

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN HAMPSHIRE CHURCHES: A CHRONOLOGY OF ST CHRISTOPHER WALL PAINTING (c.1240 TO c.1530)

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ABSTRACT

One of the most commonly-depicted saints in medieval churches was St Christopher, whose image was frequently depicted in wall-painting and positioned opposite or near to the primary entrance to the building. This characteristically gigantic figure was instantly recognisable to individuals who wished to view his image to gain the benefits offered – principally protection against sudden or ill death, misadventure, harm and fatigue, and the treatment of illness. This article suggests a revised chronology for St Christopher wall painting in England and Wales, and demonstrates how the Hampshire mural corpus belonged to broader national and international stylistic and typological trends in medieval art. In the absence of evidence to date with accuracy the vast majority of wall painting, a range of supplementary textual and visual sources must assist in chronologically assigning the St Christopher murals to approximately twenty-five to thirty-year periods.

INTRODUCTION

St Christopher imagery emerged in England from the mid thirteenth century, and for half a century was confined to illuminated manuscripts and wall painting schemes in royal and monastic buildings such as Winchester Castle and Romsey Abbey (PRO 1937, 177; Tristram & Bardswell 1950 1, 595). By the late thirteenth century, St Christopher murals were beginning to appear in provincial and rural parish churches – for instance Winchester St John – and by the fifteenth century were almost ubiquitous (Fig. 1). Yet just fifteen St Christopher murals are recorded in Hampshire (and one on the Isle of Wight), nine of which are in existence today, a figure which demonstrates

the full extent of wall painting loss across the county.

Previous attempts at dating St Christopher murals are not watertight, and it is fairly common for different authors to assign rather different dates to one painting, dates which may vary from ten to one hundred years or more. For instance, Collier argued that the St Christopher wall painting at Shorwell (Isle of Wight) was fourteenth century in origin, Cox claimed that c.1470 was more realistic, and Marshall suggested a date of c.1440 (Collier 1905, 143; Cox 1911, 151; Marshall 2000) (Fig. 2). Yet it will be demonstrated below that the style and features suggest the mural could possibly date from even later in the period than Cox proposed. It is also rare for authors to explain why they assign a particular date to an image, a factor which leaves the modern scholar with no choice but to doubt and question their methods and approaches, and to present a new chronology for St Christopher paintings. Because the full extent of St Christopher typologies are not represented by the Hampshire corpus, examples from outside country will be briefly discussed in order to provide context. Such an approach also establishes the variety of wall paintings which were, in all likelihood, once present in Hampshire churches. This investigation is work in progress, not least because the corpus will expand as more wall paintings are uncovered or as further antiquarian illustrations and accounts of lost murals are brought to light.

The function of St Christopher wall paintings

St Christopher's popularity in medieval society can be attributed to the indispensi-



Fig 1 St Christopher Wall Painting, Winchester St John (photograph Tim Bowly)

ble and extensive benefits gained by viewing his image. As a 'helper' saint invoked to deal with earthly ills, he functioned as a kind of talisman (Duffy 2005, 177; Pridgeon & Rosewell 2012, 165). Audiences perceived that viewing his figure would ensure protection against sudden, ill or unprepared death, an inevitable occurrence without the receipt of housel (final communion) or shrift through confession (Duffy 2005, 120). This function is confirmed by the wall painting scroll inscription at Woodeaton (Oxfordshire): 'Ki cest image verra le jur de male mort ne murra' (He who sees this image shall not die an ill death this day) (Tristram 1955, 115; Pridgeon 2008, 94–5). Sermon-related literature – such as the *Legends of the Saints* (c.1400) – also suggests that viewing St Christopher's image defended against misadventure and harm: 'Pat pai[m] ne may / ony mysawentoure fal þat day / þat pai one his ymage cane se' (Metcalfe 1890, xxii, 340; Pridgeon 2008, 95–6). Likewise, inscriptions imply that the saint functioned as a protector against or curer of fatigue, feebleness and exhaustion – for instance at Westminster Abbey where the fragmentary lettering reads: 'Sancti Christophori speciem quicumque tuetur / Illa nempe die languore tenetur' (Whoever sees St Christopher this day will not be laden with tiredness) (Binski 1995, 217; Pridgeon 2008, 96–7). This role extended to treatment of diseases, as illustrated by Caxton's 1483 *Golden Legend* edition (a collection of saints' lives) which describes the saint 'put[ting] away sekenes and sores fro them that remember hys passyon and figure' (Whaite 1929, 7; Pridgeon 2008, 98).

Like other saints, St Christopher also possessed a number of supplementary functions. The *Legends of the Saints* describes him as a friend and helper, a figure who is nearby when assistance and support is required: 'Bot prays hym hartly fore to be / Gud frend til al in necessite' (Metcalfe 1890, 360; Pridgeon 2008). He was also a figure to be imitated and emulated, as suggested by the case of John Warde, the Cambridgeshire painter who created 'a devout interpretation of St. Christopher's life...very lyvely in a table', and placed it in his pew so he could 'learne to be a right Christopher' (Turner 1555, folio

20v–21r; Pridgeon 2008, 99). Intercession for forgiveness and salvation was also a generic function of medieval sainthood, and St Christopher's position as a mediator is affirmed in the closing lines of Caxton's *Golden Legend*: 'Thenne late us praye to Seynt Christofre that he praye for us etc' (Whaite 1929, 7; Pridgeon 2008, 100). An examination of testamentary sources also reveals an occasional *post obit* role for the saint, also indicated by his infrequent appearance on monuments – for instance the diminutive brass at Weeke commemorating William and Anne Complyn (Pridgeon 2009, 14–15, fig. 4).

Location of St Christopher wall paintings

The corpus of extant and lost St Christopher murals in England and Wales currently totals 378, and of these approximately 73% of these were positioned in the nave area. This was a common site for morality images such as the Doom, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Works of Mercy, as well as for 'helper' saints like St Margaret of Antioch, frequently invoked by pregnant women to ensure safe delivery of the child (Duffy 2005, 177; Pridgeon 2008, 305–38). Likewise, 74% of the St Christopher wall paintings in the corpus were positioned on the north side of the church, either in the nave or aisle. Typically, the south door functioned as the principal entrance for the general laity, and the characteristically large St Christopher figure – detectable from the entrance, directly after passing through the doorway, and when departing the building – was instantly identifiable by those who wished to invoke him (Anderson 1995, 71; Postles 2007, 750; Collier 1905, 139; Tristram 1955, 116). Although St Christopher murals were almost certainly glanced at in passing, the occasional presence of kneeling donor figures within paintings – for instance at Cockthorpe (Norfolk) – also suggest that viewers might linger, kneel and contemplate before the image (Marks 2004, 171; Lenten 2006, 363, 366; Pevsner & Wilson 1990, 437). Testamentary evidence also indicates that lights were placed before St Christopher, as at Middleton Cheney (Northamptonshire) where J. Barrett left 'To the lyzt off Sanct

Table 1 St Christopher Wall Painting in Hampshire

<i>Church</i>	<i>Painting Date</i>	<i>Painting Location</i>	<i>Grid Reference</i>
Ashmansworth St James	Late fifteenth century (or later)	North nave wall	SU4107156637
Bramley St James	?Sixteenth century	North nave wall	SU6449758999
East Meon (lost) All Saints	Undated	Unspecified	SU6806422289
East Wellow St Margaret	Early fourteenth century	North nave wall	SU3028620406
Freefolk St Nicholas	Early fifteenth century	North nave wall	SU4874048616
Hartley Wintney St Mary	Late fifteenth century (or later)	North nave wall	SU7677755878
Shorwell, Isle of Wight St Peter	Late fifteenth century (or later)	North aisle wall	SZ 4573282996
Sopley (lost)- St Michael and All Angels	Undated	Unspecified	SZ1564696715
Tichborne (lost) St Andrew	Undated	North nave wall	SU5687230259
Romsey Abbey (lost)	Thirteenth century	Niche, back of high altar, western face of wall	SU3510221263
Tufton St Mary	Middle / third quarter of fourteenth century	North nave wall	SU4575046823
Winchester Cathedral (lost)	Thirteenth century	North transept, east wall	SU4823229270
Winchester St. John	Late thirteenth century	North aisle wall	SU4870229454
Winchester (lost) St John	Early / second quarter of fifteenth century	South aisle wall	SU4870229454
Winchester (lost) St. Lawrence	Late fifteenth century (or later)	South aisle wall	SU4810729470
Winchester Castle (lost)	c.1248	Queen's chapel, west gable	SU4776729477

Christofore a stryke of malt' (Isham Longden & Sergeantson 1913, 364).

