

DEFINING THE EARLY SIXTEENTH-CENTURY RENAISSANCE EXPERIENCE: THE TOMB OF RICHARD AND ELIZABETH NORTON AT EAST TISTED, HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

Of the sheriffs of Hampshire who held office in the first half of Henry VIII's reign, no less than four chose to be buried in tombs surrounded by monuments covered in Italianate, all'antica, detail: one such was Richard Norton who was buried in the church of St James, East Tisted in the north-east of the county. Through comparative work, this paper proposes the attribution of the Norton tomb to Thomas Bertie, the bishop of Winchester's master mason, and makes a case for a revision of the dating of the tomb and the tomb's role in the development of decorative architectural styles in the region.

INTRODUCTION

The church of St James the Great at East Tisted stands amidst a small cluster of buildings deep in the countryside of east Hampshire. Both the church and its village are somewhat overshadowed by nearby Chawton: famous for Jane Austen and her cottage. The visitor to East Tisted, if venturing into the church, would however be rewarded by the sight of three splendid tombs erected by members of the Norton family. These are the tombs for Richard and Elizabeth Norton of c.1530; that of John and Anne Norton from the mid 1550s; and Sir John Norton's tomb of the 1680s. This paper is concerned with the first of these: the tomb monument and Easter sepulchre created for Richard and Elizabeth.

As will be explained, the tomb-chest is covered in Renaissance *all'antica* detail that is fully in tune with other pieces of work from across Hampshire that were created in the later 1510s and during the 1520s (Riall 2007d). It is this commonality of detail that makes

this tomb, and the wider group it belongs to, of more than passing interest and thus worth exploring in some detail. Further, the similarity in style and design that occurs through all these pieces of work can be linked to architectural pieces of similar date in Winchester cathedral and, by extension, to the cathedral workshop and its master mason – Thomas Bertie.

The tomb of Richard and Elizabeth Norton has not previously been remarked on in detail. The article in the Victoria County History of Hampshire offers a typical account of the tomb, providing an outline description of its architecture and décor, while not questioning its setting (VCHH III, 1908). Pevsner noted the tomb in the *Hampshire* volume of his *Buildings of England* series. His commentary was revised by Rodney Hubbuck, who noted that the tomb dated to c.1530 and that it had been moved (Hubbuck in Bullen *et al.* 2010, 248). The tomb now stands at the east end of the south aisle of the nave (Fig. 1); however, it was not originally placed here, but was erected in the chancel of the church, where it was set against the north wall.

This paper re-visits an earlier paper on the Norton tomb of the 1530s (Riall 2007c), which was written before the author became aware of the existence of watercolour sketches that depict the church in 1839, and which Rodney Hubbuck drew to this author's attention. Further, this paper aims to explore the Norton tomb, its *all'antica* style, and its context as one of a larger group of works that emerged from one workshop and from the work of an individual mason – Thomas Bertie. Readers of this journal will be aware that some of Bertie's work has been described in previous volumes; this paper introduces some new material about the mason and notes also his connection to



Fig. 1 East Tisted: general view from the west of the tomb of Richard (d.1536) and Elizabeth Norton. The 'gothic' arch framing the tomb is Victorian.

another monument, the Waller tomb at Stoke Charity (Riall, *in preparation*).

All'antica

The Norton tomb is one of a group of funereal monuments that were created in the late 1510s and through the 1520s that show extensive surface decoration that can be described as in the Renaissance *all'antica* style. This is sometimes referred to as 'grotesque', 'antique' or 'antiquewerk'. This was the principal new form of decoration to be adopted in England during the earlier part of Henry VIII's reign, and can be shown to have been emerged as a fashion at court from c.1513 (Thurley 1993, 86–98; and see Lewis 1995, 146–151). As a fashionable addition to architectural works, *all'antica* was probably first introduced into a Hampshire setting by Bishop Richard Fox, bishop of Winchester 1501–28. He was the patron of a sumptuous set of chancel furnishings, covered in *all'antica* detail, erected in the chapel of the Hospital of St Cross, Winchester (Riall 2008b). This work, now partially lost, was created c.1517. The attraction of *all'antica* soon caught the imagination of the landed gentry in Hampshire, as is evident from their patronage of the fashion in the design and making of their funereal monuments around Hampshire. Whilst the overall style of architecture remained rooted in the Gothic, Perpendicular, style the decorative elements saw Gothic replaced by Renaissance. This is most evident at Thruxton where the tomb of Sir John Lisle, who died in 1471, was later incorporated into the tomb of his grandson, also called John, and his wife who both died in 1524. The earlier tomb is wholly Gothic in style, whilst the later one is fully Renaissance (Riall 2007b).

