PART II.—PAPERS, ETC.

Medieval Building Documents, and what we learn from them.

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I GREATLY appreciate the honour which has been conferred upon me by a Society whose record of work in the past and whose practical energy in the present give it so high a place among the learned societies of this country; and it is with a full sense of my responsibility that I succeed to a chair occupied by so many distinguished predecessors. Although I come to-day from the North of England, and my own work, such as it is, has lain for the most part in the northern and midland counties, I have the privilege of being a native of Bristol, an origin of which I am duly proud, and of having spent all my early life upon the borders of Somerset. The county has played no small part in fostering my devotion to medieval history and antiquities, and, although I cannot expect to be often present in it during my year of office, I nevertheless hope to be of some use in furthering the objects of the Society and so making some practical acknowledgment of the debt which I owe to the sphere of its local activities.

The subject which I have chosen for my address is of a somewhat general nature, but it also has its local application in a county famous for the beauty of its ecclesiastical archi-

tecture. Every member of this Society must have asked himself the question, while examining the splendid churches of Somerset, 'Who were the builders of these churches?' and must have speculated upon the evidence for building operations and for the employment of material. Answers to this question are usually rather vague and are often wrong, and the evidence is often scanty and sometimes ambiguous. But a careful enquiry into such evidence as there is brings certain main facts to light, which form a foundation for the establishment of general principles.

The sources of evidence are, roughly speaking, of three kinds, viz. (1) Historical allusions in medieval chronicles; (2) Building accounts; (3) Miscellaneous documents of various kinds.

(1). The statements of medieval chroniclers are on the whole unsatisfactory. Such notices are extremely valuable, so far as they fix the dates of buildings; but, if taken too literally, they may easily be misconstrued. Medieval historians employed phraseology of a set kind which would be understood by their contemporaries, without contemplating the possibility that future generations might need something more explicit. I take an example from one of the most lively and picturesque chronicles, that of Geoffrey of Coldingham, the first of the three annalists of the church of Durham. He is speaking of the famous bishop, Hugh de Puiset (1153–95), and of the attempts to build the chapel at the east end of the church, which were eventually abandoned for the construction of the Galilee chapel west of the nave.

'To the zealous efforts of his predecessors, who had built the church and, for its glory and defence, had given it many gifts, he lent his approval, striving to rival the industry of those from whom he received such proofs of virtue. He accordingly began to build the new work on the eastern side of the church. Pillars and bases of marble were brought from beyond seas. And though several masters were employed, not without danger to themselves by the intervention of destiny, and though the work had as many beginnings as there were masters, and large sums were spent upon workmen, yet, when the walls had risen to scarcely any height, the building at length so gaped and cracked, that this was taken as a clear sign that it was unacceptable to God and His servant

Cuthbert. So he abandoned that work and began another to the west, wherein women might lawfully enter; so that, while they could not go in person to the innermost part of the shrine, they might have some comfort in beholding it.'[1]

If this passage is read carelessly, the bishop himself, who is given such prominence in the account of the work, might be taken as the architect. He was unquestionably the moving spirit, and we need not deny him splendid taste and architectural intelligence. But, if we scan the words more carefully, we distinguish between the bishop who set the work afoot and the people responsible for its execution. The architects are the 'masters' (*magistri*), men who have earned the right to exercise mastery in their craft; while under them are the 'workmen' (*operarii*). When it is said that the bishop 'began' (*inchoavit*) the work to the west of the church, it means that he caused it to be begun. It seems almost unnecessary to point out that medieval writers constantly used such words as *fecit*, *construxit*, 'he made,' 'he built,' in the sense of *fieri fecit*, *construi fecit*, 'he caused to be made' or 'to be built.' Thus the chronicler whom I have cited says, a little later, that Hugh de Puiset 'likewise made the bridge and borough of Elvet,' the eastern suburb of Durham.[2] If the meaning of this is clear to common sense, it nevertheless may be mistaken by fanciful readers as a tribute to the bishop's skill in architecture; and it may be well to quote another sentence in which the distinction between the bishop and his employees is clearly given.

1. *Hist. Dunelm. Scriptores Tres* (Surtees Soc.), p. 11: 'Antecessorum studia, qui ecclesiam construxerant, et multa ad decorem et munimentum illic contulerant, abprobans, diligentiam aemulari studuit, a quibus documenta probitatis accepit. Novum ergo ad orientalem ejusdem ecclesiae plagam opus construere coepit. A transmarinis partibus deferebantur columpnae et bases marmoreae. Cumque plures, nec sine ipsorum periculo, fatis intercedentibus, admitterentur magistri, et tot haberet principia quot magistri, sumptibus copiosis in operarios inpensis, et muris in aliquam vix altitudinem erectis, in rimas tandem deisceret, manifestum dabatur inditium id Deo et famulo suo Cuthberto non fuisse acceptum. Omissoque opere illo, aliud in occidentem inchoavit; in quo muliebris licite fieret introitus; ut quae non habebant ad secretiora sanctorum locorum corporalem accessum, aliquod haberent ex eorum contemplatione solatium.'

2. *Ibid.*, p. 12: 'Fecit pontem de Elvete, et Burgum similiter.'

'He caused . . to be placed . . in the church . . also the shrine of gold and silver, in which he ordered the bones of the venerable Bede, priest and doctor, to be put: a shrine fashioned with so great industry by the zealous pains of the artists, that they who handle it may well doubt which is the more excellent in it, the work or its ornament.'[3]

I apologise the less for insisting upon what to many may seem a mere truism, because the theory that bishops and abbots were the architects of their churches has still a certain amount of popularity; and this theory is founded in the first place upon literary evidence of an ambiguous kind. There is some tendency to accept it among recent American writers upon medieval architecture.[4] The Lombardic origin of Norman Romanesque, as demonstrated, for example, by Mr. Kingsley Porter, has been attributed to the influence of William of Volpiano and Lanfranc upon the buildings of Normandy. William of Volpiano, whose activity corresponds nearly to the first half of the eleventh century, was a Lombard, who was abbot of Saint-Bénigne at Dijon, and afterwards of Fécamp in Normandy. We know that he brought 'masters' from Lombardy to Dijon, and the last chronicler of Saint-Bénigne represents him as *magistros conducendo et opus dictando*, i.e. hiring masters in various crafts and giving them directions for their work.[5] This, however, means no more than that he told them what he wanted them to do, just as a man who is having a house built for him has the natural right to express his wishes to his architect. The phrase cannot be extended

3. *Ibid.*, p. 11: 'Fecit . . in ecclesia . . poni . . feretrum quoque ex auro et argento, in quo ossa Venerabilis Bedae presbyteri et Doctoris ferre decrevit, ex studio artificum tanta diligentia compositum, ut quid magis in eo praestet, opus an decor, attrectantibus merito veniat in dubium.'

