



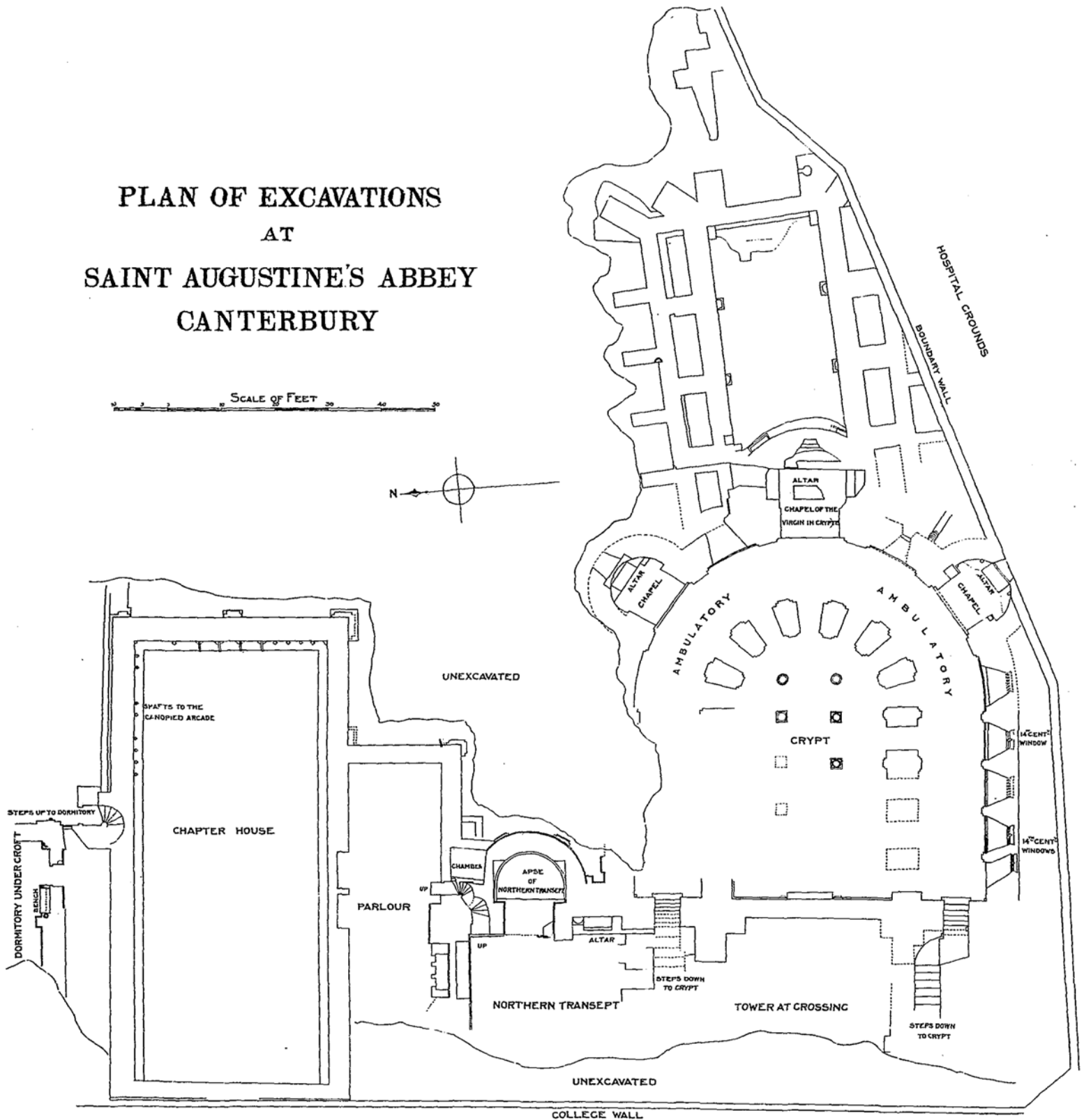
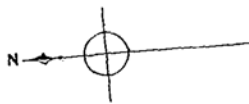
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PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS
 AT
 SAINT AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY
 CANTERBURY

SCALE OF FEET



MEASURED & DRAWN BY
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Archæologia Cantiana.

EXCAVATIONS AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY.

BY SEBASTIAN EVANS, JUN.

II.—THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, AND SOME OF THE ADJACENT MONASTIC BUILDINGS.*

THE excavations were resumed in May 1902, but unfortunately, owing to lack of funds, it was not possible to carry them on with a sufficient number of labourers, and progress has been consequently very slow.

