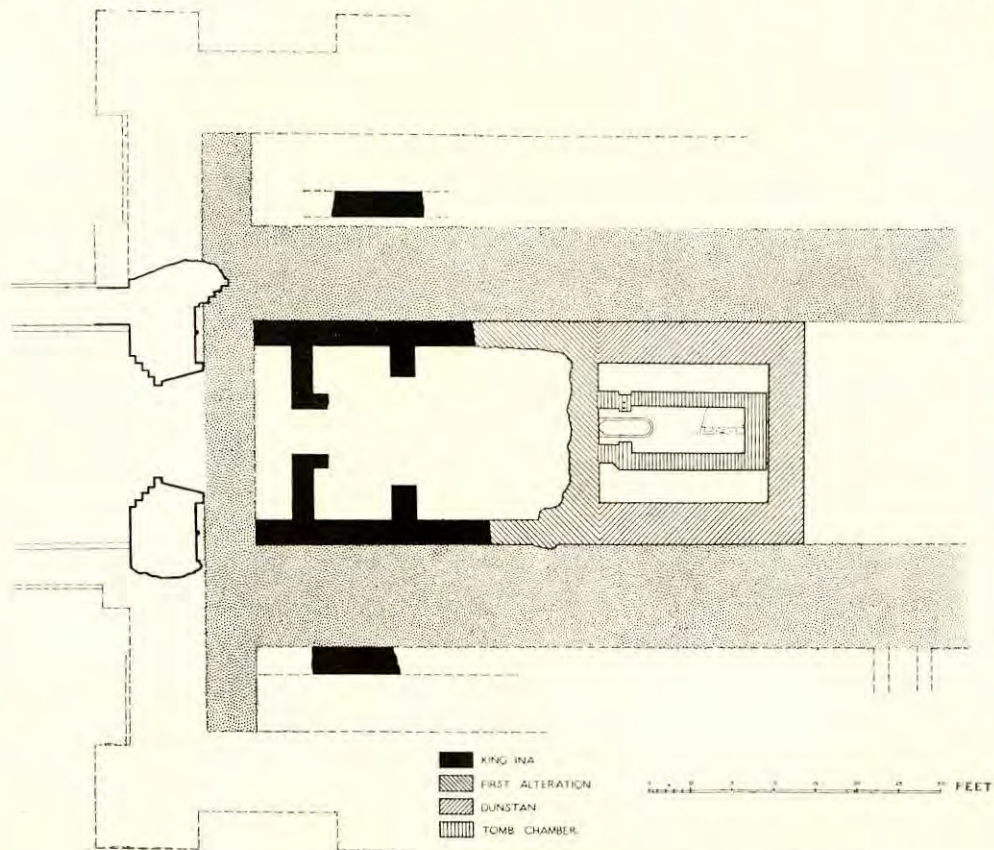


The stipple shows the sleeper walls of Herlewin's Church

PLATE I



GLASTONBURY ABBEY

PART II.—PAPERS, ETC.