4. See, *e.g.* Dr. R. A. Cram's book of lectures, *The Study of Gothic*, 1917, pp. 84, 85.

5. Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, CXLI, col. 856: 'In cujus basilicae miro opere domnus praesul expensas tribuendo, ac columnas marmoreas ac lapideas undecunque adducendo, et reverendus abbas magistros conducendo et ipsum opus dictando, insudantes dignum divino cultui templum construxerunt.' I have varied the position of a comma in Migne's edition, which is wrongly placed after and obscures the construction of *insudantes*. The bishop, it will be noticed, shared with William the task of setting the work on foot.

to mean that he took control of the work and its execution. It is quite possible that Lombard masters may have followed him to Normandy, where he took a very prominent part in reviving the religious life and founding new monasteries ; and the abbey of Bernay in the diocese of Lisieux, the church of which is the earliest example now remaining of Norman Romanesque on a large scale, was founded under his influence. It will be observed, however, that William's actual province was that of monastic reform ; and, although building was a necessary corollary to his work, we have absolutely no reason to suppose that he had a professional interest in architecture. To make this inference is to confound religious zeal and statesmanship with their concrete expression in art.

Of Lanfranc, again, we know that, as a young monk at Bec, he came to a monastery where the brethren were forced by poverty to turn their hands to minor works of building, and that, as his influence grew, he incited abbot Herluin to undertake new buildings.[6] But to found upon this the hypothesis that he was responsible for the design of his churches at Caen and Canterbury is to overlook the fact that at this period he was the Conqueror's right-hand man in affairs of state. In our own day we have plenty of experience of the versatility of statesmen ; but architectural skill is no part of their official equipment, and, if they spent their time in designing buildings in their jurisdiction, we should reasonably suspect that they were neglecting their more important duties. It would have been impossible for Lanfranc, amid the press of his administrative work, to produce such masterpieces of design as the nave of the Abbaye-aux-Hommes at Caen : we might as well expect the bishop of Liverpool, in these days of teeming population and concentrated diocesan work, to be the architect of his own cathedral church. Architecture, then as now, was an art which required special training and exclusive devotion on the part of its practitioners. William of Volpiano and

6. See *B. Lanfranci Vita*, *ibid.*, CL, col. 31, for the account of Lanfranc's arrival at Bec, 'quo nullum usquam tunc pauperius aestimabatur vel abjectius coenobium. Forte tunc abbas exstruendae fornaci occupatus, ipsemet operabatur manibus suis.' *Ibid.*, cols. 37, 38, will be found the story of Lanfranc's successful efforts for the rebuilding of Bec.

Lanfranc were intelligent patrons of art, but they were not artists.

Further, those who press such theories to their extreme point are in danger of overlooking architectural facts. There is a fascination in tracing William of Volpiano from Lombardy to Dijon and thence to Normandy, and it is undoubtedly tempting to co-ordinate the churches with which he was connected in one architectural scheme, originating in Italy. But it is much more difficult to establish the relation between Lombardy and Normandy without resorting to fancied resemblances; and the fact remains that what we know of William's church at Dijon bears very little analogy, in plan and elevation, to the Norman group.[7] The link, in fact, which is supposed to establish the connexion is no link at all. Moreover, while the architectural importance of William himself has been much exaggerated, there is also, on the part of his magnifiers, a serious misconception as regards the masters whom he employed and who cannot be wholly left out of account. They are represented as members of a guild of masons, known as Comacini from their origin in the neighbourhood of Como or from their supposed head-quarters in the lake-island of Comacina. Now, it is unquestionable that the term *comacinus* occurs in the early Lombard laws, with reference to masons, and that Como and Comacina are in the district to which those laws refer. But *comacinus* is not a word which can be derived from either place: an inhabitant of Como is *Comensis* or *Comanus*, while the Latin adjective from Comacina would be *Comacinensis* or possibly *Comacinanus*. It is much more reasonable to conclude, with the scholars of a less imaginative age, that *comacinus* means simply a mason working at one job with others, than that it is a term for a member of a mysterious guild which spread over Europe from the lake of Como.[8] It would, indeed, be quite

7. *See* the plan and section from Dom Plancher given in R. de Lasteyrie, *L'architecture religieuse en France a l'époque romane*, pp. 277, 278, and contrast them with the plan of Bernay, *ibid.*, p. 487.

8. For evidence of the existence of the 'Comacine' masters *see* Rivoira, *Lombardic Architecture* (tr. Rushforth), I, 108–111. In spite of his general acceptation of the guild theory, Rivoira admits that nothing is known of their

as probable to suppose that the well-known word *comonachus*, a monk living in a monastery with other monks, implied that Como was the original home of the monastic system ; and it is surprising that this argument has not been advanced by those who are ready to discover in the monk a potential mason, as bent upon the exercise of his art as upon his religious duties.