In Hampshire (Table 1), the chance survival of St Christopher wall painting (and evidence for lost wall painting) in urban or monastic buildings – namely Winchester

Cathedral, Winchester St John, Winchester St Lawrence, Romsey Abbey and Winchester Castle – probably accounts for the lower percentage of nave and north-side locations (44% and 56% respectively). The south entrance / north nave wall arrangement was common in



Fig 2 St Christopher Wall Painting, Shorwell (Isle of Wight) (photograph Anne Marshall)

smaller, one or two cell rural churches such as Freefolk, Tufton and Ashmansworth. Although in urban churches (and some more affluent or larger rural buildings) the addition of arcades, clerestories and large perpendicular windows, particularly from the fourteenth century could lead to a reduction in wall space, the addition of aisles (and chantry chapels) might also provide supplementary areas for mural execution (Gill 2002, 190–93). In many cases – including Shorwell and Winchester St John (earlier mural) – the aisle positioning of the St Christopher figure still allowed visibility from the building entrance. South aisle locations are frequently explained by the altered alignment of the church where the building was entered through the north rather than the south door (Pridgeon 2008, 134–36). Possibly this was the case at Winchester St John when the second painting, positioned in the south aisle, was executed in the fifteenth century.

Patronage and painters

Although in the vast majority of cases there is no evidence to suggest who commissioned and funded St Christopher wall paintings, it is clear that they were initially financed by the social elite – namely royalty, monastic patrons and wealthy landowners such as Henry III at Winchester Castle (PRO 1937, 177). Yet by the fifteenth century, churchwardens' accounts intermittently record less affluent lay individuals – including weaver John Wyll at the Berry Tower in Bodmin (Cornwall) – also making significant contributions to support the saint's visual cult, sometimes through collective funding (CRO, B/BOD 314, membrane 14r; Pridgeon 2008, 178–9). Comparable textual evidence has still to emerge for Hampshire churches, but analogous patronage patterns are likely, not least because of the powerful appeal of St Christopher and his image to all echelons of society.

The identity of the vast majority of mural painters is unknown, particularly those working in provincial and rural churches. Probably they were lay professionals who learned their trade as apprentices in workshops in major religious and commercial centres, continuing to work in the locality where they trained (Rosewell 2008,

111). The toponymic names of elite artists are occasionally recorded in urban centres – such as 'John Exeter', Rich[ard] Lincoln and John de Cambridge working at St Stephen's Chapel in the Palace of Westminster (Rosewell 2008, 111). Doubtless paintings located in more prosperous Winchester buildings – the castle and cathedral for instance – were of higher artistic quality than their rural counterparts, and consequently the painters employed from further afield. Although neither textual nor visual evidence survive to substantiate this theory, the 1285 Winchester tax records do confirm that unusually a female painter 'Agnete le peynturesse' resided in the city (Biddle 1976, 516; Rosewell 2008, 111).

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Wall painting does not generally provide evidence for its own execution because dates and signatures are extremely rare, yet it is still possible to produce a loose, revised chronology of St Christopher murals using three main dating techniques: first, an assessment of the images themselves, including visual evidence such as heraldry, donor figures and architectural setting; second, a stylistic comparison with other forms of medieval images such as stained-glass, illuminations and woodcuts; and third, an examination of relevant primary texts relating to the building, for instance Liberate Rolls entries, conservation reports, antiquarian accounts and reproductions of lost images. Although a handful of further primary documents relating to relevant churches (for example wills and churchwardens' accounts) exist at The National Archives and Hampshire Record Office, such sources – which rarely allude to wall painting – are beyond the scope of this study.

Evidence for image creation is sparse and has many shortcomings (as discussed below), and consequently it is not generally possible to assign a wall painting to a specific decade. A broader dating band has therefore been used, and murals placed within the confines of approximately twenty-five to thirty years (hence the third or quarterly division of a century). A similar method has been employed

by Marks, who maintains that dating medieval images is an inexact science, and that early, middle, late and end roughly correspond with quarter centuries (Marks 1993, 3). However, it should be considered that these dating bands are approximate, and that development of styles and typologies within all media forms were uneven during the medieval period.

Wall painting

The principal obstacle to working with wall paintings from the period under examination is that a very small proportion of those that originally adorned the church are actually still in existence today. A handful of churches (Pickering [Yorkshire] for example) have almost a complete set of nave paintings (Anon 1895, 355; Pevsner 1967, 282) (Fig. 3). Yet these edifices have lost their glass, sculpture and other imagery, making it impossible to ascertain precisely how the various media would have related to and interacted with one another in an integrated manner (Gill 2002, 49). Wall painting survival has been hampered by sixteenth and seventeenth-century religious changes – the destruction and over-painting with whitewash and texts by reformers – and by the constant remodelling of churches that continues to this day (Aston 1988, 258–9; Phillips 1973, 129). Accordingly, paintings which do survive are often fragmented and confused, and it is tricky to date murals in such condition, or to compare them with other forms of visual media in the hope of making a stylistic or iconographic link. At Freefolk for instance, a recent conservation report records that part of the St Christopher painting was covered by numerous limewash layers, post-Reformation royal arms (still partially visible), further limewash, and distemper (Ballantyne 1995, 5; Bullen *et al.* 2010, 289) (Fig. 4). At Tufton, the top section of the St Christopher painting was obliterated by the lowering of the roof in eighteenth century (Bullen *et al.* 2010, 523) (Fig. 5). Similarly, many murals consist simply of figure outlines, the modelling, colouring or detail having been partially or fully lost (Winchester St John for instance) (Fig. 1). Other paintings materialize and vanish, like

the lost St Christopher at Sopley, described in unpublished correspondence (1936) by Long (the conservator at Winchester St Cross) as ‘in need of preservative treatment’ when he viewed it some years before (HRO 53M80/PZ6/31; Salmon 1936, 107). The reply from the unidentified Sopley church spokesperson reads:

/Only a very few indistinct stains were visible and the plaster and stucco was all falling away in large patches. The church was cleaned about six years ago and the stucco walls carefully repaired and coated...I know you [Long] and Professor Tristram have been undertaking some very wonderful work in connection with mural paintings but I think if you had seen it in recent years you would have admitted there was nothing left to save it was simply a patch or two of dark [?]sandy material which came away with a slight touch (HRO 53M80/PZ6/31).