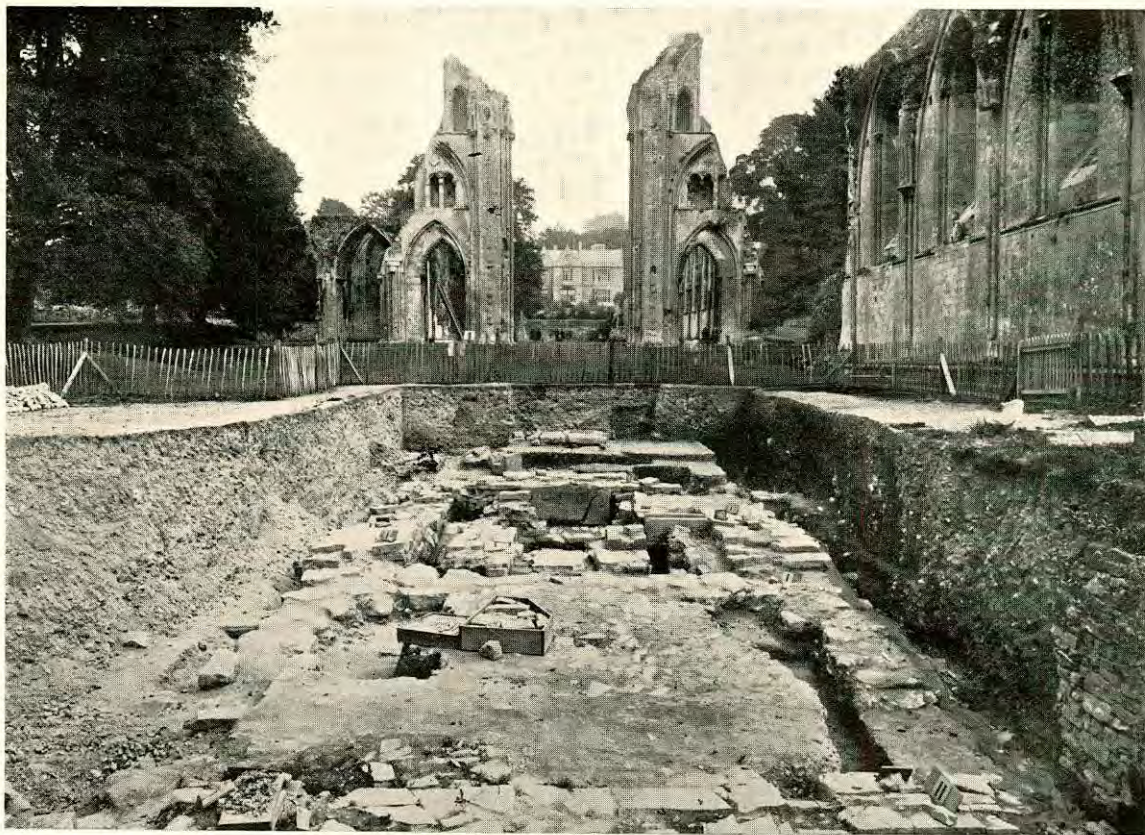
Glastonbury Abbey Excavations, 1928

BY THE DIRECTORS, C. R. PEERS, C.B.E., DIR.S.A., CHIEF INSPECTOR
OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS ; ALFRED W. CLAPHAM, F.S.A., AND
DOM ETHELBERT HORNE, F.S.A.

THE excavation begun in 1926 by Mr. Theodore Fyfe, and continued by him in the following year at the w. end of the great church, had for its object the discovery of the earlier churches that were thought to exist below the grass level of the present ruins. At a depth of 5 ft. 3 in. were found the remains of a stone paved floor, showing evident signs of burning, and having melted lead in its joints. The line of the w. wall of the nave of the burnt building and the w. and s. walls of its s. aisle were also revealed, being some feet to the E. of the w. wall of the present church. This could be no other than the church begun by Herlewin, and showed that it was completed and roofed with lead up to its w. end, at any rate before the fire, and perhaps a good many years earlier. The pavement was bedded on a layer of building rubbish some 12 in. deep containing a number of pieces of painted plaster, and below this the lines of walling appeared, enclosing a space floored with a thick layer of plaster, bedded on small pieces of tufa and lias, and rendered with a thin facing of lime mortar containing pounded brick. This red plaster floor was clearly of the same character as that with which the excavations of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, the church of Reculver, and other Kentish sites, have made us familiar, and for which a seventh century date can be confidently claimed. The walling with