I do not deny that we come across names of monks and clerks who were artists, in stone and other materials, especially at an early date. Even as late as the fourteenth century, we read of John Wygmore, prior and afterwards abbot of Gloucester (1328–37), that 'he delighted much in divers arts, so that he himself very often worked with his hands, and surpassed divers workmen in various arts, both in mechanical and textile work.'[9] Edward III employed a canon of Newstead priory to design the stalls for St. Stephen's chapel at Westminster.[10] We cannot doubt that the Cistercians, a self-supporting order, developed their magnificent architecture, a remarkable factor in the progress of Gothic construction, largely from their own resources ; while from Gloucester in 1242 there comes an interesting example of Benedictine monks turning their hands to the completion of work begun by lay craftsmen. 'The new vault in the nave of the church was finished, not with the aid of workmen, as at the beginning, but by the spirited energy of the monks who were also in the same place.'[11] Such instances cannot be overlooked, but it must

organisation, and that the chief evidence for it consists in the monuments themselves. There is, in fact, no other evidence, so that the case for assuming such an organisation falls through. Ducange, s.v. *Comacinus*, while mentioning the supposed derivation from Comacina, says 'videtur appellari qui vulgo *Macio*, gallis *Maçon*, unde forte vocabuli origo.' There can be no doubt that this is the more reasonable origin, and that *macinus* is simply one of the rather numerous late Latin terms for a mason.

9. *Hist. et Cart. Glouces.* (Rolls Ser.), I, 46 : 'qui in diversis artibus multum delectabatur, ut ipse saepissime opereretur, et multos diversos operarios in diversis artibus praeexcelleret tam in opere mechanico quam in textura.'

10. *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1358–60*, p. 490 : see also *Cal. Close Rolls, 1354–60*, p. 143.

11. *Hist. et Cart. Glouces.* (Rolls Ser.), I, 29 : 'Completa est nova volta in navi ecclesiae, non auxilio fabrorum ut primo, sed animosa virtute monachorum item in ipso loco existentium.'

be emphasised at the same time that they are exceptions, and that the first place in design and building must be given to the lay *magistri* and *operarii* respectively.[12]

(2). If notices of building operations in chronicles leave something to be desired—and, even where they are most fully detailed, they present many problems—building accounts are more explicit. They are, on the whole, numerous, and many have been printed completely or in the form of extracts. Although such fabric rolls as remain bear a small proportion to those which have perished, we still have a great deal of information with regard to our cathedral churches ; while the churchwardens' accounts which have survived from the later middle ages are full of interesting details concerning buildings and furniture. By comparing their contents we are able to gain a general idea of the methods of operation adopted.

In cathedral churches the accounts were naturally in the hands of the chapter, whether monastic or secular. We have seen how Hugh de Puiset promoted architectural work at Durham ; but it must be remembered that, while the bishop of Durham regarded his cathedral church as his spouse, he himself was outside the monastic community. His position was, so to speak, that of an honorary abbot ; but the real headship in the convent and its church belonged to the prior. If he employed masters and workmen, the consent of the prior and convent was needed, and he did little but contribute money and encouragement. Similarly, in a secular church, the control of the work lay with the dean and canons. We speak of Jocelyn at Wells, of St. Hugh at Lincoln, as if they were entirely responsible for certain parts of either building ; but the actual accounts must have passed through the hands

12. The conclusions of M. de Lasteyrie on this point may be cited. 'La vérité est qu'il y a eu, au XI^{e} et au XII^{e} siècle, un assez grand nombre de moines pratiquant l'architecture comme les autres arts, que beaucoup d'évêques, d'abbés et de clercs de tout ordre étaient assez instruits pour diriger les hommes du métier qu'ils faisaient travailler, pour dresser le programme qu'il s'agissait d'exécuter, pour inspirer les sculpteurs et les peintres et leur fournir les thèmes sur lesquels s'exerçait leur talent ; mais là se bornait habituellement le rôle des moines et des clercs et c'étaient des laïques qui le plus souvent étaient les exécutants,' *op. cit.*, p. 237. This allows all that can be admitted.

of the deans and chapters, who administered the bishops' benefactions.

The account rolls of the various officers of the monastery at Durham are very numerous, and an elaborate selection from them is in print.[13] Building operations were under the direction of the sacrist, the obedientiary appointed by the prior to look after the church and its furniture. He acted as paymaster of the workmen, saw to the provision of necessary material and tools, and supervised the work generally, with control of the fabric fund arising from the rents of the estates appropriated to his office. This was not the only side of his duties, and the accounts of his expenses are somewhat miscellaneous. They include, however, purchases of lead, tin, iron, and other materials needed by the various workmen. About 1338 the sacrist paid £10 1*s.* 4*d.* to masons carving stones for the erection of a new buttress for the gable of the Galilee.[14] In 1355–6 £5 17*s.* 2½*d.* was paid for making a window on the south side of the church.[15] In 1360–1 there is a payment of £2 1*s.* 8*d.* for iron and Kendal boards bought for the bell-tower, with hurdles made for scaffolding.[16] The same account contains entries of payments to the plumber and others working in the bell-tower, to the master-mason and his servants for the new window, for the insertion of which the wall had to be broken, and for the glazing of the round window, presumably that at the east end of the church.[17] In 1404 the inventory of goods in the sacrist's keeping, delivered by the retiring official to his successor, included a new stone window,

13. *Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham*, ed. J. T. Fowler, 3 vols. (Surtees Soc., vols. XCIX, C, CIII).

14. *Ibid.*, II, 377: 'In expens, latomorum sculpantium lapides pro erectione cujusdam novi butracii ad gabellum Gallilee.'

15. *Ibid.*, II, 382: 'In factura cujusdam fenestre in australi parte ecclesie.'

16. *Ibid.*, II, 385: 'In ferro empto ac bord' de Kendale empt. pro campanile, cum cratis factis pro skafald.'

17. *Ibid.* 'Et Joh'i plumbario operanti in campanile cum aliis secum laborantibus per vices, 15*s.* 3*d.* Et in calce empto, cum stipendio cementarii pro nova fenestra et fraccione muris (*sic*) cum salario famulorum, 6*li.* 16*s.* 8*d.* Et in 34 panell. vitr. pro fenestra rotunda, 19*li.*

newly worked, lying at the end of the church to be put in place.[18] We learn from this document that the workshops of the carpenter, glazier, plumber and master-mason, with the tools which they contained, of which there is a long and interesting list, were in the sacrist's care.[19] Each of these master-workmen had his band of assistants. The master-mason was the *cementarius*, with whom worked the masons in freestone, stone-cutters and sculptors (*lathomi*). These were the skilled workmen, the *cementarius* being the master-craftsman, who filled the office of architect.[20] The sacrist's office was administrative and financial: he was in effect the churchwarden and clerk of the works, the keeper of the fabric and the accounts.

