tombs, but that these were destroyed in 1644. Some sculptural fragments recovered during archaeological excavations at Basing House may have come from putative effigies that lay on the later-16th-century Paulet tombs, although it is as likely that these fragments came from sculptural settings that formed part of the decorative scheme at Basing House (Allen and Anderson 1999, 75–6).

STYLE, DESIGN AND CARVING – A WINCHESTER CONNECTION?

The overall style, design and conception of the work at Basing, along with details of individual sections of carving, offer a number of references to contemporary and slightly earlier work in Winchester Cathedral. This raises the possibility that the mason who designed and created the Paulet chapel and its tombs belonged to the team of masons who were then or had been working on fabric of the cathedral. There are a number of specific parallels that can be drawn between the two sets of work, with analogues amongst the carvings that imply a close association between them. Of significant importance here is the style and quality of the carving in the north-east spandrel of the west Paulet tomb. This spandrel has a carved arabesque that exem-

plifies the style of *all'antica* carving to be seen in the frieze on the south presbytery screen in Winchester Cathedral; it may be noted that these two exemplars form the sole expositions of this genre of the *all'antica* style. It is however the multiplicity of the inter-connections between carved work in the cathedral and the Paulet chapel that makes this worth exploring in some detail.

Angel corbels

Set along the top of the interior face of the chapel's north wall are a series of five angel corbels with coats-of-arms, with a sixth corbel on the south wall. As noted earlier, the roof of the chapel was altered either in the later 16th century or, following the spoliation of the church during the Civil War, in the 17th century (Crook 2002, 117–18). This made the corbels redundant, although they were mostly left *in situ*. Reading from west to east, the north wall provides arms or badges for: Paulet, Skelton, Paulet, Roos and Paulet (Table 1, Fig. 4). The sixth corbel carries the arms of Fitzpiers. The absence of Poynings from this group, from whom the Paulets inherited Basing, suggests that there were further corbels along the south wall – and indeed we might also have expected St John to have been represented. Heraldry aside, these corbels have a wider interest in view of their closeness in style and execution to similar work in Winchester Cathedral.

Early in the 16th century a new wooden vault was installed above the quire in Winchester Cathedral. The vault is supported by ribs that are stepped from a series of stone corbels that feature winged angels clasping shields. The vault itself is filled with a large number of carved wooden bosses that are of three types: emblems of the Passion, royal arms and emblems, and armorials connected to Bishop Fox (Lindley 1993, 114–8; Smith 1996, 18–25). The design idea of using angels with shields was further utilised amongst the bosses in the presbytery aisle vaults, where angels clasping shields with Christian iconography, royal insignia or badges relating to Bishop Fox form the central element in most of the bay vaults of these aisles. Similar work can also be seen in the vault of Fox's

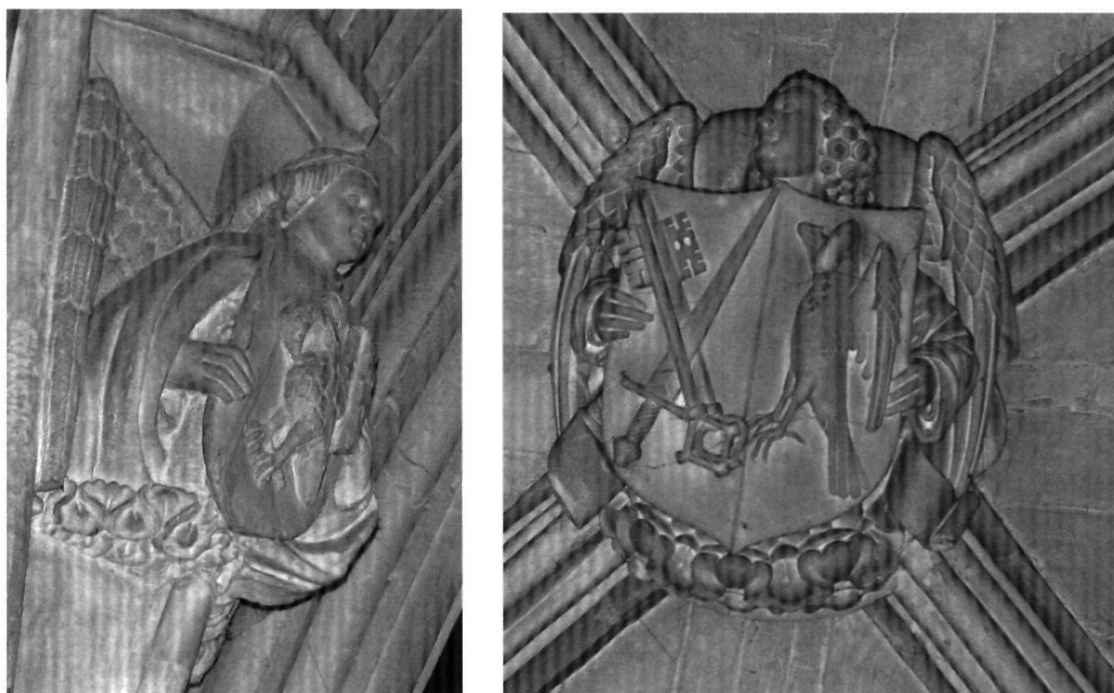


Fig. 7 Angels with heraldic shields from Winchester Cathedral: (left) angel corbel from above bishop Gardiner's chapel, and (right) boss from presbytery aisle showing an angel with shield bearing arms of Bishop Fox