which it was obviously connected was thin—2 ft. 4 in. thick, built in shallow courses of limestone. This floor, which had been cut through by the w. wall of the burnt church, extended eastwards as far as two responds, at which point there had been a step. East of these responds was a rectangular compartment, with walling set in a purplish mortar, of different character from the responds and the walls w. of them. The western part of the area enclosed showed remains of a plaster floor like that already described, but having lost practically all its surface. Its eastern limits were quite irregular, but there was enough to show that the building to which it had belonged formed part of that to the w. of the responds. Again to the E. was another rectangular compartment, with walling of greater depth than in the bay to the w. and set in different mortar. Within it was a smaller building of oblong plan, the floor of which at the E. end was paved with two stone slabs, and at the w. sloped upwards towards a doorway, of which one base stone, with two iron dowels in it, remained. The walls were thin, built with a fair face on both sides: the eastern halves of the side walls had been cut away. The space between the side walls and those of the enclosing building was carefully filled in with stone rubble, to form a bed for the paving. The side walls of the opening at the w. joined and slightly overlapped the masonry of the E. wall of the adjoining compartment. The remains appear to be those of a small burial chamber,¹ approached by a flight of steps from the w., and sunk below the contemporary ground level, for which reason its E. wall and probably all its interior had been faced with stone slabs, to serve as damp-proof courses. At first the building must have stood in the open, with access from the E. end of the church as it then was, but when the eastern chamber was added it must have been levelled down and filled in. At its w. end, where the steps must have been, a large stone coffin, covered with rough slabs, nearly filled the passage. This was completely filled with the carefully arranged bones of no less than seventeen persons, which have since been thoroughly examined by Prof. Fawcett of Bristol University, whose report goes to show that the period during

¹ See additional *Note*.



GLASTONBURY ABBEY EXCAVATIONS, 1928. General View looking East

From a Photograph by Dom Ethelbert Horne, F.S.A.

which they had been buried, before their removal to the coffin, had not been a very long one.

These buildings lie between the lines of the sleeper walls which carried the main arcades of the Norman church and its successor. The walls themselves have practically disappeared, having been used as a quarry by seekers for building material, and their lines are marked by soil and building rubbish, contrasting with the clay filling with which the whole site of the Norman church was covered when the present church was built after the fire. The construction of the sleeper walls has destroyed any evidence of Saxon building to the N. and S., but in the western end of the nave are short lengths of walling of the same character as that enclosing the red plaster floor, proving the existence of aisles or side chambers belonging to the period in question.

What then has been so far uncovered is the E. end of a church with thin walls and red plaster floors, which has been reconstructed at the E., and at a later period lengthened eastwards.

If the thin walls and red floors are identified as the work of King Ina, they will suit the date very well, being slightly later than the similar work in Kent. Ina's church we know to have been built adjoining the wooden church and to the E. of it: the remains found, assuming them to represent the E. end of Ina's church, would give a total length of some 80 ft. for the whole building and with the side walls discovered a width of 56 ft. One would have expected an apsidal E. end, but no definite traces of such a form were found.

This early eighth-century church had its presbytery reconstructed at some time, but no records help us to decide the precise period. The further eastward extension may be assumed to be part of St. Dunstan's work, in which the church was lengthened and widened, and had a tower added to it. The natural place for this tower would be over the old presbytery—but if, as we may suppose, St. Dunstan's alterations included a central tower and transepts, which were by then a recognized scheme in English building, the high altar would be moved into the new presbytery, and before it in 1016 King Edmund Ironside was buried. The stone coffin already mentioned might then be his, re-used to contain bones gathered

from the church when it was destroyed by Herlewin,—but perhaps the preferable explanation is that the bones were collected at the time of Dunstan's alterations. They had been carefully cleaned and arranged, the skulls together at the w. end, the long bones at the E., and the small bones in the middle and it may be supposed that they belonged to Saxon monks, possibly abbots, whose memory it was desired to keep in honour.

Finally it may be remarked that the story of the shooting down of the monks at the high altar in 1083 does not suit the plan of the Saxon church as at present revealed. It is, however, on the documentary evidence available, difficult to suppose that Turstan's church was far enough advanced to be the scene of the event. Perhaps future excavations further to the E. may throw light on this matter.

A number of pieces of painted wall plaster were found in the filling under the pavement of the burnt church. These must almost certainly have belonged to the Saxon church destroyed by Herlewin or his successor, and in one case a piece of plaster is still adhering to a walling stone. They are too fragmentary to put together, and nothing can be said of the designs, but some of the pieces show two layers of painting and one piece is modelled in relief.

Considering its history, Glastonbury has produced very few specimens of carved stonework of early date, but a few have been added recently. One of the channel stones of the drain crossing St. Dunstan's presbytery, and presumably of Norman date, was cut from part of a cross shaft with good interlacing panels of eighth century date: another stone had a border of fret patterns, and was probably of the same period: two others had animal ornament, probably of the tenth century.