The Ely sacrists' rolls disclose a similar state of things. No incident in the history of medieval architecture is more famous than the building of the celebrated octagon with its lantern-tower after the fall of the tower in 1322. The moving spirit in the work, as is well known, was the sacrist, Alan of Walsingham; and there is no doubt that he was an accomplished artist, renowned for his skill in goldsmith's work[21] and styled by the Ely chronicler 'vir venerabilis et artificiosus frater.'[22] The passage in which his work is described deserves close attention:

'In the first place, he caused the stones and timber which had fallen in that ruin to be carried, with great labour and various expenses, out of the church; and he had the church cleansed as quickly as possible of the dust which was there in great quantity. He then had the site upon which he intended to construct the new

18. *Ibid.*, II, 395: 'Item in fine ecclesie jacet una fenestra nova lapidea noviter operata.'

19. *Ibid.*, II, 396, 397.

20. *Cementarius* is also used for any freemason, like *lathomus*. The *cementarius par excellence*, however, was the master-mason, as in the inscription round the tomb-slab of Richard of Gainsborough in the cloisters at Lincoln.

21. 'Qui et ipse peritus erat in opere aurifabrili' (Walsingham, *Hist. Anglicana* [Rolls Ser.], I, 138, quoted by Stubbs, *Historical Memorials of Ely Cathedral*, p. 141).

22. *See* Stubbs, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

bell-tower—a site divided by architectural measurement into eight parts, in which eight stone piers should be built to carry the whole structure, and within which the quire with its stalls was afterwards to be constructed—dug and sounded, until he found solid ground on which he could safely begin the foundation of the work. Having carefully tested, as is aforesaid, these eight places, and packed them firmly with stones and sand, then at length he began the eight piers with the consequent stonework. This work, after six years, was finished as far as the upper tabling in the year of our Lord 1328. And immediately in the same year the artful timber structure of the new bell-tower, conceived with surpassing and wonderful mental skill, was begun to be built. The expense was very great and burthensome, especially as regarded the great timbers necessarily in keeping with the said structure, which had to be sought far and wide, and, when at last they were found with great difficulty, were bought at a high price. These, being brought by land and sea to Ely, were carved and shaped by ingenious artists and skilfully joined together in the same work ; and so the structure, with the help of God, attained an honourable and wished-for end.'[23]

Alan's part in the work was doubtless so conspicuous that he deserved the title ' Flos operatorum ' with which his epitaph began ;[24] and it is obvious that the chronicler recognised him as the master-mind which planned the whole conception. His excellence in art was a special gift like that of his contemporary at Gloucester, abbot Wygmore. But we must not read too much of his individuality into this account of his doings. While the *summum ac mirabile mentis ingenium* which devised the new work was doubtless Alan's, the execution of the scheme was in the hands of trained practitioners. The Sacrist's roll from Michaelmas 1323 to Michaelmas 1324, under the

23. Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, I, 644, quoted by Stewart, *Archit. History of Ely Cathedral*, pp. 89, 90. Stubbs, *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 125, also translates the passage : between his version and my own there is no material difference. The somewhat imperfect Latin of the opening sentence, however, may be given. ' Et primo lapides et ligna quae conciderant in illa ruina, cum magno labore et expensis variis extra ecclesiam fecit apportare et ipsam de pulvere nimio, qui ibi erat, celeritate qua potuit emundare ; et locum in quo novum campanile fuisset constructurus, per viii partes arte architectonica mensuratas, in quibus viii columnae lapideae totum aedificium supportantes erigerentur, et infra quas chorus postea cum stallis esset construendus, fodere fecit et scrutari, donec inveniret locum solidum ubi fundamentum operis secure possit inchoare,' etc.

24. Browne Willis, *Survey of Cathedrals*, II, 335.

heading 'Custus novi operis,' gives us particulars of the progress of the work at its very beginning. There were two classes of workmen employed, *cementarii* and *operarii*, the *cementarii* corresponding, of course, to the skilled stone-masons or *lathomi* of whom we read elsewhere. Their number was large, and the pay of the *cementarii*, including their *potacio* or gaudy in the summer, amounting to £47 11*s.* 5*d.* is the most serious item in the account. It seems also that, in addition to the masons in the pay of the sacrist, others were employed at the expense of the bishop, the cost of setting and sharpening their tools being defrayed by the sacrist. The principal *cementarius* is called master John, and may be identified with John Attegrene or Green, whose name appears on the roll for 1336–7. His importance has been overshadowed by that of his employer, and the actual details of his work are left to inference; but in 1325–6 he was occupying a *camera* or lodging in the monastery or its neighbourhood, and the convent supplied him with a fur-lined suit of clothes. Similar suits were also given to Thomas, the master carpenter, and to another master workman named Peter, while suits, apparently without fur, were bought and cut for John of Wilton, probably the master-mason's chief assistant, and Robert the painter, who was engaged to colour the new work.[25]

In several monasteries the duties of the sacrist were confined to the furniture and services of the church, and the supervision of the fabric was left to a monk with the title *custos operis*, 'warden of the work.' I may point out, however, in this connexion that the words *opus* and *fabrica*, which are practically synonymous, do not necessarily refer to architectural work actually in progress. The *opus* or *fabrica* was the permanent fabric-fund, the 'church works' of which we read constantly in medieval wills. Such funds in all churches were enriched by continual bequests: in the great secular cathedral church of Lincoln a chantry of two chaplains, known as the 'works chantry,' was maintained out of the yearly

25. See *Sacrist Rolls of Ely*, ed. Chapman, II, 25–110, containing the seven rolls compiled during the period at which Alan was sacrist, *viz.* 1322–41.

proceeds of the fund.[26] The *custos operis* or *custos fabricae*, whether monk or secular, was in effect the churchwarden. The primary duty of a churchwarden was to keep the fabric-fund of his church, to see that it was properly expended upon repairs, and to allocate the surplus to other parochial purposes. Thus in the collegiate church of Southwell the fabric-fund, supplied by contributions from all parts of the archdeaconry of Nottingham, was kept by two officials known as the wardens.[27] Similarly the *custos operum* whom we find, for example, at Winchester,[28] and the *custos novi operis* whose accounts at Westminster extend over nearly two hundred years,[29] were wardens of funds, in the one case general, in the other special. In such great churches master-masons and workmen were permanently retained, as constant repairs were necessary; but the actual work of building was of course intermittent.