Many murals that do survive have been subjected to inaccurate restoration. If a painting appears to be complete, it is frequently because it has been restored (often erroneously) by a modern hand. Even in more recent years, some conservators have used garish colours, thick dark outlines and have misinterpreted original features. The fabricated reconstruction of the St Christopher wall painting at Ditchet (Somerset) occurred in 1931. The Christ Child was removed from his customary fifteenth-century place on the saint’s shoulders, relegated to a new position at the saint’s waist, and replaced by an angel clasping an orb (Anon Undated). Other conservators have used detrimental techniques such as the application of ‘silica seal’ to the Winchester St John paintings in 1964 (mostly removed in 1967), giving them the impression of being shrouded in a grey veil (Peter Martindale Conservation 2004, 3–5). Pigment changes also occur over time, and at Bramley the original green of St Christopher’s robes is now a greyish-black colour (Tristram Archive) (Fig. 6). Yet working there are advantages to working with wall paintings. The number of surviving murals is far greater than stained-glass windows or sculpture, largely because the former were usually ‘destroyed’ with whitewash, a reversible process. They continue



Fig 3 St Christopher Wall Painting, Pickering (Yorkshire) (photograph Anne Marshall)



Fig 4 St Christopher Wall Painting, Freefolk (photograph Ellie Pridgeon)



Fig 5 St Christopher Wall Painting, Tufton (photograph Ellie Pridgeon)



Fig 6 St Christopher Wall Painting, Bramley (photograph Anne Marshall)

to be discovered behind peeling paintwork, and many have recently been uncovered – for instance the as-yet unidentified mural at Timsbury discovered in 2003. Wall paintings are also advantageous in the sense that they cannot easily be repositioned (unlike glass or sculpture), and are therefore typically located in their original position within the church building. An exception to this is the thirteenth-century murals depicting scenes from the Passion of Christ, which were removed from the east end of the Holy Sepulchre Chapel in Winchester Cathedral using the *strappo* method. The later wall painting was transferred to an artificial wall constructed at the west end of the chapel so that the high-quality twelfth-century mural of the Deposition and Entombment (with the Three Maries at the Sepulchre and the Harrowing of Hell) could be revealed (Park 1983, 38).

Lost wall paintings: visual reproductions

Hand-drawn or painted reproductions are used as a source when the original wall painting is lost – for instance Baigent's 1853 reproduction of the second Winchester St John St Christopher, uncovered in the south aisle 1853 and subsequently destroyed (Baigent 1855, 53, 80–1; Baigent 1917, xxx) (Fig. 7). (It is unlikely that the two St Christopher murals in this building were co-existent, and it is probable that the thirteenth century example visible today in the north aisle had been whitewashed or over-painted when the second figure was executed). Such reproductions tend to date from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century – before the ubiquitous use of photography in the study of church wall painting – and are exceedingly valuable sources for both lost and extant paintings. Yet although they present a duplicate of a painting that would otherwise have vanished forever, there are limitations to using these visual resources. If a wall painting is no longer in existence, then there is no guarantee that a reproduction is an accurate rendition of the original image. Many – including those executed by Tristram and Clive Rouse – are of high quality, and contain meticulous detail and convincing characteristics analogous to those found in other paintings of the period (Clive Rouse 1996; Tristram 1955). Yet others are little more than outline sketches or blocks of colour, and some lack explicit features, modelling or shading, like the lost St Christopher at Middleton (Suffolk) illustrated anonymously in 1909 (Ganz, 1909, 222). In this particular case, the limitation of the artist's style makes it almost impossible to assess the specific characteristics of the painting.

Lost wall paintings: textual sources

Compiling a chronological sequence of St Christopher images is a complex and demanding undertaking and it is very often impossible to assign an accurate date to a wall painting for which no visual or descriptive evidence survives. Lost Hampshire St Christopher paintings are recorded by authors at Tichborne, Romsey Abbey and Winchester

Cathedral (Whaite 1929, 43–4; Keyser 1883, 252, 279; Keyser 1906; Tristram & Bardswell 1950 1, 163, 595). Yet because no visual or documentary evidence relating to these images has been uncovered (to date), they simply cannot be placed within the chronological scheme with any accuracy. Furthermore, evidence is frequently inaccurate, as demonstrated by the 1846 description of the lost St Christopher at East Meon:

The Rev. B. Belcher, of West Tisted, Hants, communicated a sketch of the representation of St Christopher, which was discovered on the walls of East Meon church, but which has been concealed by white-wash. The drawing [not yet come to light] was made by Mr Richard Eames, of Petersfield, who stated that, according to tradition, the figure of a serpent or dragon had formerly been apparent at the feet of St Christopher (Anon 1846, 201).

The entry is misleading as it was simply not the convention to depict a serpent or dragon at the feet of St Christopher. The reference probably alludes to the occasional inclusion of sea creatures in the river from the fifteenth century (see Bramley below).

Artistic trends and style

The supposition employed in this study is that there may have been an interval of up to twenty or thirty years between the appearance of a style in 'cutting-edge' and exclusive media (such as stained-glass, illumination and panel painting), and its emergence in murals of inferior quality or 'simpler' type (Tristram 1955, 78). This hypothesis is suggested by the case of the Little Wenham paintings (Suffolk) (c.1310–c.1320), which have stylistic links with the St Faith, Doubting Thomas and St Christopher murals at Westminster Abbey, executed at some point in the preceding thirty years (c.1290–c.1310) (Binski 1995, 170–1, Plates 218, 225; Park *et al.* 1987, 128, Plate 128). It is almost impossible to establish that this gap existed in the case of St Christopher wall paintings because most simply cannot be dated in such a precise manner. However (as will be further demonstrated below), an examination of the mural at Ashby St. Ledgers (Northamptonshire) which contains heraldic

evidence, suggests that such a time-lag may have been common (Fig. 8). The wall painting can be dated relatively firmly on the basis that it must post-date the marriage of John Catesby to Margaret Montfort (after 1414), an occasion which is represented by quartering of the two families in the shield to the east of the image (Payling 2006, 2–3). These 'hooks' are essential for dating wall paintings with similar features for which no evidence exists, such as Freefolk which shares certain stylistic and iconographical links with the Ashby St Ledgers painting. It should also be considered that artistic trends probably took rather longer to filter down into poorer quality and less exclusive murals, which were probably executed by more local craftsmen or painters (Rosewell 2008, 111).

This method of chronologically ordering wall painting is by no means watertight, and relies heavily on the assumption that a particular illumination is not stylistically laggardly, or that a wall painting is not stylistically advanced. It is also dependent on the assumption that illumination or glass led rather than emulated artistic fashion (a trend which generally appears to have been the case, but which might occasionally be reversed – as in case of the de Lisle Psalter, which may have been based stylistically on the tomb of Edmund Crouchback [d.1296] and the Westminster Abbey wall paintings [c.1290–1310]) (Binski 1995, 170–4, Plate 225). However, as stylistic and typological comparison is the only method available for attempting to date murals for which no firm evidence exists, it is therefore an essential part of this study.

Woodcuts display visual connections with wall paintings, and it is likely that they are also stylistically laggardly in comparison with glass and illumination. Although woodcuts survive in large numbers from the beginning of the fifteenth century, they can be challenging to date. This is partly because mass production could lead to standardisation, which in turn impeded development of themes and iconography (Parshall *et al.* 2005, 3). Once a woodblock was created, the pattern could be used repeatedly for any number of years, meaning that it is often impossible to deduce whether the image is (stylistically



SAINT CHRISTOPHER.

A Painting discovered at St John's Church, Winchester. July 7th 1853.

Fig 7 St Christopher Wall Painting, St John's Church, Winchester. From: Baigent, F J 1855 On the Martyrdom of St Thomas of Canterbury and other Paintings Discovered at St John's Church, Winchester, AD 1853 *JBAA* 10, 53-87, Plate 10 (reproduced with permission from the BAA editor)

speaking) cutting-edge or outmoded. Dates are sometimes included, but the tendency to copy and reproduce earlier models also resulted in the duplication of the date as well as the picture, a process which probably explains the enigma of the Buxheim St Christopher woodcut (MS 266 [17249]; Parshall *et al.* 2003, 48). The date 1423 appears in the text block at the bottom of the image, but the style of the lines, the detailed execution of the facial features, the dynamism of the figure and nature of the cutting (hooked lines in flat drapery folds and hatching) suggest a date of c.1450 (Parshall *et al.* 2005, 153–6).