chantry chapel. The cathedral angels are all close in terms of their design and carving (Fig. 7). They have jewelled headbands set on top of effusive hairstyles – in many cases these angels have their hair curled up into extravagantly heavy whorls and curls – framing faces with highly arched eyebrows and wide eyes. Their clothing is depicted as heavily rucked, with a distinctively wide collar. We cannot see much of their hands, but their fingers reaching across the fronts of the shields are long, slender and elegant. They are shown as half-figures, rising from a garland of flowers – probably lilies. Behind them are their folded wings; these have much carved detail showing layers of feathers. These figures have a Renaissance quality about them; they seem more in tune with contemporary continental work rather than a continuation of a traditional English Gothic style. The Basing corbels exhibit the same characteristics, as may

be seen from the details of headband and hair, faces and dress, hands and fingers and shields. There are some differences, not the least being that the cordon of lilies around the base of the Basing corbels is less complex (there are fewer leaves) than those in the cathedral (Fig. 4). Nevertheless, the corbels at Basing are sufficiently close in style to those in the cathedral to lead us to ask whether they emanated from the same workshop. To answer this question we must now turn to the carvings in the arch spandrels of the Paulet tombs.

Paulet tomb arch spandrels

The eight spandrels of the two Paulet tombs in the north screen all conform to a single design; set into the outer corner is a shield that is superimposed upon an arabesque of carving in deep relief. The shields are today all plain,



Fig. 8 St Mary's Church, Basing. Northeast spandrel from the west Paulet tomb



Fig. 9 St Mary's Church, Basing. Northwest spandrel from the east Paulet tomb

although originally they may have been painted. The spandrels of the east tomb all feature vine leaves, and, in two instances, grapes. This is a clear reference to the Eucharist and is in itself not exceptional. The west tomb is somewhat different. The southwest spandrel features a leaved branch with an unidentified fruit that

might possibly be a pomegranate, whilst the southeast spandrel features a rose branch with roses in bud and in flower.

The north face is different again (Fig. 6). The northwest spandrel has a relatively plain vine leaf. The northeast spandrel however is rather more sumptuous and considerably more

important (Fig. 8). Set in the bottom left corner is a dolphin's head from the wide-open mouth of which emerges an arabesque that is fully Renaissance in character, and from which are subtended both roses and pomegranates. As a symbol of Christian iconography, the pomegranate signifies fertility and bounty, and also symbolised the whole church because of its many segments and fruits contained within one fruit. In addition, the pomegranate was associated with the Resurrection, and, in the context at Basing with the many references to the Eucharist in the spandrel carvings, this might be the most appropriate interpretation. The rose was associated with the Virgin Mary: Basing church was dedicated to St Mary – a point that is underlined by the presence on the west front of the church of a Virgin and child in a niche supported by another angel corbel, which carries a shield with the arms of John and Alice Paulet (Crook 2002, 106–7 and figure 14). However, these roses have a peculiarly heraldic quality about them, and it may be appropriate to identify these as representative of the Tudor Rose, and in particular a reference to Henry VIII. It would follow that the pomegranates refer to Henry's then queen, Katherine of Aragon. The significance of the Renaissance spandrel is discussed below. The presence of a dolphin is more complicated, and is discussed below alongside commentary on its use as a Renaissance motif.

While interesting, the iconography of these spandrels is particular to this setting. Of more concern to us is the quality of the carving, which reveals further connections with work in Winchester Cathedral, and specifically to the workmanship of the bosses in the presbytery aisles. Four of the spandrels feature branches that have been torn or pulled, rather than cut, from their parent plants, with the northwest spandrel of the east Paulet tomb being particularly naturalistic (Fig. 9). There is a direct analogue amongst the presbytery aisle bosses in the cathedral (Fig. 10). The depiction of bunches of grapes, and of grapes in bud, on the east Paulet tomb spandrels matches other presbytery bosses in the cathedral (Fig. 10). This level of corresponding detail is carried through to the exaggeration of the veins in the vine

leaves, and the stippled treatment given to these during the carving process. Further parallels can be drawn between the roses, a particular point of note is the unusual treatment of the back of the rose flower heads which is the same in both contexts: on the west Paulet tomb (southeast and northeast spandrels), with analogues amongst the bosses in the presbytery aisles and amongst the arabesques of the cathedral south presbytery screen frieze (Figs 10, 11, 12).

A further four spandrels can be seen in the door-case. The general design of these follows that of the tomb arch spandrels and provides in each a shield with carved badges of the Paulets set upon arabesques of branches: in the north-east spandrel, an oak branch; north-west a rose branch; south-east, a vine branch with grapes and south-west, a branch with a rose and a pomegranate. This last arabesque is carved in the same mode as the north-east spandrel of the west tomb.

A final point to note concerning the overall workmanship of these spandrels is that all the shields are of a different design, one from the next, with no two alike. This is a typical trait of this mason-designer, and can be seen in the settings at Sherborne St John, Thruxton, Winchester Cathedral and Christchurch.