We must therefore hesitate to attach too much architectural importance to the employment of the words *opus* and *fabrica*; and the context in which they are used must be carefully weighed before they are taken as indisputable evidence for the date of any part of a building. A good example of the purely architectural use of *fabrica*, belonging to a period at which the classical culture of the Renaissance was beginning to affect Latin style, is found in the documents relating to the building of the Divinity school at Oxford.[30] Much earlier, in 1333, the *opus* or *fabrica* of the church of Wells, begun by dean Godelegh, as mentioned in the terms of the grant of an indemnity to his

26. *See* Bradshaw and Wordsworth, *Lincoln Cath. Statutes*, III, 899.

27. *See* Leach, *Visitations and Memorials of Southwell Minster* (Camden Soc.), pp. liii–lv. *See also* a further discussion of the Southwell 'wardens of the common' and 'wardens of the fabric' by the present writer, *Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, XVI, 83, 84, and the certificate of the fabric fund returned in 1548, *ibid.*, 130.

28. *See* Kitchin, *Compotus Rolls of the Obedientiaries of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester* (Hants Record Soc.), pp. 55, 56.

29. *See* list of names in Pearce, *The Monks of Westminster*, pp. 208, 209: *see also* Rackham, *The Nave of Westminster* (Proc. Brit. Acad., vol. IV).

30. Printed in *Epistolae Academicae Oxon.*, ed. Anstey (Oxford Hist. Soc.): the chief documents are quoted by Hope, *The Heraldry and Sculptures of the Vault of the Divinity School at Oxford* (*Archæol. Journal*, LXXI, 217 *et seqq.*).

executors, clearly refers, not merely to the fund, but to the work of rebuilding for which it was started. The indemnity was allowed

> ' by reason of the demolition of the church of Wells, and of the work or fabric of the same church, in what sort soever it was begun by the same deceased in his lifetime, or was to be finished by him ; and by reason also of what money soever was collected by the same deceased in his lifetime, both for the work or fabric of the said church and for the quire-stalls, for the canonisation of the lord William of March or for any other reason, or has been received by his executors for the said work or fabric of the said church before the day of the making of these presents.'[31]

Details with regard to the disposition of architectural responsibility in cathedral churches of secular canons are perfectly clear. The interesting, if somewhat fragmentary fabric-rolls of York minster have been long in print.[32] Those of Exeter cathedral, an invaluable series, are known to some extent from the extracts printed by Dr. Oliver and Archdeacon Freeman ; and I hope shortly to print a full edition of these from the transcript made by the late Sir William Hope. Both sets of rolls indicate similar methods. The care of the fabric was nominally in the charge of the treasurer, the third of the four *dignitates* of the church, whose seats were, normally in English usage, at the four corners of the quire. The custody of the fabric-fund, however, was entrusted to two wardens, one known as *custos operis*, while the other acted as his *socius* or fellow, with the title *contrarotulator* or comptroller, whose duty, as the name implies, was to check the accounts by keeping a duplicate roll. Here we have the principle of the two churchwardens, jointly responsible for the annual accounts of their fund. At York the wardens seem invariably to have been two of the inferior clergy of the church—*e.g.* in 1422 the *custos* or clerk of the works was Nicholas Keld, one of the vicars choral, with Peter Friston, one of the chantry-priests, as his comptroller.[33] The same custom prevailed at Wells in

31. *Reg. Rad. de Salopia* (Somerset Record Soc.), I, 150, 151.

32. *The Fabric Rolls of York Minster*, ed. Raine (Surtees Soc., vol. xxxv).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

the fifteenth century; but, after the Reformation, the office of *custos operis* was delegated to a dignitary or one of the residentiary canons.[34] At Exeter, in 1299–1300, a priest, Robert Asperton, was *custos*, but the comptroller was master Roger 'Cementarius,' *i.e.* the master-mason or one of his subordinates. Later accounts are kept in the name of a single *custos*, so that we have no evidence that this arrangement, by which the clerk of the works and the master-mason acted together, was permanent.

From the York rolls and from documents which throw light upon them we gain a very full idea of the procedure followed. The fabric-fund was raised by indulgences granted by the archbishops and by offerings made at the various altars of the church, and was vested in land and rents which provided an annual income.[35] Out of its proceeds a permanent body of masons was maintained, in the pay of the *custos*, and under the control of the master-mason. It will be noted that the body which employed these officials and workmen was the dean and chapter of the church. Archbishops gave lavishly to the fund: archbishop Thoresby's contributions to the work begun in 1361 at the east end of the church were examples of surprising munificence,[36] but these were merely donations for the health of his own soul and imply nothing more than his approval of the design supplied by the master-mason.

Throughout these rolls the *magister cementariorum* is in charge of the stonework. He receives a specified wage and a house by grant of the dean and chapter.[37] It is evident from the beginning that he is thoroughly competent in his craft.

34. John Leage, *custos fabrice* in 1564–5 (fabric roll 9), was chancellor of the church. Thomas Holt, *custos* 1663–5 (rolls 10, 11) was also chancellor. William Fane, *custos* 1667–9 (rolls 12, 13) was prebendary of Taunton. I take these details from MS. notes on the rolls made by the late Sir William Hope. Much information about the post-Reformation masters of the fabric is contained in *Calendar of the MSS. of the Dean and Chapter of Wells* (Hist. MSS. Comm.), vol. II.

35. *See* Archbishop Thoresby's letter of indulgence, *Fabric Rolls of York Minster*, u.s., pp. 175, 176.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. xiv, xv *note*.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167.

