The Architectural History of Beverley Minster, 721-c. 1370

by

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Department of Art, Art History, & Visual Studies
Duke University

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Lisa Reilly

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Art, Art History, & Visual Studies in the Graduate School of Duke University 2011
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation is the first architectural history devoted to Beverley Minster, a large and ambitious Gothic church located in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Beverley is one of the most important medieval buildings in England, but it has been almost entirely ignored in the literature. The church is composed of three parts: choir and transepts (c. 1225-1260), nave (c. 1308-c. 1370), and west façade (c. 1380-1420).

The thesis begins with a description of the destroyed buildings that occupied the site during the Saxon and Romanesque periods. The remainder of the dissertation focuses on the work completed at the Minster during the fourteenth century, in the so-called Decorated style. First, the nave is analyzed and its construction is assigned to six campaigns between the years c. 1308-c. 1370. Much discussion is devoted to the “historicism” of the nave’s conservative design, which is a subtly modernized version of the east end that preceded it. Contemporary documents also permit discussion of the financial contributions of the laity, canons, and municipal leaders who paid for the nave to be built.

Finally, a detailed analysis is offered for the furnishings made at Beverley between 1292 and c. 1340: the reredos (high altar screen), sedilia (seating for
priests), and the destroyed shrine which once contained the relics of St. John of Beverley. Like the nave, they are all neglected masterpieces of the Decorated style.
Contents

Abstract.................................................................iv
Illustrations ................................................................x
Acknowledgements .........................................................xviii
Introduction .................................................................. 1
  The setting ................................................................. 3
  Methodology and approach ........................................... 6
  Historiography .......................................................... 10
  Structure of the dissertation .........................................13
CHAPTER 1: TOWN, SAINT, AND MINSTER ..........................15
  The town of Beverley ..................................................15
  St. John of Beverley ...................................................19
  The constitution of the Minster .....................................24
THE MINSTER’S FABRIC BEFORE THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY .... 32
  The first Saxon building ..............................................32
  The second Saxon building ..........................................37
  The third Saxon building .............................................40
  The Romanesque building ..........................................48
  The first Gothic building ............................................51
  The Early English east end ..........................................56
PART I: THE NAVE

CHAPTER 2: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NAVE

Architectural description

Methodological approach and hindrances

The Minster’s appearance at the start of the fourteenth century

The start date of construction

THE SEQUENCE OF CONSTRUCTION

The first campaign

The second campaign

The third campaign

The fourth campaign

The fifth campaign

The sixth campaign

CHAPTER 3: FUNDRAISING FOR THE NAVE

The town

The laity in Yorkshire

The laity outside Yorkshire

The canons

PART II: THE FURNISHINGS

CHAPTER 4: THE SHRINE

Description

The contract and “opere cementario”
Chronology and fundraising........................................................................................................... 154

CHAPTER 5: THE REREDOS ........................................................................................................ 162
Description and chronology ........................................................................................................ 162
THE WESTERN FACE OF THE REREDOS............................................................................... 167
Description and condition ......................................................................................................... 167
Appearance and iconography ..................................................................................................... 172
THE EASTERN FACE OF THE REREDOS............................................................................... 179
Description and architectural analysis ..................................................................................... 179
Execution and original appearance .......................................................................................... 185
The reredos as a shrine base ...................................................................................................... 190
Occupation and visibility .......................................................................................................... 200

CHAPTER 6: THE SEDILIA ....................................................................................................... 205
Description ................................................................................................................................. 205
Location, restoration, and original appearance ......................................................................... 209
Attribution and stylistic context ............................................................................................... 216
Materiality and hierarchies of style .......................................................................................... 220
Iconography, scenography, and “big brother” ........................................................................... 227
Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 232
Appendix A: The Archbishops of York through the Reformation ........................................... 242
Bishops of York ......................................................................................................................... 242
Archbishops of York ................................................................................................................ 242
Appendix B: The Provosts of Beverley Minster ....................................................................... 244
Appendix C: Documents Cited in the Text .............................................................. 246

1. The account of the tower collapse, c. 1213-15 ........................................ 246

2. The contract for the shrine of St. John of Beverley (18 October 1292) ...... 249

Bibliography .................................................................................................. 251

ILLUSTRATIONS ......................................................................................... 274

Biography .................................................................................................... 466
Illustrations

All images are of Beverley Minster unless otherwise indicated.