The all'antica spandrels at Basing

The style of the *all'antica* spandrels lifts the workmanship of the Paulet tombs from being of parochial and local interest to an entirely different level, as the *all'antica* workmanship in these arabesques can be closely tied to the style of the *all'antica* frieze on top of the south presbytery screen in Winchester Cathedral (Figs 8, 11, 12). As noted above, the arabesque in the tomb arch spandrel emanates from jaws of a dolphin's head. This is reminiscent of the creatures to be seen at the start of vine trails on Gothic choir screens, although a dolphin would be an unexpected motif in such contexts. The first motif beyond the dolphin's head is a vine leaf, with further ephemeral traces of vine leaves emerging from behind the shield itself, and then a second vine leaf at the first fork in the arabesque on the further side of the shield. This much is in tune

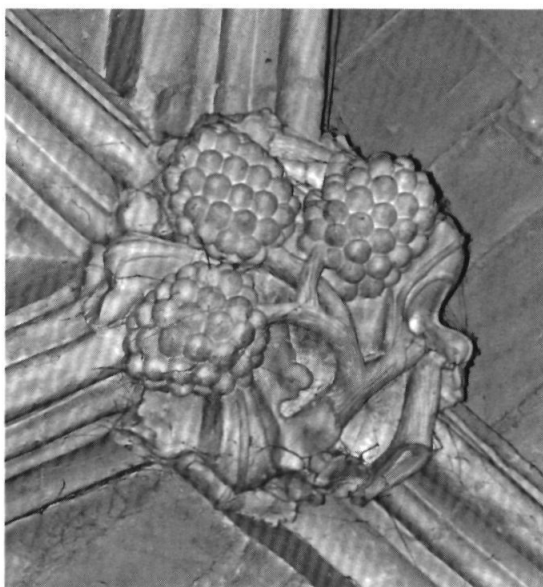


Fig. 10 Winchester Cathedral, bosses from the presbytery aisles



with the overall Gothic character of the other spandrels, which evince a strong association with the Eucharist, the dolphin's head excepted. Thereafter, the arabesque takes on a Renaissance guise. The leafy cladding is metallic in character, and terminates in tight swirls which, as *all'antica* motifs, are clearly recognisable as ball terminals. These also feature on the dolphin's head. This is a quite modest piece of work, not especially

showy and really quite small (the spandrel is about 1 m long).

The style and workmanship of this spandrel is echoed in the south-west spandrel of the door-case. This spandrel is very much smaller, at about 0.3 m long, but nevertheless the characterisation of *all'antica* work is quite evident from the presence of ball terminals and the typical *all'antica* cladding of the arabesque.

The same leafy arabesque with ball terminals was utilised within the more complex arabesques that decorate the frieze at the eastern end of the south-face of the south presbytery screen in Winchester Cathedral (Fig. 11). This frieze has been described in some detail by Martin Biddle, who analysed the development of the early Renaissance work in the cathedral and established an overall dating framework (Biddle 1993, 257–304). Most of the south frieze was cut to a single overall design that comprises a series of tightly wound, affronted and addorsed scrolls set between urns, with an alternating sequence of putto heads and shields, into which is fitted the occasional pelican – the badge of Bishop Fox. For some unknown reason,

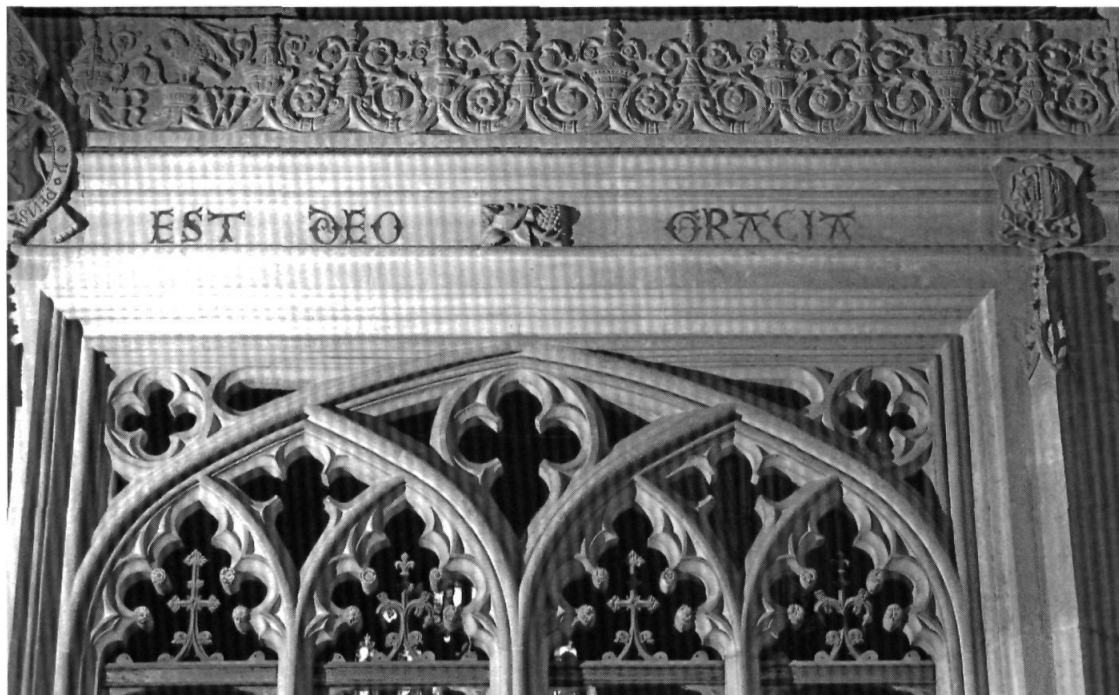


Fig. 11 Winchester Cathedral, the east section of the south face of the frieze on the eastern bay of the south presbytery screen (S3S east)

the frieze in the south face of the most easterly bay (Bay S3S) is different (Figs 11, 12). The shields are omitted and the scrolls opened out to loop around an alternating sequence of roses and pomegranates, the sequence beginning with the letters R W representing bishop Fox, whose arms marshalled within the Garter are set just to the left. At the far end of this section of frieze, and set on the stringcourse, is a shield with the dimidiated rose and pomegranate badge of Henry and Katherine (Fig. 12). The leafy scrollwork with ball terminals we have seen at Basing reappears in this frieze, used in the scrolls that roll out and around the rose and pomegranate badges in the lower part of the frieze. The ball terminals have also the same tendril-like quality, curling away from the body of the scrollwork. It is noteworthy that the same ideas employed at Basing for the treatment of the backs of the roses can be seen in the presbytery frieze, whilst the carving of the pomegranates is also very close.