As time goes on, master-masons of considerable experience and reputation are hired to supervise the building. In 1407 Henry IV allowed his mason, William Colchester, 'expert in his art and much commended,' to go to York, where the new tower in the middle of the church was contemplated.[38] The appointment of a stranger was resented by the staff of cathedral masons, and a murderous attack was made upon the newcomer.[39] In spite of this, Colchester remained in charge of the work till 1419. Again in 1473 William Hyndlee was brought from Norwich, the dean and chapter paying the travelling expenses of himself and his household, and finding the costs of a law-suit which his departure from Norwich may have involved.[40] Hyndlee continued to be master-mason at York for more than thirty years, his name occurring for the last time in 1504.[41] Men thus brought in from a distance were probably widely versed in the contemporary progress of architecture and in practical design, as well as in the qualities of building-stones. Their names are sometimes significant of neighbourhoods famous for their quarries, among which they doubtless had learned the rudiments of their profession. Thus the name of John of Corfe, with others from Dorset, occurs among the masons at Exeter, where Purbeck marble was freely used,[42] and the master-mason at Worcester in 1316 was master William of Shockerwick, a hamlet in the district famous at a later time for its Bath stone.[43]

Under the master-mason were the *cementarii* or *lathomi*. Some of these, in a place like York, would be men trained locally. A town where large building operations were constantly in progress would naturally produce its own local school of masoncraft; and it can easily be understood that a body of masons of this kind would resent the introduction of a master-mason who, like William Colchester, had no con-

38. *Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1405–8*, p. 383.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 482: *Fabric Rolls*, u.s., p. 201.

40. *Fabric Rolls*, u.s., p. 80. The sum amounted to £24 9*s.* 3½*d.*

41. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

42. Oliver, *Lives of the Bishops of Exeter*, p. 392.

43. Wilson, *The Worcester Liber Albus*, p. 153.

nexion with them. At the same time, there is abundant indication that clerks of the works, in their duty of hiring masons, did their best to attract skilled men, without regard to their local origin. The *operarii* or workmen formed an inferior class, whose business it was to lay foundations and fetch and carry materials for the *cementarii*. It should be noted that the master-carpenter was of equal importance with the master-mason : he was usually paid at the same rate, and was directly responsible to the *custos operis*. These were the two chief craftsmen ; but the smiths, plumbers and glaziers, each under a master, form separate items in the account-rolls.

The general uniformity of this method of procedure is illustrated by reference to other fabric accounts, such as those of Magdalen college at Oxford.[44] One interesting series, discovered only a few years ago, and recently printed in a somewhat condensed form,[45] gives a very complete history of the rebuilding of the manor-house at Kirby Muxloe in Leicestershire between 1480 and 1484. The employer in this case was the famous William, lord Hastings, the chamberlain of Edward IV ; and the work had to be finished very hastily as the consequence of his tragic death in 1483. When the accounts are compared with the existing remains of the house, one of the finest examples of the brick architecture of the later middle ages, they raise several problems ; but, as regards the question of employment of workmen, they are quite explicit. The clerk of the works was Hastings' steward, Roger Bowlott, who appears to have lived on the spot and was assisted by a comptroller, Ralph Peche. The site was cleared by a body of labourers, chiefly Welshmen, who worked at the moat and got things ready for the coming of the masons. The master-mason, John Couper, was hired from Tattershall in Lincolnshire, where, earlier in the century, the noble brick tower had been built and the thirteenth-century castle trans-

44. The evidence of these rolls is summarised by H. A. Wilson, *History of Magdalen College* : *see* p. 22.

45. *The Building Accounts of Kirby Muxloe Castle*, 1480—1484, ed. Thompson (*Trans. Leices. Archæol. Soc.*, XI, 193–345) : *see ibid.*, pp. 87, 88, for a brief note on these accounts with a photographic reproduction of two pages, and *ibid.*, pp. 109–114, for a general account of the building.

formed into a fortified palace for Henry VI's treasurer, Ralph lord Cromwell. Couper, who worked at the rate of 8*d.* a day, paid intermittent visits to Kirby Muxloe, accompanied by an apprentice: the permanent control of the masons was delegated to a warden or, as he was called at York, *secundus cementarius*, who was paid 3*s.* 4*d.* a week in gross. The apprentice and the ordinary masons received 6*d.* a day, which was also the pay of the 'rough masons.' This secondary body corresponds to the *cementarii vocati* '*setters*' at York, and to the *lathomi ponentes* at Magdalen: although they belonged to an inferior grade, and were not entrusted with the skilled work of the 'freemasons' in dressing and carving stone, the actual work of building was divided between them and the bricklayers. The master bricklayer, like the master-mason, was paid a daily wage of 8*d.*: his assistants, several of whom were Flemings and seem to have been hired out of the eastern counties, were paid 6*d.* The master-carpenter also received 8*d.*

We need not discuss the other workmen and their wages in detail, as this has been already done elsewhere. I need remark only that, during the winter season, the wages of those who remained at work were slightly lowered, and that, after Hastings' death, when the building was hurried to an imperfect end under a master-mason who had previously acted as second in command, the number of workmen and the amount of their wages were alike reduced. The point which these accounts clearly prove is that neither the employer nor his clerks of the work were the architects of the building. The clerks were business men who saw that Hastings' wishes were carried out. The supervisor of the whole design was the master-mason, who, although he was paid no more than the two other master-craftsmen, heads the list of employees in the weekly accounts. His periodical visits, for which he was allowed travelling expenses at a fixed rate, were not merely for the purpose of seeing that his assistants were getting on with their stone-dressing and carving, but for that of directing the whole design in consultation with the heads of the other departments. He was, in fact, the architect, with whom the masters in timber and brick acted in harmony.