Figure 1. Map of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire .......................................................... 275
Figure 2. Geology and topography of Beverley and surrounding area .......... 276
Figure 3. West facade from the Westwood Pastures ................................................. 277
Figure 4. Exterior, view from the southwest ............................................................. 278
Figure 5. Thomas Gent, Beverley Minster with Hawksomor’s dome (1733) .... 279
Figure 6. North Bar, Beverley (1409-10) ................................................................. 280
Figure 7. Percy tomb, from the north ........................................................................ 281
Figure 8. Stow Minster, eastern crossing arch (c. 1057) ........................................ 282
Figure 9. South nave aisle, arch of reused chevron (bay 2) ..................................... 283
Figure 10. Lincoln Cathedral, southeast crossing pier (c. 1195) ............................ 284
Figure 11. Choir, looking west .................................................................................. 285
Figure 12. Choir, south elevation .............................................................................. 286
Figure 13. Retro-choir, south side ............................................................................ 287
Figure 14. John Bilson, ground plan of Minster (1893) ........................................... 288
Figure 15. Chapter house, staircase ......................................................................... 289
Figure 16. Southwest transept, from the west ......................................................... 290
Figure 17. Northeast transept and choir, from the southwest ............................... 291
Figure 18. East window, 1416-8 .............................................................................. 292
Figure 19. Southwest transept facade, exterior ....................................................... 293
Figure 20. Southwest transept façade, interior .......................................................... 294
Figure 21. Eastern crossing and retro-choir, looking northeast ............................ 295
Figure 22. Choir, north elevation ............................................................................. 296
Figure 23. Blind arcading, west aisle of southwest transept .............................. 297
Figure 24. Triforium, north side of choir (bay 2) .................................................. 298
Figure 25. Lincoln Cathedral, St. Hugh's choir, blind arcading in aisle .......... 299
Figure 26. Northeast transept, south side .............................................................. 300
Figure 27. Eastern crossing, remains of abandoned lantern tower .................... 301
Figure 28. Eastern crossing, northeast and northwest piers ............................... 302
Figure 29. Junction, southwest transept and nave ............................................. 303
Figure 30. Junction, southwest transept and nave ............................................. 304
Figure 31. Nave, exterior of north side ................................................................. 305
Figure 32. Nave, exterior of south aisle ............................................................... 306
Figure 33. Nave, north aisle tracery (bay 3) ......................................................... 307
Figure 34. Nave, south aisle tracery (bay 5) ......................................................... 308
Figure 35. Nave, clerestory tracery (bay 3) ........................................................... 309
Figure 36. Nave, south side (exterior) ................................................................. 310
Figure 37. Nave, south aisle, parapet figure of the Creation of Eve ............... 311
Figure 38. Nave, south aisle, parapet figure of Flight from Paradise .............. 312
Figure 39. Selby Abbey, north side of choir ......................................................... 313
Figure 40. Selby Abbey, north side of choir, remains of parapet figure ......... 314
Figure 41. Nave, south aisle, tabernacle (bay 3) ................................................. 315
Figure 42. Nave, north aisle, niche (bay 3) ................................................................. 316
Figure 43. Nave, south aisle, buttress ............................................................... 317
Figure 44. Nave, south aisle, parapet level ........................................................... 318
Figure 45. Nave, looking east ............................................................................ 319
Figure 46. Nave, north elevation (looking west) .................................................. 320
Figure 47. Nave, looking east ............................................................................ 321
Figure 48. Junction of southwest transept and nave ......................................... 322
Figure 49. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-2) ......................................................... 323
Figure 50. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-4) ......................................................... 324
Figure 51. Nave, south elevation (bays 1-3) ......................................................... 325
Figure 52. Nave, north side, base of vaulting shaft (bay 3) .............................. 326
Figure 53. Nave, south arcades, label stops ...................................................... 327
Figure 54. Western face of central tower, abutment of Romanesque roof ....... 328
Figure 55. Nave, north side (bays 1-2) and height of Romanesque elevation ... 329
Figure 56. Nave, north side (bays 1-2) and edge of Early English campaign .... 330
Figure 57. Nave, south side (bays 1-3) and edge of Early English campaign .... 331
Figure 58. St. Albans, nave, north side, junction of 12C and 13C work .......... 332
Figure 59. York Minster, chapter house (c. 1275-85) ....................................... 333
Figure 60. York Minster, chapter house vestibule (c. 1275-80) ....................... 334
Figure 61. York Minster, nave, looking east ...................................................... 335
Figure 62. South aisle, foliage capital (bay 3) ..................................................... 336