One of the first of these tombs to include *all'antica* detail, if only minimally, was the tomb erected for Sir John and Eleanor Paulet at Basing, which can be dated to c.1519 (Riall 2009). Perhaps only slightly later in date is the Pexall tomb at Sherborne St John, where *all'antica* detail was prolifically employed (Riall 2007a). Details from both tombs can be seen in the south presbytery screen in Winchester cathedral (Biddle 1993). The south screen has the date 1525 on it, but the work may be

somewhat earlier. The north presbytery screen in the cathedral offers a different expression of the *all'antica* style, and can be seen a series of tomb cases and a frieze that caps the screen (Biddle 1993; Riall 2005). This screen also has the date of 1525, but here this is probably the completion date for a protracted and long-running period of work that extended from c.1520 through to 1525. The north screen frieze is echoed in the monumental surround for the Lisle tomb mentioned above, which was created for Sir John and Mary Lisle between 1522 and 1527 (Riall 2007b). It is also to be seen in the chapel screen created for prior Draper in Christchurch priory, which has on it the date 1529 (Riall 2008a).

All of these monuments share a style of *all'antica*, together with an architectural elegance and ostentation, that when combined together indicate they all emerged from the cathedral master-mason's workshop in Winchester. There were other works created in Hampshire in this period that also have a strong sense of *all'antica* about them, but which differ stylistically from this group of tombs and chapels. These include the glass made for William Sandys that was installed in the Holy Ghost chapel, Basingstoke, and at his great country house, The Vyne. Also, the Salisbury chapel of c.1520–30 in Christchurch priory must be mentioned. This too is covered in *all'antica* carving, but the style of this work, and its fully repetitive nature, show that this work emerged from a different workshop and employed a different designer to that who designed and created the works in the cathedral and around Hampshire as noted above.

The early forms of the *all'antica* style faded out of use in the 1530s and was replaced in the 1540s and 1550s in Hampshire by strapwork as the defining decorative fashion. This was a second, later, Renaissance style that drew heavily on the architectural and decorative ideas of Sebastiano Serlio, alongside designs created by artists and print-makers from Fontainebleau of Francis I, and from across northern Europe (Wells-Cole 1997). The pair of Paulet tombs on the south side of Basing church (Crook 2002), the Gardiner chapel and Mason monument in Winchester cathedral (Biddle 1993, 281–94), and the mid-1550s Norton tomb in the church



Fig. 2 East Tisted: watercolour view of the church from the north east (1839).

at East Tisted are all important exemplars of this later and quite different style.

Victorian refurbishment and early nineteenth-century watercolours

In the middle of the nineteenth century the church of St James in East Tisted was rebuilt in a Victorian Gothic style. The church tower carries the date 1846 set into the stringcourse and this marks the completion of the work. This process of redevelopment or modernisation was accompanied by a re-ordering and re-arrangement of its interior fittings. The extent to which any of this work was carried only becomes apparent from some watercolour sketches that are amongst the private papers of the Scott family whose home, Rotherfield Park, stands across the road from the church (Figs 3 & 4). These were the work of G. F. Prosser, who took watercolour sketches early in the nineteenth century, and of Miss Jane Paris, a friend

of the Scott family, who made several watercolour sketches in 1839. The latter sketches may have been prompted by the intention of the Scott family to rebuild the church, and her watercolours were possibly made intentionally to create a record of the “old” church.

The view of the interior of the church shows the arrangement of the interior prior to its re-arrangement (Fig. 3). In the foreground are box pews and a three-decker pulpit that were all swept away and discarded. The present pulpit is Victorian, although set in the same place as the earlier pulpit. At the east end of the chancel can be seen, on the north side, the two tombs erected in the sixteenth century for the Nortons (the 1550s tomb is now in the north aisle), whilst on the south side is tomb of Sir John Norton who died in 1686, which is also now in the north aisle. A further detail to emerge from this watercolour is that the church had aisles to the nave in the early nineteenth century, whilst the chancel did not.