However, I am now able to put before you a plan of the Church east of the central tower, which embodies the crypt, the parlour between the northern transept and chapter-house, the greater part of the chapter-house itself, and a small part of the dormitory.

This crypt is very interesting, as Professor Willis mentions that there are only five eastern English crypts founded before 1085, namely, Canterbury, Winchester, Gloucester, Rochester, and Worcester, so to these must now be added the one under notice, as it was built by abbot Scotland, who was abbot from 1070 till the time of his death in 1087.

In many other respects the Church and arrangement of the monastic buildings very much resemble

* Continued from Vol. XXV., p. 243.

abbot Serlo's work at Gloucester, which was begun in the year 1089.

This crypt is in a very imperfect state, all the vaulting having gone, and most of the ashlar facing from the piers and walls. It measures about 71 feet in length by $66\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width, and terminates, as mentioned in Canon Routledge's Paper, at the east end in an apse, with the three apsidal chapels opening out of it.

The aisles are 11 feet 3 inches wide, and continue round the circuit of the apse, forming the procession way. The vaulting was carried by engaged pilasters 6 feet 3 inches high, of about 9 inches projection, and 1 foot 9 inches wide, without bases, but with a cap 5 inches deep chamfered on the lower edge, and large rubble piers faced with ashlar. These piers, of which there are fourteen, vary somewhat in size and shape, but are about 7 feet 8 inches long and 4 to 5 feet wide, and stand on a continuous footing about 8 feet wide. Most of the ashlar has gone, leaving only the cores. These cores are now standing at heights varying from 6 feet to 9 feet 6 inches; and being likely to suffer from the weather, the trustees have had the six easternmost piers cased in brick, keeping the original shape.

The central portion of the crypt, which is 28 feet wide, is divided into three alleys by two rows of five columns. The two eastern columns were larger than the rest, probably for the support of the high altar above, and the shafts remain to a height of about 3 feet 6 inches. The stone is an oolite, and each drum has a lewis-hole in it, and shews signs of having been cut down, which leads one to think that they came from some earlier building. Only the bases of the other columns are left. They are of different moulding, standing on a plinth 2 feet square, and of Caen-

stone. No portions of shafts came to light, but a plain cushion cap found in the fallen masonry no doubt belongs to one of the columns. All of them stood on a continuous footing 28 inches wide.

Of the vaulting, in a few places the springing of the arches remains, and among the fallen masonry some pieces have been found shewing it to have been built of large flat tiles and flat stones of Kentish rag. It appears to have been quite plain and plastered over, some of the plaster being still visible on a fallen mass.

Taking the height of the pilasters with the cap at 6 feet 8 inches—and it varies slightly—it would give a height for the crypt of about 12 feet 3 inches. A string-course ran round at a height of 4 feet 3 inches from the floor.

It was well lighted, having originally four windows in each aisle, all splayed inwards, and two in the apse at the east end. Only the southern of the two latter is Norman and of one light, all the others having been enlarged in the fourteenth century to two lights; and a fifth window in the south-west corner, which is only slightly splayed, seems to have been a later insertion of the same period.

The crypt was paved with large black and yellow tiles.

Between the two eastern piers we found two graves with a single course of brick between them, possibly those of late abbots, but a little further west, and on the spot which is about the middle of the crypt which he built, we came on the leaden coffin of abbot Scotland, and in it his coffin plate, reading (in Lombardic characters):—

ANNO AB INCARNATIONE DOMINI MLXXXVII
OBIIT SCOTLANDUS ABBAS V IDUS SEPTEMBRIS.

We also found the remains of his chalice and paten.

In front of the fifth pier from the south-west was a leaden box only 3 feet 5 inches long and 7½ inches wide, in which were bones, and the coffin-plate of Wulfric I., which reads :—

HIC SUNT RELIQUIAE VENERABILIS WULFRICI PRIMI
DICTI SENIORIS HUIUS MONASTERII ABBATIS XXXV.*

Another grave contained a small leaden box, so it seems most likely that these were some of the bones which were translated by abbot Wydo, the successor of abbot Scotland, when the Norman Church was finished.

The crypt was entered by a flight of steps both on the north and south side, but instead of going straight down like the steps on the north side, those on the south have a bend to the south and a small landing in them, as will be seen from the Plan.

The chapels leading out of the apse have already been described and figured by Canon Routledge, but it may be of interest to state that the northern chapel was dedicated to St. Richard, and the southern to St. Thomas the Apostle.