It is also helpful to examine broad artistic trends when attempting to establish a chronology of St Christopher wall paintings. Stylistic comparisons can be made with images depicting subject-matter other than St Christopher, and approximate dates suggested for wall painting based on similarities between characteristics such as facial details, drapery, modelling and the use of perspective. From the middle of the fourteenth century, visual depictions become increasingly naturalistic in style and form, and crystallise in a style known as 'International Gothic' (c.1350–c.1450) (Alexander & Binski 1987, 499; Lasko & Morgan 1977, 38, 40; Marks 1993, 166). There is a clear development and emulation of broader artistic trends evident in St Christopher imagery. For instance, the fluid and relaxed style of the miniature St Christopher in a bookplate belonging to John of Wells (c.1375) is also visible in the mural at Wickhampton (Norfolk) (MS Bodl. 851, fol. 6v; Alexander & Pächt 1973, 59; Lasko and Morgan 1974, 26, Plate 31) (Figs 9 & 10). Observing precisely when these features begin to appear can help to establish an approximate chronology of images. It is also possible to employ a developmental model based on the appearance of specific features within the mural representations of St Christopher. The manner in which the saint holds the Christ Child is significant for example, and there are clear trends which appear in all media throughout the period under discussion. Between the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the Christ Child is usually positioned at the saint's waist in the crook of his arm, a form clearly

visible at Lacock Abbey (Wiltshire) (Fig. 11). By the first quarter of the fourteenth century, the Christ Child is generally held in a slightly more elevated position – for instance East Wellow – and from the second half of the fourteenth century he is typically placed on the saint's shoulders, a trend visible in the John of Wells miniature and slightly later at Freefolk (Fig. 12).

None of the above dating methods are individually watertight. Accordingly, they must be deployed in combination to provide a convincing typology and chronology for the corpus of St Christopher wall paintings.

Transmission of style and form

There is little doubt that there were exchanges in style and iconography in the medieval period, not only between objects of the same medium, but also between different forms of artwork. Although the exact nature of the transfer has never been thoroughly or satisfactorily examined, a number of individual academic studies have touched on the concept of transmission. Lowden has discussed the similarities between seven illuminated French Bibles *moralisée* dating from the 1220s to the early fifteenth century, claiming that text and image parallels between the first three or four manuscripts can be explained by the fact that they were created by the same craftsmen (Lowden 2000, 3–9, 273–4). Transmission between different media has been considered by Rackham and Baty in their analysis of the evolution of a Jesse stained-glass window at Llanrhaiadr (Denbighshire), where they trace the typology to an earlier seated Jesse woodcut print of c.1470 (Rackham & Baty 1942, 62–6, 121–4; New 2009). Wayment also examined the Passion scenes in the windows at Balliol College in Oxford (originally painted for Cardinal College by James Nicholson and transferred after Wolsey's demise), and concluded that they were based on a series of Dürer's prints (Wayment 1991; Harrison 1954; Wayment 1995).

Although very little has been written specifically on the relationship between wall painting and other media, it is clear that stylistic and iconographic transmission did



Fig 8 St Christopher Wall Painting, Ashby St Ledgers (Northamptonshire) (photograph by Anne Marshall)

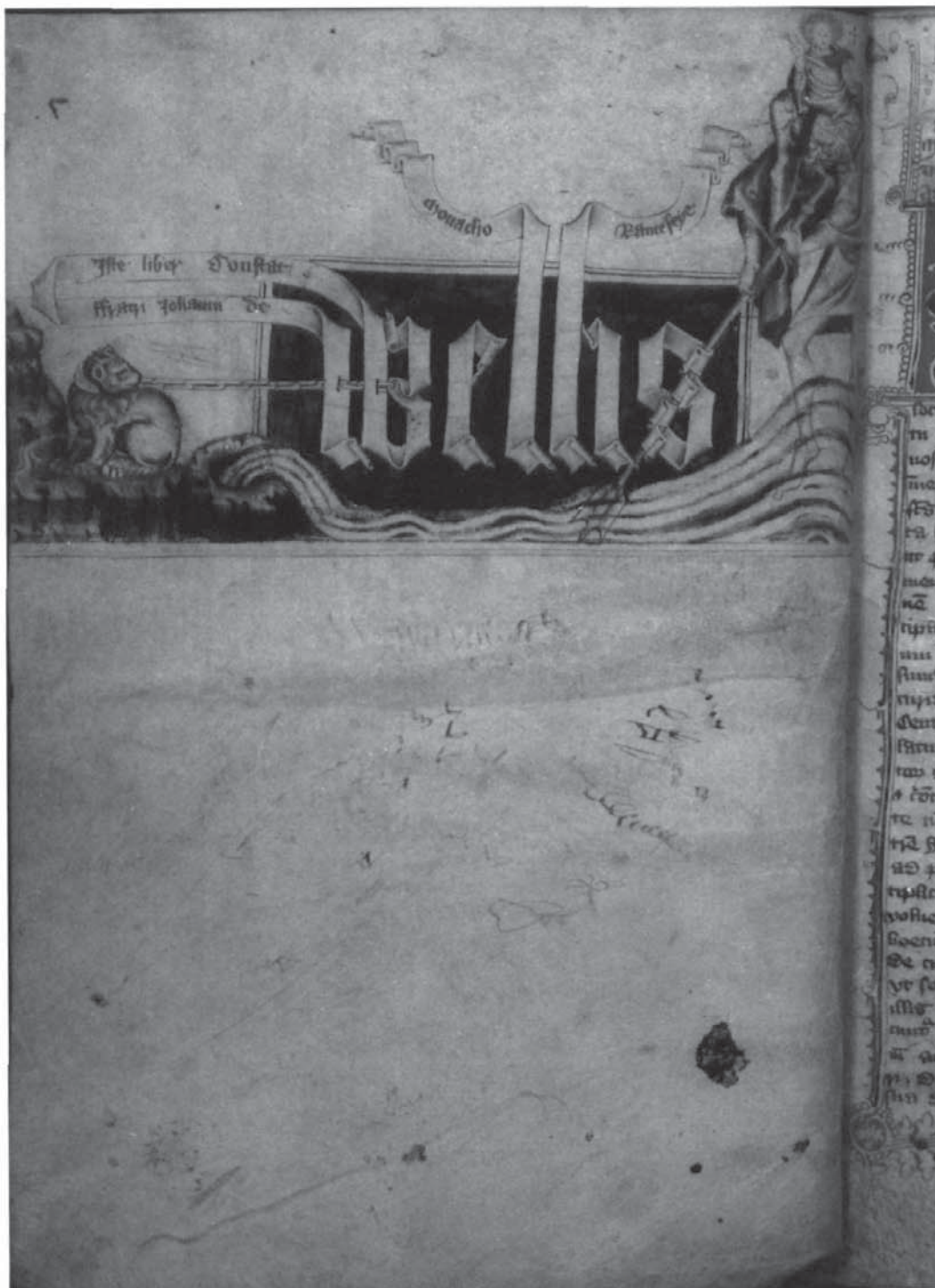


Fig 9 John of Wells Bookplate, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. MS Bodl. 851, folio 6v



Fig 10 St Christopher Wall Painting, Wickhampton (Norfolk) (photograph by Anne Marshall)