Fig. 3 East Tisted: watercolour view of the interior of the church from the west (1839).



Fig. 4 East Tisted: the Resurrection panel in the Richard and Elizabeth Norton tomb.

This feature is also confirmed by a watercolour sketch that shows the exterior of the church (Fig. 2). Further details to emerge from the view of the interior include sufficient detailing of the east window of the church to show that this predates the sixteenth century. It might be earlier fifteenth century or quite possibly of fourteenth century in date. This helps to confirm that it is unlikely that Richard Norton refurbished the church or chancel. Similarly, it would appear he did not add a chapel onto the side of the church such as those erected by his contemporaries at Basing, Sherborne St John, and Thruxton. More important, however, are some details of Richard and Elizabeth Norton's tomb that emerge from this sketch. It is now possible to show that an important element of the tomb, its frieze, was lost or discarded sometime between 1839 and the later nineteenth century. The import of this will be discussed below. Additionally, the watercolour shows that the heraldic achievement for this tomb, which today is separated from the tomb, was originally integral to it (Figs 1 & 3).

Before the emergence of these watercolours there was no good reason to suppose that the Norton tomb stood in the chancel. This thereby provides something of a cautionary tale for those of us who study church monuments. One of the most important aspects to emerge from the watercolour sketch of the interior of the church is that Norton tomb stood close to the altar at the east end of the church. This makes better sense of the presence of a Resurrection panel in the arched recess above the tomb (Fig. 4). It shows the risen Christ standing emerging from His opened tomb with, either side of Him, the Norton family. The panel and its presence in an arched space above an altar-table tomb, together with its setting in close proximity to the church high altar and on the north side of the chancel, strongly suggest that this was, and was fully intended to be, an Easter sepulchre (*pace* Herbert 2006, who is sceptical of the existence of such structures). Richard Norton's will, which alludes to his tomb, does not specify what form the monument took and there is no specific mention of the Easter rituals. In common with many others of this period, Norton left money in his will to his parish priest to pray for his and his friends'

souls, which suggests that he fully comprehended what he wished to leave money for and why. However, the style of the tomb with its enclosed and uncluttered space, its Resurrection panel, its Eucharistic references in the tomb chest, together with its original position beside the high altar are all indicators that it was intended to serve as an Easter sepulchre.

The Norton family

The sixteenth-century Norton tomb reflect the interests, consciousness and preoccupations of a family of landed gentry who were fully part of a wider network of their social class and with whom they shared similar aspirations and fears (Godwin 2002). There is no reason to suppose that the Nortons were untypical of their class or of their times; they were not greatly wealthy and yet seem to have been wealthy enough, they were not to be found at the forefront on any stage in national life, whether in politics or at court or in military service for their country, but they were closely associated with county life in Hampshire. They seem to have been quite typically normal and unexceptional members of the landed gentry.

Hitherto there has been no suggestion that the Norton's possessed a substantial house, such as Basing House, home of the Paulet family or The Vyne, home of the Sandys family, let alone one that was fortified. A map of the Norton's estate made in 1635, and now held in the Scott family archive, shows Rotherfield House set within what appears to be a substantial, rectangular-shaped moat. Traces of this moat still survive but had been assumed to be remnants of the eighteenth-century landscaping that surrounded the house, which had been rebuilt in the reign of Queen Anne, and which was substantially altered again in the nineteenth century to produce the present house (Hubbuck in Bullen *et al.* 2010, 248–50).

The Nortons had held East Tisted from the fourteenth century. Richard Norton inherited the manor of East Tisted from his parents, John and Joan Norton, in 1503, having married Elizabeth Rotherfield, the Rotherfield heiress in 1495. (VCHH III, 1908, 32). He was sheriff of Hampshire in 1515, having been listed amongst those considered to hold this office

the year before (Brewer, L & P, I/II, 2484 (9), 3499 (12)). He was a commissioner of the peace 1509–1514, (Brewer, *L&P*, I/II, p.1537–38) and a commissioner of the array in 1511 (Brewer L & P, I/I, 833, (58ii)). Like almost all the gentry of southern England, he probably took part in Henry VIII's campaign in northern France of 1513–14. He was not listed amongst those attending the peace conference held by Henry VIII and Francis I of France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in June 1520, which might imply that Norton was no longer physically very active. Thereafter we find few mentions of him in the national records. He was listed amongst those responsible for overseeing the collection of the subsidy in Hampshire in both 1523 and 1524 (Brewer, L & P, 3286, (p.1364), 30 Aug 1523; *L&P*, IV/I, 1524 (p.235), 1 Aug 1524) in a role usually given to senior or leading members of county gentry.