There are no dolphin heads in the cathedral frieze, just as there are no putti amongst the carvings at Basing. Dolphins were at this date a common feature among Renaissance works, and were included in schemes in Hampshire such as the frieze in the chapel of the hospital of St Cross that dates to *c.* 1517 (Riall 2008b) and the frieze on the Silkstede stalls in the south transept of Winchester Cathedral (Riall 2003). The absence of dolphins on the cathedral frieze seemingly marks a conscious effort by this mason to move away from the heavily zoomorphic motif-laden style of work as exemplified in the St Cross and Silkstede friezes to move to a more geometric, anamorphic execution of *all'antica* work.

The iconography of the spandrels was discussed above, where it was shown that this, in the main, related to the Eucharist and pointed towards the Virgin Mary, although references to Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon cannot be discounted. Less easy to explain is the presence of a

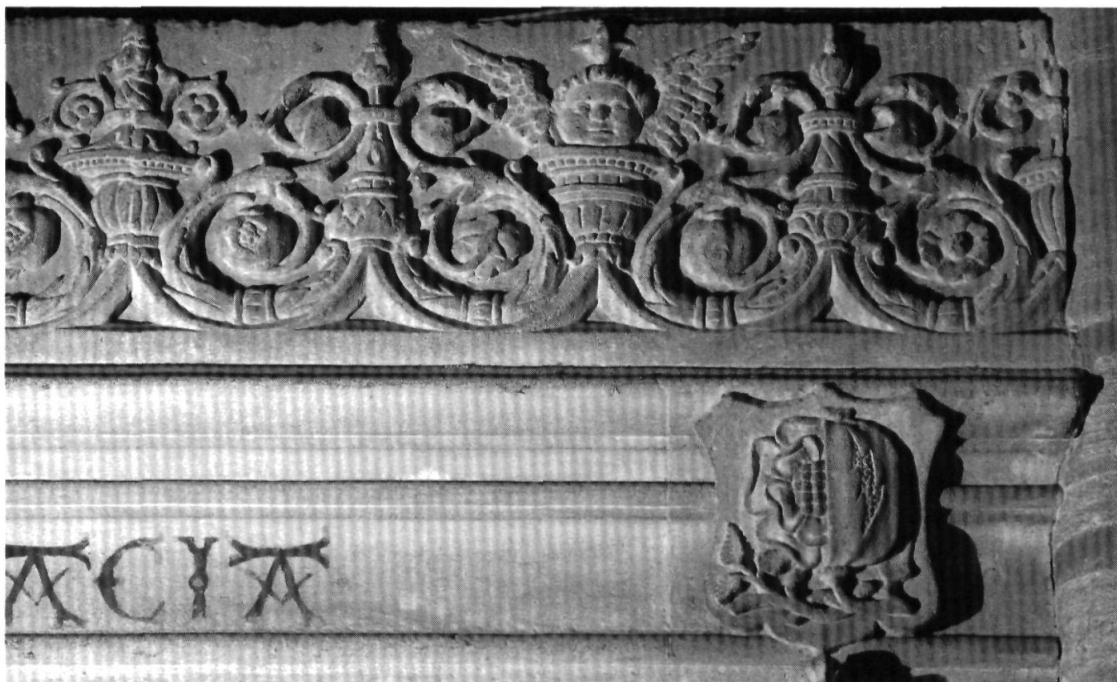


Fig. 12 Winchester Cathedral. Detailed view of the east section of S3S, showing the dimidiated rose and pomegranate badge of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon

dolphin. Fish were from an early date associated with Christianity, with believers called, '*pisciculi*, little fishes' (Hall 1974, 122). So while a dolphin might be seen as a fish, with the iconographic meaning that that carries, the use of a dolphin also implies other meanings. A dolphin came to represent symbolically the faith of Christians, and, more powerfully, was used to symbolise Christ's death and resurrection. The dolphin represented salvation; a theme that came down from Classical mythology as told in the tale of Arion, the youth with a lyre, who was saved from drowning by a school of dolphins that carried him home to the court of Periander. This theme of resurrection and salvation echoes the more prolific references to the Eucharist that can be seen elsewhere in this programme of work. This parallels the iconographic programme at St Cross, which contains in its frieze prolific numbers of dolphins many of which bear putti on their backs (Riall 2008b).

Connecting the *all'antica* spandrel at Basing to work in Winchester Cathedral – alongside the parallels to be drawn between the angel bosses and details of the carving in the other spandrels – points us towards an identification of the authorship and dating of this work. But before exploring this, there are some lesser details of the Paulet tombs that should be noted, as these also underline the links between work in the cathedral and at Basing.