Figure 63. South aisle, looking east ................................................................. 337
Figure 64. South aisle (bays 1-4), with line indicating extent of 1st campaign ... 338
Figure 65. Nave, south aisle, showing extent of 1st campaign ......................... 339
Figure 66. Nave, south aisle (bay 1) ................................................................. 340
Figure 67. Nave, south aisle (bay 1) ................................................................. 341
Figure 68. Junction of southwest transept and nave ...................................... 342
Figure 69. Nave, south aisle, coursing of masonry ........................................ 343
Figure 70. Nave, south aisle (bay 3) ................................................................. 344
Figure 71. Nave, south aisle (bay 5) ................................................................. 345
Figure 72. Nave, south aisle, label stop (bay 1) ............................................... 346
Figure 73. Nave, south aisle, label stop (bay 2) ............................................... 347
Figure 74. Northwest transept, stiff-leaf capitals ........................................... 348
Figure 75. Nave, south aisle, capital (bay 2) ..................................................... 349
Figure 76. Nave, south aisle, capital (bay 3) ..................................................... 350
Figure 77. Nave, south aisle, infill of blind arcading (bay 3) ............................ 351
Figure 78. Nave, south aisle, detail of infill (bay 3) .......................................... 352
Figure 79. Nave, north aisle, bays 1-3 .............................................................. 353
Figure 80. Nave, north aisle, looking west ..................................................... 354
Figure 81. Junction of northwest transept and north aisle of nave .................. 355
Figure 82. Nave, north aisle (bay 1) ................................................................. 356
Figure 83. Nave, north aisle (bay 2) ................................................................. 357
Figure 84. Nave, north aisle (bay 4) ................................................................. 358
Figure 85. Nave, north aisle, capital (bay 2) ..................................................... 359
Figure 86. Nave, north aisle, capital (bay 4) .......................................................... 360
Figure 87. Nave, north aisle, label stop (bay 2) ......................................................... 361
Figure 88. Nave, north aisle, label stop (bay 4) ......................................................... 362
Figure 89. Nave, north aisle, blind arcading (bay 3) ................................................. 363
Figure 90. Nave, north aisle (bays 1-2) ..................................................................... 364
Figure 91. Nave, north aisle, vaulting shaft and plinth (bay 3) ............................... 365
Figure 92. Nave, south aisle (bays 1-2) and southwest transept ............................. 366
Figure 93. Nave, south elevation ............................................................................... 367
Figure 94. Nave, north elevation ............................................................................... 368
Figure 95. Nave, north elevation, label stop of musician (bays 2-3) ...................... 369
Figure 96. Nave, north elevation, label stop of musician (bays 3-4) ...................... 370
Figure 97. Nave, north side, label stop (bays 4-5) ..................................................... 371
Figure 98. Nave, south elevation (bays 4-7) ............................................................... 372
Figure 99. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-3) ............................................................... 373
Figure 100. Nave, north triforium (bays 1-2) ............................................................. 374
Figure 101. Nave, south triforium (bays 3-5) ............................................................. 375
Figure 102. Nave, south clerestory, masonry break (bay 7) ................................. 376
Figure 103. Nave, roof level, masonry break above vault (bay 7) ......................... 377
Figure 104. Nave, south aisle, junction of 13C and 14C moldings (bay 2) ......... 378
Figure 105. Nave, vault of south aisle (bay 1), showing extension voussoir ...... 379
Figure 106. Nave, clerestory tracery ........................................................................ 380
Figure 107. Selby Abbey, east window .................................................................... 381
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Carlisle Cathedral, east window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Hull, Holy Trinity, detail of east window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Nave, south side, showing aisle and clerestory tracery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Nave, south side (bays 1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Nave, north elevation (bays 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Nave, south elevation, bays 3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Choir, north elevation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Nave, north clerestory (bays 2-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Washington Cathedral, nave (c. 1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>Armstrong and Cant, summary of findings in the nave roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Nave, vault, looking east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Nave, vault (bays 2-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Junction of vault, nave and central tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Northeast transept, looking northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Nave, south aisle, vault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Vault webs and patterns in the Decorated period (Frankl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>Vault webs and patterns in the Decorated period (Wilson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Wells Cathedral, Lady Chapel, vault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Ottery St. Mary, vault of east end, crossing, and nave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>Lincoln Cathedral, nave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Junction of southwest transept and nave, with setting-off buttress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Nave, vault (bays 1-5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 130. Southwest transept, bracket for John of Beverley’s standard .......... 404