In many of these documents Richard Norton is mentioned alongside other leading families of Hampshire gentry that included: Paulet of Basing, Lisle of Wotton (and Thruxton), and Sandys of The Vyne, as well as less prominent members of the gentry whose names crop up again and again in the official records such as: Uvedale, Pounde, Wallop, Waller, Tichbourne and Frost to name but a few. Norton was not a leading member of the Hampshire gentry, but can be seen as generally typical of them – a man who could be relied upon in times of both peace and war. As such, he had the same aspirations to be buried with dignity in a tomb created in the latest fashion, which, in the 1520s and 1530s, embraced a fashionable taste for the Renaissance.

Richard Norton died in 1536 (1537 by modern reckoning). His will is dated 24 January 1536/7 and was proved 28 February 1536/7 (National Archives PROB 11/26; Baigent, BL Add 39970, f.393). In his will he indicated that he wished to be buried in the tomb that he had caused to be erected, at his own expense, in the chancel of the church. This clearly shows that the tomb was created before 1536. Whilst documentary evidence shows that Richard Norton died in 1537, the death of Elizabeth Norton is apparently not marked in any documentary record. The family archives of the Scott family suggest she died in 1530, but there is no indi-

cation for a source of this information. That said, the Norton tomb had an inscription, now partially lost, and this may have been the source that states she died in 1530. All of which, when taken together, indicates the tomb was created before or around 1530, and which, as will become clear, fits with the dating of other pieces of work around Hampshire of a similar style and fashion.

EARLY RENAISSANCE – THE TOMB OF RICHARD AND ELIZABETH NORTON, c.1530

Against the east wall of the south aisle of the church of St James is the canopied altar tomb of Richard and Elizabeth Norton (Fig. 1). The setting comprises a tomb chest that is panelled on the front, each panel holding a shield surrounded by Italianate *all'antica* detail (Fig. 5 a & b), above which is a canopied space that is surmounted by a heraldic plaque cased by more *all'antica* detail (Fig. 6). The canopy is formed by a four-centred arch, the underside of which is panelled with blank, cusped tracery that is typical of the early Tudor court style. The canopy covers a space, or sepulchre, at the back of which is a carved panel that features a Resurrection scene with the Norton family at prayer either side of the Risen Christ (Fig. 4). Capping the canopy is a cornice which bears three shields: on the left that of Norton, in the centre Norton impaling Rotherfield, and on the right that of Rotherfield. This heraldic display records the marriage of the Rotherfield heiress, Elizabeth, to Richard Norton in 1495. Their arms are repeated across the front of the tomb chest, and their co-joined arms are further displayed above the canopied tomb where they are supported by a pair of putti in a decidedly Renaissance style. This style of display, putti standing either side of a heraldic achievement, can be seen elsewhere, for example in the display of the arms of Thomas Wolsey at Hampton Court and the royal arms at The Vyne, and derives probably from Pietro Torrigiano's funereal monument created for Henry VII and Elizabeth in Westminster abbey. These were all displays that Richard Norton may conceivably have seen for himself. The



Fig. 5 a & b East Tisted: the left hand and centre tomb-chest panels from the tomb of Richard and Elizabeth Norton.



Fig. 6 East Tisted: the heraldic achievement atop the Richard and Elizabeth Norton tomb. The base of the East Tisted plaque has the same carved detail as the frieze above the Lisle tomb at Thruxton.

spandrels of the tomb canopy are filled with smaller shields that have carved upon them the initials **R N** and **E N**, for Richard and Elizabeth Norton. Emerging from behind these shields are small *all'antica* devices, these being based on an urn from which emerges a flower head.