(3). I must dwell lightly upon the subject of miscellaneous

documents, which it would be a superfluous task to classify. Building contracts, where they survive, are of extraordinary interest. Nothing is more instructive to the student of architectural history than to read such contracts in the presence of the buildings to which they refer, as can be done, for instance, at Fotheringhay[46] and at the Yorkshire churches of Catterick and Hornby.[47] The discovery by the late Sir William Hope of the record of a law-suit, relating to a breach of a building contract, among the early Chancery proceedings in the Public Record Office, has explained difficult points in the architectural story of the Lincolnshire church of Wyberton, near Boston.[48] Contracts, it may be noted, are quite decisive with regard to the position of the master-mason as architect: they are founded upon his plan and estimates submitted to the employer. Again, the master-mason employed at Fotheringhay, a fifteenth-century church second to none in beauty, was a local man whose home was in the village. As we have seen, master-masons were sometimes hired from other parts of England, and it was doubtless often the case that a single mason overlooked building operations at several churches in one neighbourhood. If we had full evidence, however, we should find, especially in districts where the local stone was of first-rate quality, that few villages were without a skilled artist who was capable of making additions and doing repairs to a parish church, and that employers had not far to go to find architects. Such villages as Croscombe in Somerset or Bibury in Gloucestershire are, as it were, the natural outgrowth of the soil, the work of native hands trained in native methods.

46. Printed in *Monasticon*, VI (iii), 1414–5. The original document (1434) seems to have disappeared, probably in the fire at Thoresby in 1879: when *Monasticon* was compiled, it was among the muniments at Holme Pierrepont, from which it was probably removed to Thoresby.

47. Printed by McCall, *Richmondshire Churches*, pp. 37–40, 62. The original of the Catterick document (1412) is in the possession of Sir J. Lawson-Tancred of Aldborough, Yorks., and has been printed more than once. The Hornby contract (1409–10) is among the muniments of the Duke of Leeds at Hornby Castle.

48. *The new building of Wyberton Church, Lincs. in* 1419–20 (*Lincs. Notes and Queries*, XIV, 225).

A word of warning is necessary with respect to the architectural application of casual documents. It is not uncommon to find a building, or some part of it, attributed to a fixed date, which, though it may now and then be more or less in agreement with the actual evidence of the stonework, is supplied by a document which really has no architectural bearing. The miscellaneous contents of episcopal registers have often been used in this way. No source of evidence is less satisfactory. The record of church building formed no part of the duties of a bishop's registry : to his clerks *ecclesia* was a purely legal term, signifying, not the fabric of a church, but the rectory or the advowson. In numerous cases which I have tested by reference to the original documents, the architectural inference falls to the ground. Even where it may be fairly pleaded, the conclusion is doubtful. If the bishop of Hereford was called in to arbitrate upon the responsibility of the parishioners of Stottesdon in Shropshire in respect of the building of their church tower, it does not follow that his award refers to an actual rebuilding then contemplated or in progress.[49] It probably does so refer, but there is nothing in the bishop's mandate which warrants a positive conclusion. We must therefore suspend judgment on doubtful points and abstain from forced deductions. Similarly, the foundation of a chantry by no means implies the building of a special chapel : if it is said to be in a *capella de novo constructa*, well and good, but otherwise the primary reference of the document is to a service in a building, and not to the building itself. One important fact, however, bishops' registers will teach us. Churches appropriated to monasteries were not built at the expense of their appropriators. Ordinations of vicarages show us that the responsibility of monasteries was purely rectorial : it was confined to repair of the chancel, and often part of the burden of this was thrown upon the vicar. The nave was maintained by the parishioners ; and this fact, while it disproves many cherished legends of splendid church

49. *Hereford Reg. Trefnant* (Cant. & York Soc.), pp. 19, 20. The date of the mandate is 1394.

architecture due to monastic patrons,[50] explains the frequent inferiority of the chancel of a church to the work of the nave.

The large number of documents printed as an appendix to Dr. Raine's edition of the York fabric-rolls gives the student a good opportunity of distinguishing definitely architectural from other kinds of evidence. In one respect two of them will be found especially helpful. Two lists of rules for the cathedral masons, one in Latin and one in English, survive among the chapter muniments.[51] Both, made in the fourteenth century, were new editions of ancient customs, and were sworn to by the *principalis* and *secundarius cementarius*, i.e. the master and the warden of the masons, and by the master-carpenter. Their details are quaint and interesting; but the chief point to be noticed about them is that they are rules for a local and self-governing body under the patronage of the dean and chapter, and contain no allusion to any larger organisation embracing masons as a whole. It is well known that the evidence for the early history of organised masoncraft is slight and conjectural; and the medieval use of the term 'free-mason' did not imply a member of a guild in the enjoyment of certain liberties or franchises, but simply a worker in free-stone as opposed to the less skilled 'rough mason.'[52] I have already commented upon the singular untrustworthiness of the Comacine theory, to which so many have subscribed. Equally fanciful is the picture which, in default of evidence, has been constructed of bands of masons wandering about the country and seeking employment at different

50. A work entitled *Churches of Lincolnshire*, published in 1841, seems to have been primarily responsible for the story that the fine series of churches between Spalding and the Norfolk border at Sutton Bridge are due to the rivalry of monastic houses in architectural display. The historical qualifications of the writer are sufficiently shown by his identification of the priory of 'Acre,' *i.e.* Castle Acre in Norfolk, the proprietors of the rectory of Long Sutton, with the abbey of St. Mary at York.

51. *Fabric Rolls*, u.s., pp. 171–3, 181–2.

52. This is the obvious distinction between the 'fremasons' and 'rowmasons' of the Kirby Muxloe accounts: see a note in Coulton, *Social Life in England*, p. 481, which prefaces his extracts from the early 15th cent. set of rhymed rules for masons.

building centres. The York masons, as we have seen, were probably local men, possibly reinforced by new blood from other places. They worked under rules made for them by their employers; and, although, after the middle of the fourteenth century, English masons are found combining in a trade-union of their own, not without opposition from various quarters, their constitution was apparently less stringent than that of the federation of German masons which issued its rules at Ratisbon in 1459, under the presidency of the master-mason of Strasbourg.[53]

Numerous commissions, entered upon the Patent rolls, for the hire of masons and carpenters for royal undertakings, empower deputies to impress into their service workers of all kinds, wherever they can be found. The question in such cases was how to procure the best men: such men doubtless were hired individually and were bound to one piece of work for the time being, but there is nothing to show that, before or after that piece of work, they necessarily worked in company with the same body of fellows. Just as a master-mason might be imported from elsewhere to take charge of them, so they, as individuals, might be engaged, after their stated period of service was over, to work elsewhere with other companions.