Figure 131. Reredos, east face, niche with capital of guildsmen ..................... 405
Figure 132. Reredos, western face from choir ............................................ 406
Figure 133. Reredos, eastern face (looking west) ........................................ 407
Figure 134. Reredos, upper platform ............................................................. 408
Figure 135. Junction of Percy tomb and reredos staircase .............................. 409
Figure 136. Reredos, western side (detail) ..................................................... 410
Figure 137. Reredos, western face, main niches and gables ............................ 411
Figure 138. John Carter, Percy tomb, with Hawksmoor’s altar screen (1791) .... 412
Figure 139. Richard Lewis Wright, western side of reredos, 1829 .................... 413
Figure 140. Reredos, original fragment of west face ...................................... 414
Figure 141. Nave, north triforium (bays 3-4) ............................................... 415
Figure 142. Reredos, east face and platform ................................................ 416
Figure 143. Reredos, east face, base of Purbeck pier .................................... 417
Figure 144. Reredos, east face, capital of Legend of Theophilus ...................... 418
Figure 145. Reredos, east face, canopy of niche .......................................... 419
Figure 146. Reredos, east face, blind tracery ............................................... 420
Figure 147. Reredos, east face, detail of tracery .......................................... 421
Figure 148. Reredos, eastern face, vault of interior ....................................... 422
Figure 149. Nicholas Dawton, identification of subjects of reredos vault .......... 423
Figure 150. Reredos, eastern face, boss of the Coronation of the Virgin .......... 424
Figure 151. Exeter Cathedral, pulpitum ....................................................... 425
Figure 152. Southwell Minster, pulpitum, from the west ........................................ 426
Figure 153. Reredos, eastern face, crosses on buttress crenellations ................. 427
Figure 154. Reredos, east face, base of vaulting shaft ........................................ 428
Figure 155. Mackenzie, engraving of St. Stephen’s, Westminster (1844) .......... 429
Figure 156. Reredos, eastern face, tracery on buttress ........................................ 430
Figure 157. St-Urbain, Troyes, terminal wall of apse .......................................... 431
Figure 158. Reredos, eastern face, mismatched diaper ......................................... 432
Figure 159. Reredos, eastern face, mismatched diaper ......................................... 433
Figure 160. St. Albans, shrine base ........................................................................ 434
Figure 161. St. Albans, shrine base with plinth of quatrefoils ............................... 435
Figure 162. Winchester Cathedral, reredos .......................................................... 436
Figure 163. Northwest crossing pier, scars of original pulpitum .......................... 437
Figure 164. Peterborough Cathedral, west facade ................................................. 438
Figure 165. Sedilia, front (north) side .................................................................... 439
Figure 166. Sedilia, cornice of wainscoting ......................................................... 440
Figure 167. Sedilia, ogee arch and gable ............................................................... 441
Figure 168. Sedilia, rear (south) side ..................................................................... 442
Figure 169. Sedilia, rear side, blind tracery ............................................................ 443
Figure 170. Sedilia, interior, vault corbel ............................................................... 444
Figure 171. Sedilia, vault of interior ....................................................................... 445
Figure 172. Sedilia, interior, vault of third bay ...................................................... 446
Figure 173. Sedilia, interior, boss of Christ ............................................................ 447
Figure 174. Photograph, south choir aisle (c. 1870)................................. 448
Figure 175. Bartlett, water-color of retro-choir and southeast transept (1829) .. 449
Figure 176. Sedilia, interior, junction of medieval and restoration work .......... 450
Figure 177. Sedilia, bench, junction of medieval and restoration work........... 451
Figure 178. Ely Cathedral, Lady Chapel, blind arcading............................... 452
Figure 179. Sedilia, buttress and foliage ..................................................... 453
Figure 180. Percy tomb, caryatid and gable ................................................. 454
Figure 181. Sedilia, soffits of gable .............................................................. 455
Figure 182. Hawton, sedilia ........................................................................ 456
Figure 183. Heckington, sedilia ................................................................... 457
Figure 184. Patrington, sedilia .................................................................... 458
Figure 185. Patrington, Lady Chapel in the south transept............................ 459
Figure 186. Westminster Abbey, sedilia, front (north) side ......................... 460
Figure 187. Westminster Abbey, sedilia, back (south) side ........................... 461
Figure 188. Westminster Abbey, tombs on north side of presbytery ............. 462
Figure 189. Islip Roll, showing choir of Westminster Abbey (c. 1520)......... 463
Figure 190. Sedilia, foliage on canopies ....................................................... 464
Figure 191. Southwell Minster, sedilia ......................................................... 465
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Introduction