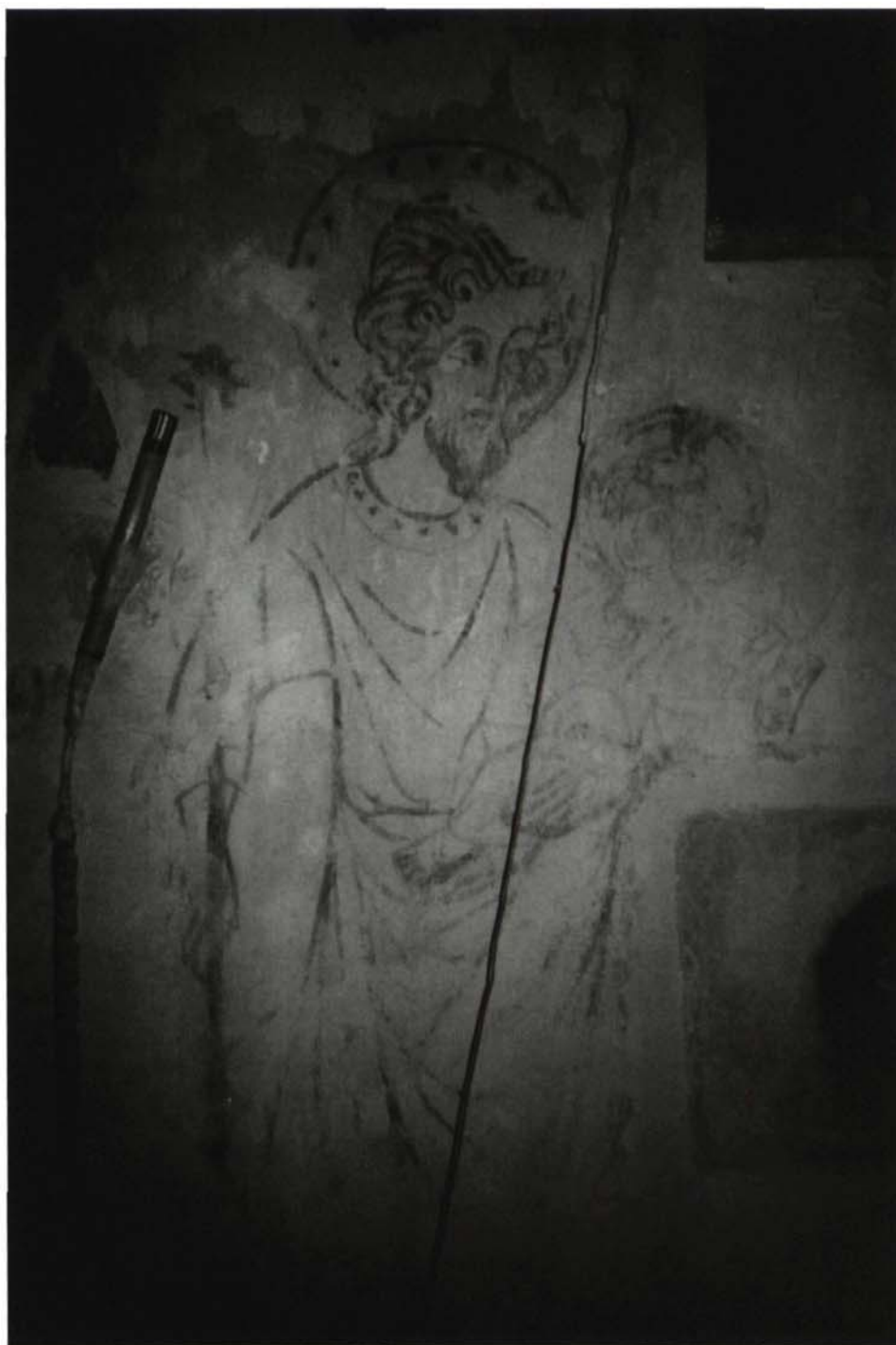


Fig 11 St Christopher Wall Painting, Lacock Abbey (Wiltshire) (photograph Ellie Pridgeon)

occur. Kitzinger concluded that the thirteenth-century cycle of scenes from the Genesis wall painting in San Marco in Venice was modelled very closely on the illustrations in the fifth or sixth-century Bible in the British Library (the Cotton Genesis) (Kitzinger 1975, figs 3 & 4; MS Cotton Otho B VI). In the case of more fashionable wall painting, the interchange of iconography may have been a two-way process, and wall paintings may have led – rather than emulated – artistic fashions. The Limbourg brothers are known to have based some of their miniature compositions either directly or indirectly on murals and frescoes (as well as on sketchbooks and panel paintings) (Schacherl 1997, 75, 81, 97). For example, the picturesque costumes and extravagant head dresses of the figures in the Trés Riches Heures Purification of the Virgin scene are slightly altered copies of Taddeo Gaddi's fresco in Santa Croce in Florence (MS 65, folio 54; Schacherl 1997, 97, 96, Illustration). Transmission also took place between wall paintings, as evidenced by the stylistic parallels discussed below.

There is very little evidence to suggest precisely how the diffusion of images and iconography occurred. Models, copy drawings and cursory sketches were probably used by assistants in panel painting and illumination workshops, and these may have been put out into general circulation when they were finished. Craftsmen might have copied directly from other images – possibly after viewing the depiction itself within the workshop, or when complete and in situ – and verbal instructions may also have provided guidance (Jones 2000, 198; Lowden 2000, 3–9, 273–4). In addition, there were probably intermediary generic pattern books and stock designs in circulation for wall painters to use, though no example specifically for the purpose has ever come to light (Kitzinger 1975, 108–109, 115–120; Jones 2000, 202; Lowden 2000, 1, 9). It should be considered that transmission from one medium did not necessarily result in a reproduction that was an exact copy of the original. Artists and craftsmen adapted images to fit their own purposes, desires and styles, and designs sometimes had to be modified to suit an image of a vastly different scale or size. In the case of St Christopher depictions, it is

noticeable that background features such as ships and the hermit became more common from the early to mid-fifteenth century in wall painting, but not in alabaster and sculpture. This was largely for the very practical reason that it is rather more difficult to render landscapes into a piece of work which ostensibly has no background. It was rare for artists to work in more than one medium as each area required rather different skills, but it did occur occasionally. In fifteenth-century Norwich for example, the glazing workshop owned by Thomas Goldbeater included painters, and one of his apprentices became a freeman painter (Rosewell 2008, 112).

CHRONOLOGY OF ST CHRISTOPHER WALL PAINTING IN HAMPSHIRE

The thirteenth century

It is likely that Henry III was responsible for introducing the cult of St Christopher into England in the thirteenth century. The first reference to an English St Christopher wall painting is found in the 1240 Liberate Rolls. The entry for December 10th records the plan to embellish the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London in the following manner: 'An image of St Christopher holding and carrying Jesus is to be made and painted where it may best and most suitably be placed in the same church' (PRO 1930, 15). Regrettably, the entry does not specify the form or style of the image. A second Liberate Rolls entry for 1248 is slightly more enlightening, and refers to a painting in Winchester Castle: 'Order to paint on the westward gable in the Queen's chapel at Winchester, out of the issues of the county, an image of St Christopher, carrying Christ in his arms, as he is painted elsewhere' (PRO 1937, 177). This is clearly a mural to be painted directly onto the west gable (although we cannot be entirely certain this command for future action was implemented). There is no surviving visual evidence for the image, but the entry describes how St Christopher is to be depicted 'carrying Christ in his arms'. This is a valuable piece of information because it suggests that the saint



Fig 12 St Christopher Wall Painting, East Wellow (photograph Anne Marshall)

was to support the Christ Child in the crook of his arm, in a similar manner to the figure at Lacock Abbey.