The wall at the west end of the crypt is about 5 feet thick and flanked by two large piers—the eastern piers of the tower—and at the top of the crypt steps on the southern side is part of a rubble wall remaining to a height of about 2 feet, possibly part of the southern wall of the choir. The steps leading up to the choir and those to the choir aisles have entirely disappeared. The old drawing in Thomas of Elmham's book shews two doors, one on the north and another on the south, which led to the "*Corpora Sanctorum*," but all trace of these has entirely gone.

We have not yet excavated the western piers of the tower, as they lie almost under the modern wall

* Abbot Wulfric I. died 1059.



NORTH SIDE OF THE CRYPT.



THE CRYPT FROM THE EAST, SHOWING NORTHERN STEPS.

of the College boundary, but the width between the two eastern piers is about 31 feet.

The eastern side of the northern transept has been excavated, and it is found to terminate in a small apsidal chapel, of which only about four feet of the walls remain above ground-level. It is Norman, and of the same date as the crypt. It is probable that this small apse suffered in the fire of 1168, and only part of the outside wall left standing, as fragments of worked stone, Purbeck marble moulding, pinnacles, etc., are certainly of later date. All trace of flooring has gone, and also of a stone screen in front of the chapel. The altar-block has gone, but part of a Purbeck marble slab found among the rubbish inside may have belonged to it.

In the space between the crypt steps and this chapel are the remains of an altar-block, with a kind of stone locker on the north side and a narrow recess on the south, the latter whitewashed and stencilled with a pink rose pattern.

North of this transept, and formed by the walls of it and the southern wall of the chapter-house, is a vestry or parlour about 17 feet 6 inches wide. This corresponds to the slype or passage which usually led into the cemetery of the monks, but in later times this was made into an oblong room by making a wall across the east end. This room had an upper storey, which, like that at Gloucester, was perhaps the library of the monastery, and part of the small vise leading up to it is still to be seen. Out of this staircase another narrow stair was made leading into the northern transept, perhaps used by the monks as they went from the dormitory to their night services, or simply as an entrance to the Church from the vestry.

On the southern side of this parlour and towards the west end of it is a curious deep recess built of

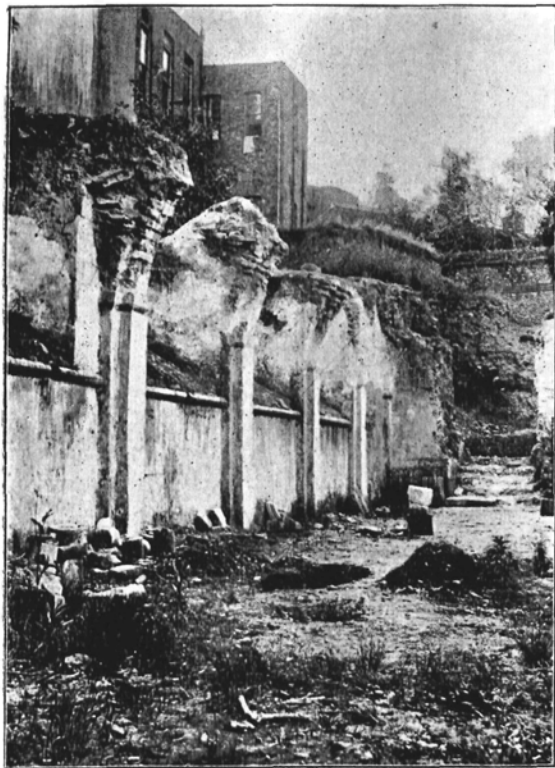
brick. The south wall of it, which is formed in the transept wall, was found to be painted when first excavated in November 1900, but no steps seem to have been taken to preserve it, and it perished in the winter. It is impossible to say what this recess can have been used for. Some fragments of the flooring of the parlour remain, shewing small square and triangular red and blue tiles worked into a star pattern.

Immediately to the north of this parlour is the chapter-house, which was built in Norman times by abbot Hugh Flory about 1120. About the year 1325 it seems to have fallen into bad repair, as Thorne tells us that money was bequeathed for its restoration, and the monks began to save money with the same object. It was not till the year 1386, however, that the new chapter-house was finished. The Norman one must have been entirely pulled down, as so far we have not come on any work of that period.