The Resurrection panel

Set against the back wall of the tomb canopy is a panel representing the Resurrection of Christ, with Richard and Elizabeth and their many children kneeling either side of Him (Fig. 4). Banners above the Nortons carry inscriptions painted in black-letter text: that above Richard reads, 'IHU XPE FILI DEI MISERE MEI'. The description given in the Victoria County History notes the inscription above Elizabeth was then illegible (VCHH III, 1908). It has since been restored and reads: 'SPIRITUE GRACIA DEUS MISERE MEI'. But is it correct? We have no way of telling if this is the case. The shields on the front of the tomb chest and the plaque with the family arms above the tomb canopy have also been re-painted in recent times, but it is not known if this conserved earlier paintwork or was a modern introduction. The heraldic shields on the Pexall tomb chest at Sherborne St John show traces of paint which might conceivably be sixteenth-century in date (Riall 2007, 150), thus the Norton tomb may also have originally been painted.

The Resurrection panel suggests that the Norton's had a very large family (Fig. 4). It shows Richard Norton, dressed in his armour, kneeling in prayer with his sons, eight of them, behind him. On the other side of the Risen Christ are Elizabeth and their nine daughters. Did they really have this many children? There is apparently no documentation to prove this. However, there are in Sussex comparable monuments with donor panels that carry similar depictions of children, and here documentary evidence suggests that large families and depictions thereof were factually correct. John Gunter's 1557 tomb at Racton, Sussex, has a similar donor panel and his will appears to suggest the number of children (four sons and two daughters) shown on the donor panel is a realistic depiction (pers. obs., and documentation provided in Racton church). We

might anyway ask why the carver of the Norton plaque would carve more children than the couple actually produced. A more difficult question would be to wonder if all these children survived into adulthood, and it may be that what is presented here – on a plaque that has as its central theme the Resurrection – are all the Norton children, including those who died at birth or in childhood. An interesting light is shed on this problem by a brass on the Hampton tomb at Stoke Charity, Hampshire. This tomb dates to the 1480s and amongst its well-known brasses is one that shows the Hampton children: two sons and six daughters. The sides of the tomb chest show that four daughters married but of the remaining children there appears to be no trace, and it is presumed they died. A second tomb in this church, the Waller monument of c.1525, was likely to have been created by the same mason – Thomas Bertie – who made the Norton tomb and he may well have noticed the brass and been struck by the depiction of all the children, both the living and the dead (Greenfield 1894, 4, and see plate III; Hubbuck in Bullen *et al*, 2010, 505; Riall, *in preparation*).

It may be noted that Richard Norton, like his contemporaries Sir John Lisle and Sir Ralph Pexall, chose to have himself depicted in armour; Norton being carved in light relief on a panel, whilst the others commissioned life-sized effigies. It is possible that the Paulet tombs at Basing also had effigies, but these were lost in the seventeenth-century Civil wars. The details of Richard Norton's armour and the styling of Elizabeth Norton's dress correspond closely to the Lisle and Pexall effigies.

Renaissance detailing in the carving

The stylistic treatment of the tomb chest panels is central to understanding the wider context of this work, and its use of *all'antica* detail (Figs 1 & 5). The tomb chest has three panels that are set within a framework of plain, bull-nose mouldings. Each panel features a shield that is charged with the heraldry of the Norton family, and which is supported by extensive and deeply carved Renaissance *all'antica* detail. The *all'antica* work in the two outside panels is remarkably similar (Fig. 5), but close

inspection reveals that there are in fact some differences. This is stylistically typical of the genre, where apparent symmetry underpins the design but within which there is a playful disregard of the finer detail, so that on casual inspection it seems to be altogether similar; in reality, this is an illusion and the symmetry is actually asymmetrical. The outer panels display this aspect of *all'antica* work very neatly. The base design shows a diagonal arrangement of urns pointing into each corner with interlinking pairs of slashed volutes that emerge from leafy pods or flower heads. Between each set of volutes is a flower head on a stalk, with further floral motifs emerging from the mouths of each of the urns. The two panels could almost be mirror-images one of the other but for the differing treatment to all the flower heads and the reversal of the treatment to the urn bodies. Even allowing for a degree of inaccuracy in the carving – and we might note that there are some discrepancies in the laying out of the designs – it is apparent that the diversity of design is clearly a deliberate element in the overall design of this carved work. The urns are repeated in the central panel, where the shield is in fact set on top of a roundel, or medallion, which is clasped by two distinctive styles of cartouche as well as the elaborate stands of the urns themselves.