One of the earliest surviving St Christopher wall paintings is the image in the nunnery precinct at Lacock Abbey. It is positioned in a chamber at the west end of the south cloister walk, an area which was probably occupied by three or four chaplains attached to the Abbey (The National Trust 1994, 23–4; Brakspear 1901, 153; Ditchfield 1922, 41–2). Two paintings, one depicting St Christopher and the other St Andrew, are located on the north wall of the room. The precision and accuracy of the lines and rendering of the features indicate that both murals are of the highest artistic quality, and the patron of the paintings – if not the Abbey itself then perhaps the chaplains – was likely to have been affluent (Bardswell & Tristram 1950, 557–8). They may have been attuned to the latest artistic trends, and able to meet the expense of a painting executed in a progressive and undoubtedly expensive style. As a result, the Lacock mural is most likely to be approximately contemporary with (rather than post-date) manuscript images of the saint, and it certainly has strong stylistic and iconographical links with illuminations from the late thirteenth century, in particular the image in the English Picture Book of the Life of Christ (c.1290–c.1300) (MS 370, folio 9r; Binski, P & Panayotova 2005, 183–4, Plate 75) (Fig. 13). Both figures have narrow, sloping shoulders, and thin, elongated heads which are tilted slightly forward towards the Christ Child. The strong eyebrows run in an unbroken line to form the long, narrow nose, and the small mouth and large oval eyes with full pupils are strikingly similar. The stylised, curled hair frames the faces, and flows over the shoulders, and both Christ Childs sit in the crook of the saints' arms, supported beneath by a splayed hand. In both instances, the Christ Child is endowed with a cruciform-patterned halo, and the saint holds a long, slender staff with a ridged pommel. Also dating from this period is the first Winchester St John St Christopher mural, which features the curled golden hair, the stylised oval eyes, the pommelled staff and the Christ Child's cruciform halo, but which

lacks the graceful stance and delineation of the Lacock figure (Bullen *et al.* 2012, 633). The most striking feature of this St Christopher, possibly the earliest surviving example from a parish church, is that rather than characteristically towering over the adjacent bishop, he is depicted on similar scale – possibly a result of the physically restrictive window splay positioning.

The early fourteenth century

Stylistic and typological comparisons can be made between the East Wellow and Winchester St John murals, including the manner in which the Christ Child is raised and supported above the saint's chest by his extended, protective arm. However, the robust frame, the square (rather than sloping) shoulders, and the 's-shaped' curve and slight sway of the figure – features found in their finest form in the Westminster Retable (c.1270) and a prominent style in all art forms well into the fourteenth century – suggests that the East Wellow St Christopher post-dates the Winchester St John example (Binski 2005, fig. 1; Binski 1987, 152).

The second quarter of the fourteenth century

Although (as yet) there are no surviving or recorded St Christopher wall paintings from this period in Hampshire, there is little doubt that they previously existed. Examples from outside the county include Hardwick (Norfolk), which can be compared stylistically and typologically with the de Lisle Hours, commissioned by Robert de Lisle (d.1343) as a gift for one of his daughters, and written and illuminated in England (possibly York) between c.1320 and c.1330 (MS G50, folio 5b; Morgan Library and Museum 2006) (Fig. 14). Both saints display elongated heads, tilting upwards towards the Christ Child, and also the exaggerated 's-shaped' curve, bending elegantly at the waist like the earlier East Wellow figure (Morgan Library and Museum 2006). The Hours St Christopher leans so far back that his right shoulder is positioned almost directly above the protruding foot, and although this feature is not so pronounced in the Hardwick



Fig 13 St Christopher Illumination, Picture Book of the Life of Christ, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. MS 370, folio 9r

painting, it is clearly evident. The saint's right foot is placed slightly to his right, meaning the line of the leg (covered by the long tunic) runs at an angle from the calf to the hip (seen in embryonic form in the East Wellow mural). Both wear a type of outer cloak, which in the case of the Hardwick image is fastened at the neck with a round clasp and open at the front to expose an ochre-coloured undergarment at the chest. The cloak is looped up around the waist and draped over the saint's left arm. This creates a slanting hemline, and the excess material hangs down in a series of drapery folds to the left of the saint. Both figures hold a long, smooth, pole-like staff, which extends above the height of the saint's head, and the saint's right arm is in both cases positioned behind the staff and twisted round and upwards in order to grasp the top of the shaft (in striking contrast to the earlier, shorter staffs at Winchester St John and East Wellow). The Christ Child in both the Hardwick mural and de Lisle Hours is positioned rather higher than in previous images, and sits in the raised crook of the saint's left arm, supported by his hand.

The middle and the third quarter of the fourteenth century

The large St Christopher wall paintings at Tufton and Woodeaton display certain traits found in the slightly earlier Hardwick painting, including the slight swaying 's-shaped' figure of the saint and the positioning of the Christ Child low on the shoulder supported by the saint's prominent left hand. However, these paintings are more akin stylistically and iconographically to the later glass panel in the church at Halam (Nottinghamshire) (Pevsner & Williamson 1997, 137; Pridgeon 2008, Plate 43). Although no precise date has been attached to the panel – most commentators simply assign it to the fourteenth century – it was possibly executed in the second quarter of the fourteenth century (Pevsner & Williamson 1997, 137). This premise is based on the use of yellow stain – first used in the chancel of Stanford-on-Avon (Northamptonshire) (c.1315-c.1326), the three-dimensional buttressing, and the greater use of white glass

(also found in the nave scheme at Stanford [c.1325-c.1340]) (Marks 1993, 154). The most prominent feature of the Halam glass, also visible in the Tufton and Woodeaton wall paintings, is the bulky nature of the St Christopher figure. He has become rather more ungainly and cumbersome in build, the broad shoulders, heavy torso and stout legs making a striking contrast to the slender, graceful, delicate wall painting images hitherto encountered. The Woodeaton and Halam figures also wear knee-length breeches fastened with bows.

The late fourteenth century

Although there are currently no recorded wall paintings from this period in Hampshire, a number of stylistic and typological comparisons can be drawn between the St Christopher image at Wickhampton and the 'International Gothic' John of Wells miniature, (MS Bodl. 851, folio 6v; Alexander and Pächt 1973, 59, Plate 650; Lasko & Morgan 1977, 38; Marks 1993, 166). The tinted illumination is the only miniature in the book, and the leaf is prefixed to a volume of texts of miscellaneous dates, forming a kind of bookplate (c.1350-c.1375) that connects the folio with the monk John of Wells. An elaborate scroll to the left-hand side of the image reads: 'Iste liber constat fratri Johanni de Wellis, monacho Rameseyensi' (This book belongs to Brother John of Wells, monk of Ramsey) (Lasko & Morgan 1974, 26, Plate 31; MS Bodl. 851, folio 6v; Alexander & Pächt 1973, 59). The most striking similarity is the location of the Christ Child on the saint's shoulders (in contrast to the low-shoulder positioning in earlier images such as Tufton). In the miniature, the Christ Child sits directly behind the head of the saint, and at Wickhampton he is positioned on the saint's right shoulder. Likewise, the saint's head is twisted at an angle of ninety degrees so he can gaze up at the Christ Child seated upon his shoulders. This posture causes the saint to bend at the waist, and for his torso to lean alarmingly to the right, and the figure therefore appears far more awkward than the more graceful figures evident in manuscripts and wall paintings from earlier in the century. St Christopher's



Fig 14 St Christopher Wall Painting, Hardwick (Norfolk) (photograph Anne Marshall)

'bent knee' stance is to become one of the key features in manuscript, alabaster, stained glass and mural representations of the saint from the late fourteenth century onwards (see Freefolk below) (Pridgeon, 2009, 20–24).