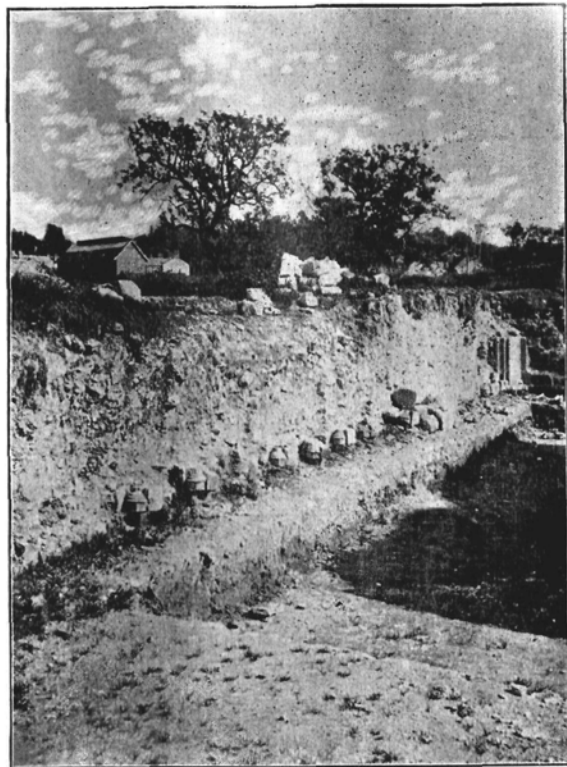
The present chapter-house is an oblong chamber about 86 feet long by 36 feet wide, and so far as can be judged from the portion excavated, was without a vestibule. The walls only remain to a height of about four or five feet, and though there seem to have been two large windows in the east end, only some fragments of these have been found.

The side-walls were lined by a canopied arcade carried on shafts resting on a bench 1 foot 8 inches wide, forming the stalls or seats for the monks. In the middle of the east end is a throne or seat for the abbot, wider and of finer workmanship than the other stalls, with a somewhat similar but rather lower seat on either side of it, and north and south of these again was arcading like that of the side-walls.

The canopies, etc., were richly ornamented, judging from the small carved heads and pinnacles found among the fallen rubbish in the interior; and the work



SOUTH SIDE OF THE CRYPT.



NORTH SIDE OF THE CHAPTER HOUSE.



NORMAN BENCH END DORMITORY UNDERCROFT.

is interesting, as we can fix the date of the building as between the years 1382—86. Of the roof it is quite impossible to say anything, but two finely worked bosses may have come from it.



According to Thorne's *Chronicle* eight abbots were buried here, but so far we have not come on any of their graves.

Immediately north of the chapter-house is another passage or parlour, out of which is an entrance to the dormitory undercroft or sub-vaults. This parlour might once have been a passage from the cloisters to the infirmary cloister, but it now has a wall at the east end, with a low narrow window. Just outside this window is a small vise leading to a storey above.

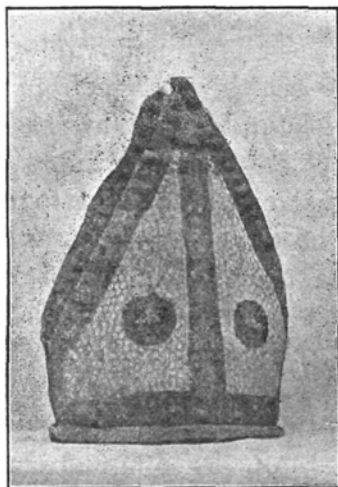
To the west of the undercroft entrance is a small stone seat with a bench end of Norman work, quite the prettiest and most characteristic that we have found. East of the entrance is a small engaged shaft and base in the corner of the wall, the base shewing a leaf pattern.

The dormitory appears to have been completed by abbot Hugh Flory about the year 1120, and its original length was 204 feet by 44 feet wide, one of the longest in the country. Thorne states that it had

a chapel constructed in it with studies adjoining, but hardly anything now remains above ground except the north end wall, which stands to a height of about 24 feet.

The site of the infirmary with its chapel and cloister is now nearly clear, but the excavations are almost at a standstill for lack of funds. I hope it will be possible to get leave from the College authorities to dig in their grounds, where a great portion of the northern wall of the nave of the Church is still standing, and also the cloisters. It is not unlikely that we shall then come on traces of St. Augustine's original Saxon Church, but the site of the southern porch, where Queen Bertha was originally buried, is now occupied by buildings belonging to the Hospital.

A complete plan of the old Norman Church should then also be obtainable, and a nearly complete one of the adjacent monastic buildings.



LEADEN MITRE OF JOHN DYGON.*

* See Canon Routledge's Paper in Vol. XXV., p. 242.