Renaissance script

The two Paulet tombs are identified by inscriptions cut into the hollow of the stringcourses, although that on the west tomb is incomplete – the south face of this tomb remains blank probably because there was an intention to record the dates of when John and Alice died, which, if it was done at all, may only have been painted onto the stringcourse rather than

carved. The east tomb has an inscription as follows: *'hic · jacet · joh[an]es · poulet · armig · et · elenor · vx · ei* (here lies John Paulet, knight, and Eleanor his wife), continued on the south thus: *qui · obier[unt] · me[n]se · septe bris anno dni 1488'* (who died in September 1488). This has been taken to suggest that Eleanor Paulet died in 1488, but this is incorrect. The *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* reveals that she died in July 1504, and that she held the castle, manor and lordship of Nunney, Somerset, as well as lands in Hampshire following her husband's death in 1492; these are recorded as having been passed to her son and heir, John Paulet. The west tomb bears an inscription as follows: *hic · jacet · johes · poulet · miles · et · alicia · vx·ei* (as above) (Fig. 6), which continues on the south (Fig. 5), *qui · obierunt · mense*.

The style in which this lettering was executed calls for some comment. At the beginning of the 16th century, black-letter script was utilised for public display scripts in English contexts, the Paulet donor plaque described above being an example. During the first quarter of the 16th century, Gothic script was superseded by a variety of Renaissance experimental display scripts, based on Classical and Romanesque script forms, alongside extrovert renderings of initial letters, such as in the Langton and Silkstede chapels in Winchester Cathedral. The Paulet inscriptions are consciously echoed by the inscription on the cathedral south presbytery screen, which dates to c. 1525. Here, Bishop Fox's motto – *Est Deo Gratia* – was cut into the hollow of the stringcourse and executed in a somewhat idiosyncratic but uniform cursive decorative script that is probably based on 12th-century Romanesque originals, such as Bishop Henry de Blois' *Winchester Bible*. This Romano-Gothic script deliberately avoided Roman sans-serif classical forms: typically, the A has a bar across the apex and often has a broken crossbar; the D is lower case with the upright curled above; the diagonal of the N is curved; and the O is pointed. Throughout all of these letters there was a tendency to splay the ends, a stylistic trait that is occasional termed as a fishtail-serif, as well as to add a bulge or some other effect to the middle of the stem. As a style, this form of deco-

rative script found favour across Europe from the end of the 15th century and, in England and Wales, was still being employed in the later 16th century (Gray 1986, 148–50). Apart from the mottoes on the stringcourses in the presbytery screen (Biddle 1993, 270–1), similar displays of this script appeared at Sherborne St John, on the Pexall tomb (Riall 2007c), and on Prior Draper's chapel in Christchurch Priory (Riall 2008a). All of these are later than the Paulet tombs, the Draper chapel being the last in the series and dating to 1529.

Stringcourses, coats-of-arms and helms

The overall design and layout of the Paulet tombs was closely followed by the funerary settings at Sherborne St John, the Pexall tomb of c. 1519 (Riall 2007c), and at Thruxton, the Lisle tomb of c. 1524 (Riall 2007b). In all three cases a four centred arch spans a tomb; above the arch is a stringcourse in the centre of which is a large shield with a coat-of-arms, surmounted by a mantled helm (Fig. 13). The mantling around the Lisle helm displays the same stippled chisel-work noticed on a Paulet spandrel and amongst the cathedral bosses mentioned above. This arrangement parallels that on the cathedral screens where large, centrally placed shields were set on the stringcourse, with smaller shields in each bay. All of these are carved from stone. In the case of the Pexall and Lisle settings, the shields and helms were painted. A similar arrangement was followed at East Tisted, although here the arms were displayed on a separate plaque that was hung above the tomb that also probably served as an Easter sepulchre and which was originally sited in the chancel (Riall 2007d). As noted earlier, there are a number of problems with the shields and helms at Basing. They are all very white, and contrast quite considerably with the stonework of the tombs to which they attached – all save the corbel with shield that hangs from the apex of the west tomb (Figs 6, 13). Moreover, in terms of their colour, they are very similar to the achievements that hang on the south tomb screen that was erected in the mid-16th century (VCHH IV, 126; Crook 2002, 108–9). Additionally, the helms and mantling



Fig. 13 Coats-of-arms and helms. Clockwise from top: Paulet arms from the north face of the east tomb; Pexall arms from the south face of the Pexall monument stringcourse at Sherborne St John; and the Lisle arms from the south face of the Lisle monument stringcourse at Thruxton

on the earlier tombs are stylistically the same as those on the later Paulet tombs. This is somewhat surprising; the more so when it is noticed that

all four shields on the earlier Paulet tombs are, geometrically, the same. All the other shields on the tombs are otherwise different, those in the

spandrels, the shields in the door case, those at the bottom of the central niche and the shields held by the angels; this, as noted above, being a typical stylistic and design trait of this mason.

Some light was shed on the problem during conservation work on the Paulet tombs that was carried out by Mr Roger Harris in 1998 (Harris 1999). He showed repairs to these heraldic displays had been carried out using plaster, and that this overlaid – on the south face of the east tomb – the carved and painted inscription in the stringcourse: the terminal T of *Poulet* and initial A of *Armiger* being covered by plaster (Fig. 13). Assuming that these heraldic achievements were indeed damaged during the Civil War, then it is inconceivable that they could have been repaired until after 1660, and this is reflected in the Baroque feel of the armorial displays. This leads us to conclude that the stringcourse armorial settings on the earlier Paulet tombs are not original, and also casts some doubt on the originality of the stringcourse armorial settings on the later Paulet tombs.