The early fifteenth century

The St Christopher wall paintings at Freefolk and Ashby St Ledgers can be dated with some accuracy to the early fifteenth century on the basis of heraldic evidence and comparison with miniatures. As discussed above, the shield adjacent to the mural at Ashby St Ledgers denotes the marriage of John Catesby II to Margaret Montfort (after 1414), and it is therefore most likely that the image post-dates this event (Payling 2006, 2–3). It is clear that both the Freefolk and Ashby St Ledgers murals demonstrate stylistic ties with the John of Wells miniature, including the positioning of the Christ Child behind the saint's head, the swivelling of the saint's head to view the Christ Child, and the bent right knee. Yet they are more directly linked to a slightly later St Christopher illustration in the Pepysian Sketchbook (MS Pepysian 1916; James 1924–1925, Plate 15b). This manuscript is an illustrator's model book that contains images of saints, exotic animals, birds and grotesques (Scott 1996, 39). The exact function is not clear, but it may have been used – or intended for use – by an atelier as a guide for manuscript reproductions, embroidery, and perhaps even wall painting (James 1924–5, 1, 16; Alexander *et al.* 1988, 19). Scott has also suggested that it might have been the property of an individual artist who used it to train himself and experiment with drapery, colour, shading and human figure (Scott 1996, 41). The St Christopher miniature belongs to an addition of c.1400, and although it is almost certainly English in origin, the figures and birds may have been influenced by the Lombard Sketchbook of Giovannino de Grassi (1398) (MS VII 14; Scott 1996, 41; James 1924–5, 1, 18). The Pepysian Sketchbook is a significant manuscript because it is one of a handful of surviving English medieval books of its kind (although an example devoted specifically to the decoration of books, was rediscovered

relatively recently at the British Library) (Backhouse 1975).

The resemblance of the Pepysian Sketchbook image to the Freefolk and Ashby St Ledgers wall paintings is remarkable. In comparison with the heavy, clumsy figures evident at the end of the fourteenth century (Wickhampton for instance), these St Christopher figures are slim and moderately slight in build. They are clothed in thigh-length, close-fitting swathes of drapery – enhanced in the manuscript image by the heavy use of modelling and shading – and they raise and bend their right legs slightly at the knee. With the exception of the Freefolk figure, the head of the saint is tilted back so far that the jaw and chin are almost horizontally parallel. In both the Pepysian Sketchbook and the Freefolk mural, St Christopher wears a turban-like hat, perhaps an attempt to represent the saint as a 'pagan', whose origin is specified in the *South English Legendary* (an account of the lives of the saints, c.1276–c.1279): 'Sein Cristofre was Zarasin in þe lond of Canaan' (D'Evelyn & Mill 1956, 340; Wells 1936; Wells 1942; Boyd 1968, 494; Heffernan 1979, 346). Similarities between the positioning of the Christ Child are most striking in the Ashby St Ledgers and Pepysian images, where the child is placed directly behind the saint's head. It is also significant that the Ashby St Ledgers mural is one of the first recorded instances of boats in a St Christopher mural. This feature is to become ubiquitous by the middle of the fifteenth century, and is evident towards the end of the period at both Bramley and Shorwell.

The second (lost) Winchester St John St Christopher, illustrated by Baigent in 1853, has stylistic links with the Ashby St Ledgers and Freefolk figures, including the short attire and the tilted head. Likewise, the fact that the saint holds a short, smooth staff – common in the fourteenth century at East Wellow for instance – may also position it chronologically in the earlier fifteenth century. However, the inclusion of the hermit (see below) and the sense of flourish and movement in the legs and feet indicate it could post-date the Ashby St Ledgers and Freefolk St Christophers. It should also be considered that the illustration may not be an entirely accurate rendition

of the original mural, thus rendering stylistic analysis redundant.

The second quarter of the fifteenth century

Although there are no surviving or documented St Christopher murals in Hampshire from this period, a number of illuminations can help to chronologically place the wall painting images at Impington (Cambridgeshire) and Llanynys (Denbighshire) in the second quarter of the fifteenth century (Rosewell 2008, 25, fig. 31) (Fig. 15). The staffs are both tall, and take the form of huge, knotted branches or trees. The sprouting leaves at Llanynys recall the episode in the *Golden Legend* (composed and collected by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine, c.1260) whereby the saint converts to Christianity (Granger Ryan 1993, xii). After crossing the river the Christ Child instructs St Christopher to plant his staff in the earth and consider its flowering as confirmation that he is Christ the King: 'And if you want proof that what I am saying is true, when you get back to your little house, plant your staff in the earth, and tomorrow you will find it in leaf and bearing fruit' (Granger Ryan 1993, 12). The backgrounds are more comprehensive than in earlier depictions of the saint, and incorporate additional features such as the windmill on the left river bank at Llanynys (Hubbard 1986, 247; Salmon 1941). The hermit features in all three depictions, standing on the right-hand bank outside a small house, holding a lantern and guiding the saint across the river. This motif derives from the *Golden Legend* and the *South English Legendary* (Granger Ryan 1993, 12; D'Evelyn & Mill 1956, 343). The figure appears in illumination from the late fourteenth century (for instance a French Book of Hours dating from c.1370), and becomes ubiquitous from the mid-fifteenth century (MS AL 1643–1902 [Reid MS 1]; Pridgeon 2008, Plate 40).

The third quarter of the fifteenth century

Despite the absence of surviving or recorded St Christopher paintings in Hampshire which date from this period, the image at Pickering can be loosely assigned to this period on the

basis of architectural and heraldic evidence (Ellis 1996, 5). While Pevsner rather vaguely dates the clearstory to the late medieval period, others have been more specific and argued that the structure was added around 1450, which provides a *terminus post quem* for the paintings (Anon 1895, 355; Pevsner 1967, 282). An approximate date is also dictated by the fact that one of the four knights in the Martyrdom of Thomas Becket image wears the armour of Edward IV, suggesting the entire scheme may date from between 1461 and 1483 (Anon 1895, 355; Ellis 1996, 10, Illustration). Stylistic comparisons can be made with the Buxheim St Christopher woodcut discussed above (c.1450) (MS 366 [17249]). The torso of the saint (particularly at Pickering) is far broader, heavier, sturdier, and more cumbersome in comparison with the light, slender figures from the earlier part of the century. The legs are increasingly muscular and shapely, and in the case of the wall paintings, the feet are very large and appear almost oversized. These characteristics all provide the St Christopher figure with a sense of dynamism and movement, and the saint strides through the water with flourish and intent, clutching his knotted, sprouting staff. It is also significant that the facial features of the saints are harsher and more formidable in comparison with the softer, pleasanter features of earlier images. This characteristic is mentioned in the *Golden Legend*, where St Christopher is described as 'twelve feet tall – and fearsome of visage' (Granger Ryan 1993, 10–14, 11).

The late fifteenth century and beyond

Attempting to place St Christopher wall paintings within a chronological framework in the latter part of the medieval period is a notoriously complex task. In many respects, English and Welsh wall painting is no longer so directly and visibly connected to illumination, glass and panel painting in the same manner as in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. This is partly because St Christopher representations in all media become more numerous and diverse towards the end of the medieval period. The saint takes on a wider variety of postures, and it



Fig 15 St Christopher Wall Painting, Impington (Cambridgeshire) (photograph C. B. Newham)

becomes progressively more challenging to date an image by simply examining the stance or attire. Yet types also stay relatively static and do not change as rapidly as in previous years. There is also a greater gulf between English and Continental art by c.1485 (particularly with regard to Flemish panel and miniature painters, and by the end of the century, French illuminators), meaning that it is less feasible to make direct comparisons between English wall painting and Continental images (Lasko & Morgan 1977, 57). New styles, which include the subtle use of light, texture, three-dimensionality and perspective, as well as spatial concepts and naturalistic rendering of subject-matter, do not always filter down to the less stylistically-advanced murals in England, which remain largely simplistic renderings with comparatively flat backdrops. Yet even given these issues and the additional problems associated with image comparison, it is still possible to assign certain wall paintings chronologically to the end of the medieval era by examining architectural evidence and other artistic media.