“Sir Walter Scott warns us to visit Melrose Abbey by moonlight; but what, even by moonlight, is that mangled fragment of a second-rate church, with its mean surroundings, compared with the vision of Beverley Minster in its entire and perfect beauty?”

Arthur Leach, *Memorials of Beverley Minster* (1898)\(^1\)

“Every ancient building has a life-history of its own, and should be studied biographically.”

Francis Bond, *The Cathedrals of England and Wales* (1912)\(^2\)

Despite its importance to English – indeed European – architecture, Beverley Minster remains one of the most neglected monuments of the Gothic period. Strangely, it is also one of the most widely praised. When John Leland came to Beverley in 1541, he noted, with his usual brevity, that the Minster was “of a fair uniforme making.”\(^3\) Most of the English antiquarians routinely visited the town, singling out the Minster as one of the most splendid buildings in Great Britain.\(^4\) Thomas Rickman, the “grandfather” of English Gothic historiography, wrote that Beverley is “a building much less known than its great value merits it

\(^{1}\) Leach (1898), x.

\(^{2}\) Bond (1912), 1.

\(^{3}\) Leland (1907), 46.

\(^{4}\) See, for example, their annual tours of Yorkshire in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth. Oliver (1829), 23, 26-9, 51-4; Hope (1895); Kitson and Crossley (1909).
should be” and that its sculpture was “superior, as a study, to York Minster.”

Its reredos, he claimed, was “one of the best schools in England for Decorated
details,” and the entire building was “so remarkably well worked as to deserve
the most minute examination.”

John Bilson, the most insightful architectural
historian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, observed that “it is
scarcely too much to say that no more perfect church of its size exists in our
country.” His contemporary Arthur Leach rhapsodized that the Minster’s
“proportions are perfect and its details exquisite... it is a perfect work of the best
period.”