Among the coats-of-arms displayed on the exterior of the church is an angel corbel with shield that forms the base to a canopied niche within which is a statue of the Virgin Mary and Child. This has been described in some detail previously (Crook 2007, 106–8), although it is necessary here to draw attention to the architectural detail of this piece. While the angel corbel is similar to those in the Paulet chapel, there are nevertheless a number of differences (the out-thrust head, treatment of the face and clothing, carved detail on the wings) that suggest this corbel came from a different hand. However, the coat-of-arms identifies this clearly with John and Alice Paulet, and this intimates that it was installed at much the same time as their chapel was built. That the piece came from the same workshop is perhaps indicated by its overall design. The skewed, clasped pilasters that frame either side of the niche have analogues among work in the cathedral, but rather more persuasive is the treatment of the canopy. The niche is surmounted by a pinnacled gable with a fretted cornice, above which is a crocketed and crocheted domelet. The Basing niche with its domelet parallels similar architectural features

that cap the buttresses either side of the great east window of the cathedral, which was installed by Bishop Richard Fox early in the 16th century. A less obvious parallel is that of the treatment to the top of the Draper chapel screen in Christchurch priory, where similar domelets were utilised (Riall 2008a). As such, the Basing Virgin and child niche provides another pointer to the origin of the Paulet works: the mason's workshop at Winchester Cathedral.

THE WINCHESTER MASONS' WORKSHOP AND THE PAULET CHAPEL

One of the problems highlighted in this author's paper on the Pexall tomb at Sherborne St John was the paucity of close dating evidence, alongside the difficulties that this creates with any attempt to construct a chronology of *all'antica*-styled works of the early 16th century in Hampshire. As was then noted, the Pexall tomb is undated and has no associated documentary evidence (Riall 2007c, 156–8). While the presbytery screens in Winchester cathedral carry the date 1525 carved and painted on their stringcourses, there is some debate about what this date in fact represents (Biddle 1993, 271; Riall 2007a). In any event, much of this work must date to the mid-1520s, as does the tomb and chapel for the Sir John and Mary Lisle at Thruxton (Riall 2007b). Of more interest and significance is any work that is potentially earlier than 1520; it would seem entirely feasible that the Paulet chapel, with its dated donor plaque of 1519, provides just such a work.

The donor plaque (Fig. 3) reads, 'To the praise of Christ and Mary his mother these [buildings] stand through [the benefice] of Sir John Paulet, 1519' (Crook 2002, 104–5). There is no mention of Paulet's wife, Alice. Sir John himself was by 1519 of advanced years for the period, and had quite possibly withdrawn from public life in favour of his son William. Sir John was perhaps born in 1453/4 (Ashton 2004; Loades 2008, 6), although a date of *c.* 1460 seems the more likely. The *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* for years 1–12 Henry VII include responses to a writ of 13 October 8 Henry VII (1492) that

record the enquiries in Somerset, Sussex and Hampshire following the death of John Paulet (Poulet) 'the Friday after Michaelmas last' (5 October 1492). The response from Somerset tells us that 'John Poulet the younger aged 32 years and more is his son and heir'. Whether he was born in 1453/4 or 1460, by 1519 Sir John Paulet was undoubtedly nearing 60 or was older. He had twice been sheriff of Hampshire in the reign of Henry VII, in 1492–3 and in 1500–1 (Berry 1839, viii–ix), and had served in other capacities including military service – he was a commander at the battle of Blackheath in 1597. However, that he was probably no longer active in political and military affairs by the start of Henry VIII's reign seems apparent from the activities of his eldest son. William Paulet was several times sheriff of Hampshire, his first term of office occurring in 1511–12 (Berry 1839, ix), having been nominated although not chosen in the previous two years. Moreover, it is William's name, not John's, which we find in the voluminous records catalogued in the volumes of the *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic* of Henry VIII's reign. There is some suggestion that William Paulet was a protégé of Bishop Richard Fox, who wrote a letter of commendation concerning him to Cardinal Wolsey (Ford 2004). Both Paulets were among the leading figures of the Hampshire landed gentry, this family rather more unusually having extensive land holdings and offices elsewhere. And like Sir Richard Pexall, Sir John Lisle and Sir Richard Norton, when the time came to choose a mason to build chapel and tomb, Sir John Paulet looked to the bishop of Winchester's mason for its design and construction. This speaks volumes about the inter-connections between bishop Fox and the Hampshire gentry.

The mason's shop at Winchester Cathedral had been a hive of considerable activity from the early years of Fox's episcopate through to the later 1510s, when the volume of work being undertaken on the cathedral appears to have slackened. The documentary record has largely vanished, the only materials of substance from these years relating to the siting and erection of Fox's chantry chapel (Lindley 1993; Smith 1988), construction of which perhaps did not