The urns can be suggested as representing the Eucharistic chalice. This was a theme that occurs throughout all of these monuments, and indeed replicates and echoes the vine trails seen in many a church or chancel screen from all across Britain. The Norton tomb does not display an explicit interest in the Eucharist, it is more concerned with the Resurrection, but the presence of the urn/chalice motif, continually repeated, parallels the presence of more overt Eucharistic displays in the Lisle, Paulet and Pexall tombs, where imagery of grapes on the vine are present. Similarly, the north presbytery screen in Winchester cathedral displays bunches of grapes, vinous foliage and urn/chalices, alongside displays of ears of wheat, which must also represent the Eucharist.

This design, and the layout of individual motifs, is strongly reminiscent of the tomb chest of Bishop Pontoise's tomb (Fig. 7) which was incorporated into the north pres-

bytery screen in Winchester cathedral during a campaign of renovation and renewal in the early 1520s, which was completed by 1525. This tomb, along with several others, was rebuilt in an Italianate *all'antica* style and this is further reflected in the treatment of the friezes that cap the presbytery screens (Biddle 1993; see also Riall 2005; Riall 2007a; Riall 2007b). The Norton tomb panels are somewhat simpler, and on a smaller scale than Pontoise's tomb, but the same prominent motifs – urns – are present in both, these being linked together by other *all'antica* work. In the case of the Pontoise tomb this has a strong floral quality, whilst in the Norton tomb it has become more formulaic with slashed volutes, another particular motif of the genre, used instead, although these too emerge from floral trumpets. The cartouches that surround the central panel of the Norton tomb are also echoes of the work on the Pontoise tomb. The Norton tomb panels also strikingly parallel those on the north face of the Pexall tomb at Sherborne St John, especially that on the western end of the tomb (Fig. 8). The Pexall tomb was created sometime in the early 1520s (Riall 2007a).

The detailing in the tomb chest panels is somewhat echoed in the recess arch spandrels. The left hand spandrel features a small shield carrying the letters **RN**, whilst the right hand spandrel has a shield with **EN**. This carving is paralleled in the Prior Broke door in the north presbytery screen of Winchester cathedral, a work that dates to 1524–25 (Biddle 1993, 270–71).

The tomb chest, and if less so, the structure above contains details that point to the mason's workshop from which it emerged. The commentary that follows is intended to draw out the features that offer parallels between the Norton monument and the wider set of work that emerged from this mason's workshop.

Lettering

The style of lettering in the Norton spandrels echoes that used on the presbytery screens in Winchester cathedral, and calls for some comment. At the start of the sixteenth-century, black-letter script was utilised for public display scripts in English contexts and can also be



Fig. 7 Winchester cathedral: tomb panel detail from the tomb of Bishop Pontoise (c.1525).



Fig. 8 Sherborne St John: tomb panel detail from the tomb of Ralph and Edith Pexall (c.1520–25).



Fig. 9 Thruxton: detail of carving

seen on this tomb painted on the cornice. During the first quarter of the sixteenth-century Gothic script was often superseded by a variety of Renaissance display scripts, based on Classical and Romanesque script forms, alongside extrovert Gothic-styled renderings of initial letters, such as in the Langton and Silkstede chapels in Winchester cathedral. The lettering on the Norton shields parallels the inscription on the cathedral south presbytery screen. 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 perhaps loosely based on twelfth-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 decorative script found favour across Europe from the end of the fifteenth century and, in England and Wales, was still being employed in the later sixteenth century (Gray 1986, 148–150). Similar lettering style can be seen on the Pexall tomb (Riall 2007a) and the front of the Draper chapel (Riall 2008), as well as on Fox's chantry chapel in Winchester cathedral and on the Waller monument at Stoke Charity (Riall, *in preparation*).

Heraldic plaque

As previously noted, the Norton tomb has a prominent heraldic plaque that now stands separately above the tomb but was originally attached to it (Fig. 6). A particular point of note is the treatment of the base of the heraldic plaque that is fixed above the tomb. The plaque base is decorated with a series of lightly carved acanthus leaves, each being separated by a very linear and geometric three-pronged motif. This particular and unusual design also features in another Italianate-styled tomb, the tomb at Thruxton (Fig. 9), which was built for

the Lisle family in the mid-1520s and where work of a closely similar design appears in the frieze (Riall 2007b).