This chorus of praise has continued to the present day, and many scholars
have emphasized that Beverley is a pivotal monument in the history of English
architecture. Surprisingly, however, this universal admiration has led to little
in-depth research. In the past century, only two articles have been published on
the architectural history of the Minster. Beverley has no position in the general
narratives of Gothic England (or of medieval architecture as a whole), and its

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{5} Rickman (1825), 105.
\bibitem{6} Rickman (1825), 346.
\bibitem{7} Bilson (1898), 197.
\bibitem{8} Leach (1898), ix–x.
\bibitem{9} For example, Draper (2006), 167-171; Coldstream (1994), 44, 46, 176, 173; Wilson (1990), 170-
174; Brieger (1957), 48-51; Webb (1956), 100-102, 150-151; Kidson and Murray (1962), 80-81, 127;
Bond (1906), 91, 436, 511, 535.
\bibitem{10} Hoey (1984); Wilson (1991).
\end{thebibliography}
representation in the literature is essentially non-existent. With a few important
exceptions, the Minster has been relegated to the no-man’s-land of the footnote --
or else to glowing, but brief, descriptions in survey texts.\(^\text{11}\) In the \textit{realpolitik}
English Gothic, Beverley always seems to be lurking just off-stage, never
managing to get into the spotlight where it belongs.

\textbf{The setting}

The town of Beverley is located in the East Riding of Yorkshire, 200 miles
north of London and 40 miles east of York (Figs. 1-2). From several directions,
the view of the Minster and surrounding countryside remains unchanged from
the Middle Ages. Anyone who has approached Beverley by bus or car knows
that the vision of the Minster rising beyond the Westwood Pastures is one of the
most poetic sights in England (Fig. 3). If Constable had ever painted it, Beverley
Minster would now be more famous than Salisbury Cathedral. The church’s
west facade, called “the most perfect frontispiece in all of Gothic architecture,”
dominates the landscape for miles in every direction.\(^\text{12}\) During the Middle Ages,
it served to broadcast the supremacy of the canons, their institution, and the
relics of their patron saint. Now, it looms over a quiet English town, visible from

\(^{11}\) \textsc{webb} (1956), 100-1; \textsc{evans} (1949), 171-2; \textsc{wilson} (1990), 172-4; \textsc{kidson} and \textsc{murray} (1962), 96.
\(^{12}\) \textsc{camden} (1806), vol. 3, 181.
every spot -- especially at night, when the building is spectacularly floodlit. The canons would undoubtedly have approved.

The Minster was founded in the early eighth century by John of Beverley, bishop of York between 706 and c. 714. He spent his retirement in Beverley and quickly attracted a quasi-Apostolic following. John was widely celebrated during his lifetime for the miracles he performed, some of which were recorded by his personal friend Bede. John’s tomb quickly became a popular site of pilgrimage, and he was officially canonized in 1037. The monastery that John built was probably destroyed by the Danes in the ninth century. At least two (and possibly three) churches followed. Later, there was a flurry of building activity under the last three Saxon archbishops of York: Aelfric (1023-51), Cynesige (1051-60), and Ealdred (1061-69). In the middle of the twelfth century, the nave was reconstructed in the Romanesque style, and the late Saxon presbytery may also have been remodeled at this time.

In 1188, Beverley was ravaged by fire, leading to the construction of the present Minster. It is a highly ambitious building on a vast, cathedral-like scale – expensive, profusely decorated, and designed to overawe. It was built in three

13 York was not made an archdiocese until 735, so Egberht was technically the first Archbishop of York. The chronology of archbishops is given in Appendix A. For biographical details of John of Beverley, see WILSON (2006), 19-35.
main phases. The east end (c. 1220-c. 1255) is a superlative example of the Early English style, and pilgrims flocked to its high altar for over three centuries to venerate St. John’s immensely precious shrine. The nave of the Minster dates from the fourteenth century and was completed to a surprisingly retrospective design. Rather than surging ahead with all the latest innovations of the Decorated style, the architect instead created a subtly modernized facsimile of the choir and transepts that preceded him. The east end and nave of Beverley flow seamlessly into one another, despite the separation of over a century. This “historicism” and continuity will be one of the leitmotifs of this dissertation.

The west façade of the Minster -- with its soaring towers and sweeping expanses of glass -- was the final part of the building to be completed. Work stopped here around 1420, and for the first time in centuries, the building was finally free of scaffolding and the commotion of construction.