begin until 1514–15; it was described as 'newly built' in 1518. By this date, and through Fox's patronage, the entire area of the presbytery had been remodelled through the insertion of a new great east window and a new vault over the presbytery and quire. In addition, new aisles and aisle walls had been added either side of the presbytery, complete with another series of bosses in the stone-built aisle vaults. All of this may have been complete by 1514–15, by which time work on Fox's chantry chapel had begun. It is clear from temporary woodwork inserted into the roof spaces of the transepts that there had been an intention to continue this remodelling of the cathedral fabric. This work never progressed beyond the initial preparations to lift the transept roofs; quite why this development was halted has never been fully explained, although it is generally accepted that Fox was more intent on pouring his money and energies into the building of his college of Corpus Christi at Oxford. The only work of any size that took place thereafter in the cathedral during Fox's episcopate was the erection of the presbytery screens, with their Renaissance frieze, and the replacement of the many tombs that lay in the path of these screens (Biddle 1993, 263–7; Riall 2007a). All of this work on the presbytery was sponsored by Bishop Fox, a point underlined by the ubiquitous presence of his personal badge: a pelican vulning. It may be no coincidence, therefore, that following the abandonment of the planned rebuilding of the cathedral transepts stores of building materials assembled for this work were sold. The pipe roll of the bishop of Winchester for 1520–1 reveals that large quantities of building materials, accumulated for the bishop, were sold off at that time (HRO Eccl. II/155866). Amongst these materials were ten cart loads of Caen stone. It is possible that much of this was purchased by patrons such as the Paulets, Pexalls and Lisles for their tomb monuments and chapels, or was bought by the cathedral workshop and sold on by the masons when undertaking commissions for patrons such as these.

By about 1518, therefore, it appears that the masons' workshop at the cathedral found itself without any substantial programme of

work. While routine maintenance work would have been undertaken by the masons on both the cathedral (priory) itself, and the monastic buildings, there must have been a significant falling-off of new work that may have been accompanied by a reduction in the workforce. One means by which the workshop could have continued to function would have been to contract for works away from the cathedral. Indeed, it is entirely likely that the prior and convent of St Swithun's would have been enthusiastic about winning contracts, both for the possibility of the financial reward as well as to help maintain financially a mason's workshop. This would serve to explain the presence of a specifically Winchester Renaissance style amongst the funerary monuments of members of Hampshire's landed gentry: the Pexalls, Lisles, Nortons and, as we can now discern, the Paulets.

The coincidence in dates of the Paulet chapel and tombs, completed *c.* 1519, and the abandonment of work on the cathedral, leads us to consider that the Caen stone used for the Paulet works might originally have been intended for Fox's work on the cathedral. The Paulet donor plaque with its date of 1519 alludes to a completion date; the sense of the inscription suggesting that the work was by that date done, rather than being planned. Such a date fits in with a slowing down or stoppage of work on the cathedral; allowing its masons to carve the angel corbels for Basing in a mode that echoes those in the cathedral but which were – in minor details – slightly different and a little simpler. This connection is supported by comparison of the carving technique and style used for the Basing spandrels and the cathedral presbytery aisle bosses, along with the workmanship and design style of the Virgin and Child statue and its niche. More significant is the *all'antica* work at Basing, in the shape of the spandrels with Renaissance arabesques. It would appear to be the case that this was the first piece of *all'antica* work applied to a design to be cut in stone for a Hampshire setting. Moreover, it set in train a series of ever more elaborate and involved designs that would lead through the frieze for the Pexall tomb, to the two frieze designs for the cathedral south presbytery screens, and on into the designs for

some of the tomb chest panels in the cathedral, and those at both Thruxton and East Tisted.

THOMAS BERTIE

The conjunction of so many aspects of design, workmanship and carving style that can be specifically linked to Winchester Cathedral, and with the addition of an element of *all'antica* work, raises the possibility that the work at Basing was executed by Bishop Fox's mason, Thomas Bertie. His working life has been explored in some detail elsewhere, and only some general points need be made here (Harvey 1984; Biddle 1993; Riall 2005; Riall 2007a; Riall 2007b; and Riall 2007c). The Paulet chapel and tombs of 1519 at Basing encapsulate much of Bertie's style as a designer and mason. It is conceivable that Basing was his first independent commission and, as such, it offers pointers to his approach to the problem of executing a stylish funereal monument, in an up-to-date, of-the-minute fashion, alongside provision of a chapel, which at Basing was relatively conservative in its decorative details.

The overall effect of the Basing tomb-screen was to provide an architectural work that was sparing in its detail; there is little in the way of additional carvings; indeed, actual detail is reduced to the minimum, with much of it confined to the carvings in the spandrels. This sparse, astringent style offers an antithesis to the style and workmanship of chantry chapels such as Fox's in Winchester Cathedral. There is nothing at Basing of the Gothic stone-cage canopy work encrusted with crockets, pinnacles, niches and finials that characterises Fox's chantry chapel. Nor also is there any sense of the 'must-have' overall carved surface decorative detail, however repetitious, that we see in contemporary tomb cases elsewhere: for example, the tomb of Sir Nicholas Lisle of *c.* 1506–10 at Thruxton, or the Waller tomb and Easter sepulchre at Stoke Charity of 1525. The Basing work is very plain; there are large areas of the work that have no carved detail at all. This is a characteristic of Bertie's work – there is much plain, unadorned stonework. He reserved intricately carved detail to adorn the