A lost frieze

The early nineteenth-century watercolour, showing the chancel before its Victorian rearrangement (Fig. 3), shows that a section of the tomb was lost or deliberately removed when it was moved. Although very indistinct in the watercolour sketch, it seems almost certain by reference to other tombs and structures in this group of work that the missing element was a frieze. This frieze would additionally have been the integrating link between the tomb, with its arched canopy, and the armorial achievement that is now suspended above the tomb (Fig. 6). Five other settings from this group of work included friezes. These fall into two main series: an earlier set, which includes friezes on the south presbytery screen in Winchester cathedral and that above the Pexall tomb at Sherborne St John (and with echoes in the Paulet tomb at Basing). These all appear to date to well before 1525. A second set comprises friezes set above the north presbytery screen in the cathedral, that above the Lisle tomb at Thruxton and the frieze in the Draper chapel screen in Christchurch priory of 1529 (Riall 2008). The second series can be shown to be later in date than the first. Whilst the Norton tomb is likely to date to later in the 1520s or early in the 1530s, and although very indistinct in the watercolour sketch, it seems probable that the Norton tomb frieze is similar to those of the first series (Fig. 10 a & b). One frieze that does not fit either series is that which adorned the exterior of the Lisle chapel at Thruxton. This is now to be seen encircling the top of the church tower (Fig. 11). The overall and characteristic feature of this frieze is its intricate, ornate and fussy detail. The Thruxton chapel frieze has no parallel but there is a sense in the watercolour that the Norton frieze might perhaps have been similar.

Shields

A feature of many of these tombs, chapels and screens is the treatment of the shields that bear heraldic devices. All of them are different.

The mason seems to have gone to considerable trouble to ensure that whilst there was an overall visual symmetry to his work, but close scrutiny reveals that there were design differences. This also extended to his treatment of linear carved work, such as in the friezes, on some of these works. The Norton tomb shares this characteristic playfulness of apparent symmetry that on closer inspection proves to be elusive. There is no apparent logic to this stylistic trait, and perhaps the most that can be said is that it was a reaction to the conservative repetition of earlier Gothic work.

Effigy

This tomb has no effigies today and indeed it is likely that it never did. The arched recess is 1.30 metres wide over a tomb-chest that is 1.60 metres wide, and is thus rather less than life sized. The tombs at Thruxton and Sherborne St John, both of which comprised tomb-chests with effigies set on top, have tomb-table tops 1.70m and 1.80m long respectively, and are thus approximately life-sized. The narrowness of the recess and the presence of the Resurrection plaque at East Tisted indicate that there was no intention to provide effigies here. Indeed, given the probability that this was intended to be an Easter sepulchre, it would follow that provision of effigies may have been seen as inappropriate.

Pevsner and the dating of Richard and Elizabeth Norton's tomb

Richard Norton is known to have died in 1536/7, but the date of his wife's death remains unknown. A note in the family archives of the Scott family of Rotherfield Park indicates she died in 1530, but there is no reference to a source for this information but the note dates from the early nineteenth century; the information may have come from the tomb. These dates have a bearing on when the tomb may have been designed and built. An inscription, written in Latin and painted in black letter script runs across the cornice at the top of the monument and continues around the cornice of the tomb chest provides, the same message as the heraldry. This originally also gave the



Fig. 10 a & b Frieze work from the south presbytery screen in Winchester cathedral and the Pexall monument at Sherborne St John.

dates of the deaths of Richard and Elizabeth Norton. However, the text has been damaged and the dates can no longer be deciphered. The inscription runs from the cornice of the canopy and then leads around the cornice of the tomb, and reads as follows (Fig. 1), 'Richardus Norton armiger et Elizabeth uxor ejus filia et heres Willi Retherfield ac consanguinea et una heredu Willi dawty de f... ele quidem Ricus obiit ... die ... Anno dni M CCCCC ... et dicta Elizabeth obiit ... die ... Anno dni M CCCCC ... Qru aiaz Ppiciet' de' Amen'.