The results of the season's work have shown that the chance of recovering the early history of this ancient and famous monastery is greater than had been supposed. If work can be continued for the next few years we may be able to illustrate a period of monastic history which has left us at present no visible memorial.



GLASTONBURY ABBEY, 1928. Crypt of the Saxon Church, looking East
From a Photograph by Dom Ethelbert Horne F.S.A.

NOTE ON THE BURIAL CHAMBER

BY A. W. CLAPHAM, F.S.A.

THE most remarkable discovery made during this year's excavations at Glastonbury is undoubtedly the small crypt, *confessio* or *hypogeum*, which lies within the walls of Dunstan's chancel. As has been pointed out above, this crypt was almost certainly filled in when the floor of Dunstan's chancel was laid and was therefore of earlier construction. It has, furthermore, been pointed out that the w. ends of the walls flanking the entrance overlie, to a small extent, the E. wall of the square building further w. This building is certainly later than Ina and earlier than Dunstan, but this provides no evidence for the date of the crypt, because these flanking walls appear to have butted against the w. wall of the crypt itself, which wall enclosed the entrance-doorway. It would thus appear possible and perhaps probable that the crypt was first erected as an isolated building in the cemetery, and was subsequently connected by a short corridor with the re-built chancel of Ina's church.

Structures of this precise type are not particularly common in any part of Europe, and differ both in intention and arrangement from the more normal *confessio* built within a church. The building at Glastonbury is the first example of its type yet discovered in England, but a few instances may be cited from abroad which will serve to illustrate its form and purpose. The earliest notice of such a building with which I am acquainted is that described in Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History*.¹ He relates that Eusebia, a lady of Constantinople, possessed a house and garden without the walls of the city, in which she kept the relics of the forty martyrs of Sebastia, who suffered under the emperor Licinius. Before her death, this lady

¹ Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.*, Bk. IX, chap. ii.

bequeathed her property to some Macedonian monks, directing them to bury her in company with the holy relics. The account of how they executed her will is not very clear, but it appears that they excavated a subterranean oratory in which the lady was buried, with the relics, and raised above it a small building apparently above ground. This would appear to have happened towards the close of the fourth century.

The second example which I shall cite is very much more important for our purpose, as it still, to a large extent, survives. In 1879 Father Camille de la Croix, S.J., discovered a Gallo-Roman and Merovingian cemetery, on a hill, a mile or more from the city of Poitiers. This site called the 'Champ des Martyrs' contained also the remains of the remarkable little structure since called the 'Hypogée Martyrium de Poitiers'. It consisted of a rectangular building of two bays, half below and half above the ground, approached by a flight of steps at the w. end. It contained a number of inscriptions, both incised and painted, from which it appeared that it had been erected by a certain Abbot Mellebaud as a mausoleum for himself, and contained the relics of seventy-two martyrs of the early church of Poitiers. Father de la Croix published an elaborate monograph¹ on the building in which he proves that it could hardly have been erected before about 600, and was almost certainly destroyed by the Saracens before their defeat at Tours in 732. Its particular interest to us is that, on a larger scale,² it reproduces, almost exactly, the form and arrangement of the crypt at Glastonbury, and suggests an explanation of some of the problems of the latter place. One of the most puzzling features of the crypt at Glastonbury is the flat slab set against the external face of the E. wall; it has a lead joint between it and the one surviving ashlar stone of the crypt-wall, thus proving that it is part of the structure of the crypt and not of Dunstan's chancel which touched it on the outward face. It is not a little surprising to find a similar slab in precisely the same position at the Hypogeum at Poitiers. Here the E. wall was pierced by a deeply splayed window-

¹ C. de la Croix, *Hypogée Martyrium de Poitiers*, Paris, 1883.

[² The Poitiers crypt is about 16 ft. in length, by 9 ft. 7 in. in width. The Glastonbury crypt is 13 ft. in length and 5 ft. 6 in. in width.—ED.]

embrasure, of which the lower part still survives, the external opening being blocked by the slab in question. The upper part of the wall has been destroyed, but there seems good reason to accept Father de la Croix's explanation that the slab continued up to rather above the external ground-level, leaving the head of the window open to act as a *fenestella*, by which people, not admitted to the chapel itself, might look down and catch a glimpse of the martyrs' tombs. That a similar arrangement obtained at Glastonbury is not at all unlikely; there is a ragged gap in the middle of the E. wall of the crypt, exposing the inner face of the slab, and this may well represent the former window-embrasure, though no trace of the sill or splays remains.