Table 2 Chronological sequence of *all'antica* works in Hampshire, all apart from the St Cross and Silkstede friezes were probably created by Thomas Bertie.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Date range</i>	<i>Most likely construction date</i>
St Cross, frieze over stallwork	1510–20	1517
Basing, Paulet chapel	1516–25	1518–19
Cathedral, Silkstede canopies	1515–24	1520–22
Cathedral, Presbytery south screen	1520–25	1520–22
Sherborne St John, Pexall chapel and monument	1519–30	1520–25
Cathedral, Presbytery north screen tombs	1520–25	1520–22
Thruxton, Lisle chapel and monument	1520–27	1523–25
Cathedral, Presbytery north screen door	1524–25	1524–25
Cathedral, Presbytery north screen frieze	1522–25	1524–25
Christchurch priory, Draper chapel	1525–29	1529
East Tisted, Norton tomb	1525–35	1530–35

spandrels, and, where present, the friezes that cap his monumental surrounds (Sherborne St John, Thruxton, Winchester Cathedral, and Christchurch). Unlike many examples of Gothic tomb work, Bertie avoided precise repetitious detail. Although his spandrels have an overall verisimilitude, when examined closely there are differences – so much so, that no two spandrels are quite alike, and most are actually quite different. There is a whimsical quality to this sense of design, almost a sense of determination to avoid duplication. This can be seen in his treatment of shields. All have a dissimilar geometry; there is an inventiveness about the way in this was achieved, especially so in settings where there were considerable numbers of coats-of-arms such as at Basing (there are 39 surviving shields from the 1519 works). There must have been almost a sense of delight in achieving this differential of design, as it would have required an unusual attention to detail to allow a frieze to be carved within which the surface treatment of each urn, for example, is in some way unique – and yet this is the case in both the cathedral south screen friezes, as well

as in the Pexall frieze at Sherborne St John. We find also this sense of playfulness in the way he executed inscriptions. While the Basing inscriptions bear similarities to that on the south screen in Winchester Cathedral and another on Draper's chapel at Christchurch Priory (Riall 2008a), each is different in its details. The Basing inscription, for example, has motifs intruded between each of the words that do not appear amongst inscriptions elsewhere.

One aspect of Gothic architecture that Bertie retained was the use of blank tracery. The jambs and soffits of all his tomb arches are filled with tracery; but, in Bertie's capricious fashion, he used a different style of tracery in each fresh project. His attempts to 'escape' the Gothic style were not always altogether successful. The central niche on the Basing tomb screen has a canopy that is awkwardly conceived, whilst his corbels upon which statuary would have been stood are both inelegant and poorly executed. The corbels that serve the same purpose on the Draper screen are much better integrated into the overall design and are well articulated (Riall 2008a).



Fig. 14 Winchester Cathedral. Figure of a man in the south presbytery aisle – could this be Thomas Bertie?

It is suggested here that the Paulet chapel at Basing provides the first of Thomas Bertie's commissions as an independent mason working outside the confines of the cathedral. It so happens that it is also the most complete. The other chapels he may have built have either

been heavily remodelled or demolished. The chapel Bertie erected at Sherborne St John, assuming that he was responsible for the whole of the fabric rather than just the east window, has been remodelled so that the upper part of the walls have been replaced (Riall 2007c),

while the chapel he built at Thruxton was demolished in the 1790s (Riall 2007b). The exterior of the Paulet chapel is relatively unfussy, with ornament restricted to effusively grotesque gargoyles (although these may have been reused from the earlier chancel) that are not dissimilar to those on the exterior of the cathedral presbytery, and the now missing pinnacles that projected through the stringcourse from the buttresses. Thruxton also had pinnacles that projected above a shield-laden stringcourse with a complex *all'antica* frieze (Riall 2007b). The only other decorative feature at Basing is the presence of numbers of shields, mainly as window label stops and with a central shield above each window. The remnants at Sherborne St John and at Thruxton indicate similar schemes.

The donor plaque implies the Paulet chapel was probably completed in 1519, and this indicates that the contract to design and build it was drawn up some time before. The contract for the chapel and tomb at Thruxton is known to have been in existence *c.* 1520 from the terms of the wills of both Sir John Lisle of 1520 and Mary Lisle of 1524, with both dying in 1524 (Riall 2007b), but the actual work on this setting appears not to have begun until *c.* 1523 being completed in 1525–7 (table 1). Building work at Basing perhaps started in 1517 or 1518. On this basis, we can probably fit the Paulet tomb into the Hampshire chronology of Renaissance work as pre-dating all other stone-cut works, and probably also earlier than the Silkstede stalls in the cathedral. The presence of a dolphin in the Paulet spandrel might indicate an awareness of the frieze at St Cross, but this dolphin is insufficiently specific in its particulars to allow such a conclusion to be reached. Dolphins were a frequently utilised *all'antica* motif in such work, thus the idea could have come from other sources. Nonetheless, the presence of the St Cross frieze that was directly associated with Richard Fox would have informed Bertie's knowledge of Renaissance design (Riall 2008b), and the possibility that this work provided the inspiration for his Paulet spandrel cannot be ignored. That said, Bertie used but little from the St Cross frieze,

choosing to do quite different things in his evocation of the *all'antica* style in his work.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The style of the carving at Basing links this work to the masons' workshop attached to Winchester Cathedral and, by extension, to the series of early Tudor Renaissance tombs across Hampshire. It seems more than likely that we should credit these works to Thomas Bertie, who can be linked by documentary evidence to the Lisle tomb at Thruxton and to work in the cathedral. Monograms noted by Martin Biddle painted onto the south face of the south presbytery screen frieze have been suggested as representing Bertie (Biddle 1993, 274). He may even have represented himself amongst the bosses in the presbytery aisles (Fig. 14). Basing was conceivably Bertie's first important commission away from the confines of work on the monastic fabric of the cathedral; in addition, he and his fellow masons were quick to put into practice patrons' passions for 'up-to-date' and 'of-the-minute' vogues of fashionable decorative arts – the Basing *all'antica* spandrel being one such fashion statement.

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