Nikolaus Pevsner's surveys of the buildings of England remain a mainstay of any study of historical architecture, but he could occasionally be inaccurate. He dated the tomb of Richard and Elizabeth Norton to around 1540, probably on the misunderstanding that Richard Norton had died in 1556 (Pevsner & Lloyd 1967, 203). This mistake almost certainly derived from an error in the Victoria County History of Hampshire where, under the entry for the church at East Tisted, the incorrect date of Norton's death is given (VCHH III, 1908, 34). This was a typographical error. Earlier in this description of the village, the date of Norton's death is given as 1536, or 1537 by modern reckoning. Pevsner made no connection between this tomb and other pieces of early Renaissance work across Hampshire in his discussion of early Renaissance tombs in Hampshire, perhaps inhibited from doing so by his dating of it (Pevsner & Lloyd 1967, 33–5).

It is very likely that the Norton tomb was created sometime around 1530, and possibly even in the 1520s. But, in order to establish this more clearly, it is necessary to set the Norton tomb in a wider context of similar works across Hampshire that were created between 1517 and 1530.

THOMAS BERTIE AND ITALIANATE TOMBS IN HAMPSHIRE

In the later 1510s and throughout the 1520s, the fashion of choice for many of the aristocracy and leading members of society, especially in southern England, was a hankering for the Italianate *all'antica* style. In Hampshire the

man to whom they turned to create this style in permanent form for their tomb decoration was the bishop's mason at Winchester cathedral: Thomas Bertie. The activity and work of this mason has been described previously, thus a brief account may suffice here (Riall 2005; Riall 2007d; Riall 2009). It is clear from the somewhat meagre documentary record that Thomas Bertie was active in Winchester in the 1510s, having arrived in the city possibly as early as c.1510. He is named in the Subsidy roll of 1515 as living on the High Street in Winchester. He occasionally appears in the documentary record during the 1520s, which show he continued to live on the High Street. In the 1530s and 1540s there are direct references to him in connection with building works in the cathedral and, later, around Hampshire (Kipling 1892; Harvey 1984; Keene 1985; Biddle 1993). A key document is the 1524 will of Lady Mary Lisle, in which it is stated that the Lisle tomb and chapel at Thruxton were designed and were to be erected by the bishop of Winchester's mason. Thomas Bertie's house on the High Street was owned by the bishop, and it is highly likely that he was the bishop's mason and contemporaneously also the mason for priory of St Swithun's – a role he certainly held in the 1530s as is shown by the compotus roll of 1532/3 (Kipling 1892). The material evidence is more illuminating of his working life. During the later 1510s and 1520s, a workshop that worked to a distinctive style, that created tombs and their monumental surrounds alongside the cathedral presbytery screens, all of which are pervaded by the same Italianate *all'antica* style, was active in Winchester and seemingly closely connected with the priory of St Swithun's – later to become Winchester cathedral. Lacking any specific documentation that actually names a mason in connection with any piece of Italianate-work from this period, it seems reasonable to suggest that the leading mason in this workshop was Thomas Bertie.

CONCLUSION

The Norton tomb is a significant element of this group of work and probably dates to the later 1520s or the early 1530s. The possible



Fig. 11 Thruxton: the frieze on the east face of the church tower, formerly on the Lisle chapel.

death of Elizabeth Norton in 1530 may have prompted Richard Norton to have the tomb built soon afterwards, but there is no reason to suppose it may not have been somewhat earlier in date. As noted above, the tomb was certainly in existence by 1536. Seen alone, and out of the context of the other Italianate settings created across Hampshire, it would be possible to categorise the Norton as a relatively unimportant piece of work. However, when this tomb is set amongst other pieces of Italianate work that emerged from the same workshop, then the Norton tomb assumes a greater importance, offering as it does further evidence that brings this group of work together as a coherent ensemble of works expressing the first usage of the Renaissance *all'antica* style in southern England. The style of the Norton tomb panels is also seen in closely similar tomb panels at Thruxton and Sherborne St John. These are closely interlinked via their friezes to the presbytery screens in Winchester cathedral and the Draper chapel at Christchurch. Prior Broke's door in the north presbytery screen carries carving detail seen also in the Norton tomb and again at Thruxton. Less obvious but as important is the tomb and chapel at Basing. The Norton tomb is the smallest of these commissions, and stands by itself – there was seemingly no attempt to rebuild the chancel or add a chapel similar to those at Basing, Sherborne St John or Thruxton. Nevertheless, the Norton tomb is as important for the

additional detail it sheds on the extent and development of this workshop's products, as it is in demonstrating Thomas Bertie's skill in creating a specific type of setting on a small scale.

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