Flanking the little altar at Poitiers the N. and S. walls of the crypt had been cut away to admit of the insertion of two stone sarcophagi. It may be significant or it may be only a coincidence that there are ragged gaps in the side walls of the crypt at Glastonbury in precisely the same position.

Finally, though this is trespassing on the realms of mere conjecture, some suggestion may be made as to the actual period and purpose of the Glastonbury crypt. The close analogy with the hypogeum of Poitiers seems to indicate, very definitely, that it dates from the pre-Danish period, for so far as we know, such isolated structures were not erected in the succeeding or Carolingian period. We may further conclude that it was built primarily as a mausoleum, and perhaps also to house with honour the bones of such revered or sainted persons as were available. It will thus appear a not unreasonable hypothesis that the crypt may have been built by Ina for his own mausoleum, and to house the bones of those abbots and monks whose bodies were disturbed by the building of his new church. The great stone sarcophagus found may thus have been intended for Ina's own burial; in actual fact he died and was buried at Rome, but the sarcophagus may have remained empty in the crypt, to be finally moved by Dunstan to the level of his new floor, and filled with the bones that he found in and about the crypt when that structure was finally abandoned and filled in.

NOTE ON THE CONTENTS OF THE STONE COFFIN

ABRIDGED FROM THE REPORT OF PROF. E. FAWCETT, M.D., F.R.S.,
AND MRS. D. P. DOBSON, M.A.

THE bones were lifted from the stone coffin and examined on 4th October and again on 16th October 1928. They had been laid in the stone coffin with the skulls at the w. end, the larger bones carefully arranged at both ends, and the smaller bones in the centre. There were fairly complete skulls of fifteen individuals, two others that were too incomplete to measure, and it is possible that some separate skull bones found may have belonged to yet other individuals. Fifteen of the skulls were measured primarily to get a breadth index, and five were subjected to a more detailed examination to obtain contours. The condition of the complete skulls was remarkably good and suggested that the period during which they were buried must have been not more than was sufficient to get rid of the soft parts. The stone coffin in which they lay would appear to have been comparatively dry, as the skulls had not been distorted by reason of swelling between the various bones through absorption of moisture. The teeth were entirely free from caries, but in most cases the cusps were worn from the crowns and the dentine exposed, but in full compensation for the wear. No abnormal teeth were noted; they were also quite regular, and there was no evidence of crowding. The palate was in all cases of the modern type. In only one case was a palatine torus noted.

As to sex, there could be no doubt, and this applies to all the other bones examined,—all were male.

The condition of the sutures of the skull, in the absence of other indications from the bones of the body, showed that the skeletons were those of adults. In some cases the individuals had reached a possible age of sixty, and the average age of the fifteen examined, was 54·7. As regards race, the following

statements are made with reserve, on account of the great difficulty of settling such a question in a country whose origins are so mixed. The measurements taken yielded results somewhat different in certain respects from Anglo-Saxon skeletons found elsewhere, but in general they brought them within the known range of Anglo-Saxon dimensions. There was no great departure from the measurements recorded by observers in other parts of the country of skulls known to be Anglo-Saxon. Such departure as there was, is indicated by an increased breadth of the skull, and an increase in the cranial capacity. As others have reported of Anglo-Saxon skulls, there were well-marked brow ridges, and in one case, a definite torus. The orbits were, as is usual in Anglo-Saxons, microseme. The chins were rather of the pointed type.

The long bones indicated an average height of 5 ft. 9 in. and measurements of the femora showed that the individuals were not only tall, but sturdy. In one or two cases the long bones indicated exceptional muscularity. The general conclusion arrived at is, that the bones are those of Anglo-Saxons, and probably of monks of that race. The better development, increased cranial capacity, and the comparative tallness of the men represented may possibly be accounted for by the better social and economic conditions of the lives of the monks, which were conceivably higher than those of the ordinary layman.