One of the most common St Christopher types from the end of the period is visible in the wall paintings at Molesworth (Cambridgeshire) (Marshall 2000, Image). Molesworth nave was rebuilt at the end of the fifteenth century, and it is probable that this reconstruction would have eradicated all wall paintings hitherto present, and provided a clean space for new images (Pevsner 1968, 294; RCHME 1926, 183; VCHH 1936, 96). The chronological positioning of the Molesworth St Christopher wall paintings towards the end of the period is reinforced by stylistic and iconographical comparisons with depictions of the saint in other media. The St Christopher image in the Hours of the Holy Spirit, a manuscript made in Flanders for an English patron and dated to the late fifteenth century displays similar traits (MS Lat. Liturg. g. 5, folio 334; Bodleian Library 2006, Image). In both depictions the saint is rendered with relatively broad shoulders, a solid torso, and thick legs (which in the case of the wall paintings are rather shapeless because of the unsophisticated execution that is so characteristic of less stylistically-advanced imagery).

At Molesworth, the large, crudely-drawn feet (angled to the left and right respectively) are positioned virtually flat on the river bed, giving the impression that the figure is almost motionless. There are also a greater number of detailed background features rendered in many wall paintings from this era than at previous chronological stages. The copious fish in the river at Horley (Oxfordshire) have been identified by modern angling experts as specific breeds, including sturgeon (Buller 1993; Buller 1991, 88, Image; Whaithe 1929, 31).

Stylistically and typologically connected to the Molesworth and Horley paintings is the lost St Christopher painting at Winchester St Lawrence, recorded by Baigent's unfinished tracing held at the Hampshire Record Office (HRO 120M94W/E354/1-2; Keyser 1906, 151). The watercolour reproduction displays St Christopher's broad shoulders and crudely-executed legs, as well as the fisherman and accurately rendered fish in the background. The Hartley Wintney St Christopher, difficult to date because of its fragmented condition (Rosewell 2008, 254; Bullen *et al.* 2010, 314), can also be assigned to this chronological period. It is possible to discern the saint's large, crudely-drafted left hand grasping the top of his thick, tree-like staff, as well as sections of the right-hand and lower borders (Bullen *et al.* 2010, 314). The Ashmansworth St Christopher mural is even trickier to place in the chronological sequence because its fragmented condition interpretation is limited (Money & Keyser 1898-1903, 225). Yet stylistically it displays the movement and dynamism rendered in the bulky, thick-limbed figure at Shorwell.

Comparisons with illuminated manuscripts and other murals indicate that the St Christopher wall paintings at Bramley and Shorwell also date from the end of the period. As outlined above, the Shorwell St Christopher is notoriously difficult to date, and the most recent conservation report suggests a date of c.1470, a conclusion based on comparisons with artistic depictions of costume and ships from c.1450 (Peter Martindale Conservation 2011, 1). Although it is unrealistic to assign such an accurate date to a painting which

lacks supplementary visual or documentary evidence, comparisons with illumination indicate that in all probability the image dates from the late fifteenth century. The form of the saint, who gives the impression he is running (rather than wading) through the water, is found in illuminations as early as the 1450s. The inclusion of additional scenes from the life of St Christopher (as described in the *Golden Legend*) functions as an extension of the St Christopher narrative, and indicates a similar chronological position (Cox 1911, 151; Fairholt 1847, 85–90). Relatively unusual in visual renditions of the saint, these multiple scenes emerge in manuscript depictions from the mid-fifteenth century, and are visible in both the Hours of William de Montfort by Willem Vrelant (c.1450) and the Hours of Engelbert of Nassau – mid-1470s) (Cod. s.n. 12878; MS Douce 219, folio 038; Alexander 1970, 34, Image; Kren & McKendrick 2003, 126–37). At Shorwell both pre and post-conversion scenes are visible, and on the left bank the diminutive saint is depicted riding on horseback alongside the devil, and standing by a wayside cross, clasping the flowering staff and waving off the devil (Granger Ryan 1993, 10–14, 11; Peter Martindale Conservation 2011, 1–3). The diminutive scenes on the right bank show his martyrdom, where arrows are miraculously deflected upwards towards King Dagnus, the executioner and soldiers (Peter Martindale Conservation 2011, 4).

It is likely that wall paintings were executed up to the Reformation, and there are a number of St Christopher murals in England and Wales which can be dated with some accuracy to the sixteenth century. Examples include Layer Marney (Essex), where the early-sixteenth century rebuilding of the church (c.1505–c.1510) provides a *terminus post quem* for the St Christopher mural (Brindley 1924, 238; Pevsner & Radcliffe 1965, 262; Marshall 2001, Image). Similarly, the 1506 will of John Alward (who left land at Morningthorpe for the upkeep of Fritton church in return for the rector saying an annual Mass for his soul on St Catherine's day) may also supply a *terminus post quem* for the St Christopher painting at Fritton (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk) (MS 15 370 37 A2). Although the will does not

mention the wall painting bequest, the fragmented inscription – now illegible – at the foot of the painting once mentioned Alward and his wife Johanne, who are almost certainly represented by the two diminutive donor figures (Whaite 1929, 22, Plate 10; Rosewell 2008, 106). Stylistic and typological similarities between the Fritton, Layer Marney and Bramley St Christopher figures, which include the short tunics gathered and tied at the waist and at Layer Marney and Bramley the voluminous cloaks billowing out to the saint's left, could also suggest a sixteenth-century date for the Hampshire painting (although this is no more than a supposition). Here, the relatively deep-set vistas and sense of perspective are lacking, meaning the image appears flat, one-dimensional, and rather chaotic due to the inclusion of two mermaids, numerous fish and various boats in the river.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from exploring both visual and textual sources relating to Hampshire wall paintings that St Christopher imagery emerged from the mid-thirteenth century in buildings associated with elite and monastic patrons – most notably at Winchester Castle and Romsey Abbey. St Christopher murals appeared in parish churches from the late-thirteenth century (Winchester St John for instance), and a century later were practically universal, the general laity (as well as the elite) contributing financially to their execution and upkeep. St Christopher's popularity can be explained by his appeal to all echelons of society as a 'helper' saint who protected against sudden death, misadventure and fatigue, and who cured disease. Because the execution of these functions necessitated viewing his image, the murals were (on the whole) characteristically large and prominently positioned to cater for this demand. Although they were probably glanced at in passing, viewers many also have lingered, knelt and contemplated, and in many cases testamentary evidence reveals that lights were burned before his image. Typical St Christopher location patterns evident nationally – namely the north nave wall – are

not so apparent in Hampshire. However, this probably results from the coincidental survival of murals (and evidence for lost murals) in urban and monastic buildings (rather than rural churches), where the additions of aisles provide additional space for painting.

This study supersedes earlier attempts by authors to assign dates to St Christopher murals in Hampshire and presents a new chronology, establishing that images were integrated into broader national and international styles and trends in medieval art. There were clearly exchanges in style and iconography between objects of the same medium and different forms of artwork, possibly via generic pattern books and stock designs in circulation. Hence an examination of imagery outside the county is necessary to provide context, not least because the full extent of St Christopher typologies is not represented by the current Hampshire corpus. While a paucity of evidence means that dating methodologies are never fully watertight, conclusions about chronology can be ascertained by the examination of a variety of textual and visual sources – including primary texts relating to buildings, wall painting conservation reports, antiquarian accounts and reproductions of lost images – and by stylistic and topological comparisons with illumination, glass and woodcuts. These sources compellingly suggest that each mural can be chronologically placed within the confines of twenty-five to thirty-year periods.

Medieval wall painting research is inevitably work in progress, and it is likely that more precise and extensive conclusions will be

drawn in the future as murals emerge from under the whitewash and additional visual and textual sources surface. It is anticipated that a systematic analysis of Hampshire testamentary evidence and churchwardens' accounts (beyond the scope of this study) will uncover if not further evidence for wall painting style, typology and chronology, then an enhanced insight into medieval devotion in Hampshire churches.

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