The mention of documents upon the Patent rolls brings me to my last point, on which I may be excused for laying some emphasis, although it involves some repetition of a principle to which I have already made considerable reference. A number of the documents in question bring the name of William of Wykeham into prominence in connexion with Edward III's castles and manor-houses. No tradition is more obstinate than that which represents Wykeham as an architect, discovered and trained by his predecessor in the see of Winchester, William of Edington. Now, there is absolutely nothing which specially connects Edington, a busy clerk who for many years filled the high office of treasurer of the exchequer, with architectural work, beyond the fact that the

53. *See* the documents printed by Coulton, *op. cit.*, pp. 481–92, which include the English rules for the York masons.

priory church founded by him at his native place in Wiltshire, and the remodelling of Winchester cathedral, begun under his auspices, are important landmarks in the contemporary history of Gothic design. The only thing which these buildings indicate with regard to him is that he employed masons of such originality that they occupy a quite exceptional position in the story of architectural development. It is true that Wykeham worked under him in affairs of state, and may be regarded as his pupil in the routine of a government office[54]; and it may well be that both men took a keen interest in the progress of the works of art to which Edington contributed so freely, but that either had time for architectural practice is, to say the least of it, unlikely. The work at Edington and Winchester is obviously due to trained masons with a surpassing knowledge of their craft, not to amateurs who could only spare time for architecture from their proper business.

Wykeham, however, between 1356 and 1361, filled special offices in the royal household which brought him into continual touch with the king's masons, and must have given him a close acquaintance with building methods. At Windsor and other royal manors he acted as clerk of the works and supervisor of building operations. For full details Sir William Hope's monumental history of Windsor Castle may be consulted. The terms of his appointments are perfectly clear. He was to hire masons, to procure stone, timber and other necessary materials for their work, to pay their wages, to bring back workmen who had quitted work without licence, to imprison refractory persons, to keep a watch upon any appropriation of materials to other purposes, and to sell on the king's behalf such parts of the timber as could not be used by the carpenters. He had full power to make ordinances and dispositions touching all works and repairs, to hold leets and courts in the royal manors, and to appoint deputies

54. Wykeham, at that time clerk of the privy seal, was one of the clerks singled out for bequests in Edington's will, made in Sept., 1366: 'Item lego domino Willelmo de Wykham, clerico privati sigilli domini regis, unum anulum aureum cum uno rubie et unum jocale ad valorem xx li.' (Lambeth Reg. Langham, fo. 110).

under him.[55] These were large powers, but they were purely administrative, and there is no hint that he was under any obligation to supply the masons with plans and designs. Just as Bowlott and Peche acted for Hastings at Kirby Muxloe in 1480, as paymasters and controllers of the masons, so Wykeham and his assistants acted at Windsor for Edward III.

Probably Wykeham's appointment as royal surveyor was due to a special interest in architecture as well as to administrative talent, and it is unquestionable that, as bishop of Winchester, he was able to display his splendid taste in architectural works in his cathedral city and at Oxford. But this is no more than to say that he was able to pick architects who were capable of bringing his conceptions into execution in a style which was essentially the product of their own practice in their craft and approved itself to the bishop's mind. Of the masons who furthered the progress of that style, particularly of Henry Yevele, who may have been a Somerset man from Yeovil, Professor Lethaby has written in his book on *Westminster Abbey and the King's Craftsmen*. In his will Wykeham left careful directions for the expenditure of 2500 marks upon the completion of the rebuilding of the cathedral nave at Winchester, the aisles of which had been finished in his lifetime. The prior and convent of the church were to find the scaffolding necessary, supply lime and sand freely from their estates, and see that old materials were properly re-used. The work itself was to be entrusted to the direction of master William Wynford, the master-mason, and other sufficient and discreet artists. A monk, Simon Membury, was to be continued as paymaster and surveyor—*i.e.* clerk of the works, with another monk, John Wayte, as comptroller. The bishop's executors held his legacy in trust, to be paid at intervals through these administrative officers.[56] Wykeham's will, in fact, illustrates the methods which I have already described, and assigns their proper functions to employers, clerks of the works, architect and masons. The employer

55. *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1354–8*, p. 463 (30th Oct., 1356); 1358–61, p. 243 (10th July, 1359).

56. *See* Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta*, II, 766–7.

knows what he wants: his clerks are to see that it is done properly; but the work itself is left to those who have been specially trained to it.

What has been said, in fact, of William of Volpiano and Lanfranc in the eleventh century, applies equally to Wykeham at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth. We cannot sufficiently admire the zeal and energy of great prelates in furthering the architectural work which was necessary to their schemes for religious or educational reform or for the glory of the churches over which they presided. But this must not lead us to overlook the existence of a body of men, without whose special talent in design and construction such work could never have been contemplated or achieved. Their names have in many cases disappeared, but we still have enough evidence to show that their position in the history of medieval art is one of singular importance. Such lay masons as the two Williams who worked at Canterbury in the last quarter of the twelfth century, or the long succession of masters in charge of the royal works at Westminster and Windsor, are the men to whom we owe directly the architecture of medieval England. Their education and practical methods are illustrated by the famous sketch-book of the French mason, Vilars de Honecourt, who travelled through Europe, making drawings of buildings, building machines, and motives for sculpture and ornament that took his notice. The medieval tradition of the master-mason, the architect who himself is a worker in his craft, continued down to the seventeenth century. John Thorpe, whose drawings and plans are preserved in the Soane Museum, was the lineal successor of the medieval architect, designing buildings with a knowledge gained by practical experience; and it was not until the classical architecture of the Italian Renaissance was acclimatised in England by Inigo Jones and his followers that the function of the architect was delimited from that of the builder and working mason, and the art of architecture became a profession separate from the crafts with which it hitherto had been closely united.