Beverley fell into rapid decline after the Reformation, and the Minster was in an appalling state of disrepair by the early eighteenth century. Nicholas Hawksmoor carried out a major restoration between 1717 and 1731. His

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15 According to Leland in 1548, the area surrounding the Minster was already “greatly decay’d” and the provost’s house was in ruins. LELAND (1907), 46-7.
16 HALL (1993); BARNWELL (2001); OLIVER (1829)-9. The original expense accounts for Hawksmoor’s restoration survive: East Riding Archive Office, BC / IV / 14 / 1.
interventions saved the Minster from imminent collapse, but his unfortunate ogival dome (Fig. 5) transformed the western crossing into a kind of immense Gothick garden pavilion. This was demolished in 1812, leaving a square stub underneath.17 Aside from George Gilbert Scott’s choir screen (completed in 1884) and some minor glass, the Minster escaped the Victorian period relatively unscathed. No other major alterations have been made to the fabric, and the medieval Minster remains splendidly intact.

**Methodology and approach**

This thesis is first and foremost a monograph on an unjustly neglected building. My decision to focus on a single church was in part ideological. For the past century and half, the monograph has reigned supreme over the study of Gothic architecture in France, Germany, and Spain. For cathedrals and abbeys on the Continent, book-length treatments of a single building are the standard apparatus by which scholars interrogate architecture. Monographs allow a full discussion of a monument’s physical fabric, sequence of construction, patronage, historical context, primary sources, and whatever thematic questions most appeal to the author. They permit architecture to be investigated rigorously,

17 The lack of a central tower is usually cited as the Minster’s sole aesthetic deficiency, just as it is at Westminster Abbey.
deeply, and sensitively. Having the final word on any building is, of course, impossible; but a monograph gives authors the “breathing room” to develop a thorough grasp of their material and the expertise needed to analyze it.

For whatever reason, monographs have never been popular for English Gothic architecture. This is surprising, as Robert Willis – one of the key figures in establishing architectural history as a “true” academic discipline – published numerous monographs throughout his career. The critical template that he created did not last past the mid-nineteenth century. Today, publications on English Gothic almost never focus on specific buildings; they are instead divided up and endlessly categorized according to time period, regional school, geographical area, or religious affiliation. The current method of inquiry is intentionally diffuse, covering multiple buildings in multiple places -- often at a dizzying pace. This has led, in my opinion, to a reductive, “slice and dice” mentality in which the essential integrity of buildings is negated and architectural minutiae are pursued as goals in themselves. “Trainspotting” stylistic features like continuous keeled rolls or unencircled trefoils is immensely satisfying, and everyone should do it as much as possible; but deracinated bits of masonry ultimately have little to offer. For at least the past two decades, the

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18 Willis’s works are compiled in the very useful collection, WILLIS (1972-73).
historiography of English Gothic has been characterized by fragmentation, in which attention cannot be focused on a single building for more than a few pages at a time.

Fewer than five monographs have been published on English Gothic buildings in the past decade. The standard authority for most cathedrals is now the relevant volume of the *British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions* series, as proper monographs for most of them do not exist. When I began searching for a dissertation topic in 2007, I decided to focus on a single building to see if a monographic approach could be just as useful and productive for England as it is for France. I wanted to immerse myself in a complex set of problems that were interrelated, localized, and would reward long and careful study. I wanted to show that concentration on a single monument would yield good results and be intellectually rewarding in itself; and I figured that a doctoral thesis would be a less public disaster if I turned out to be incorrect.

The primary focus of this thesis is the work completed at Beverley Minster during the fourteenth century, in what is known as the Decorated style (c. 1308-c. 1370). I chose this time period for several reasons. The thirteenth-

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19 The most important are Engel (2007); Brown (2003); Rodwell and Mortimer (2010).
20 See, for example, Coldstream and Draper (1980); Keen and Cocke (1996); Gransden (1998); Lindley and Henig (2001); Alexander (1998); McNeill (2008); Monckton and Morris (2011).
century work has already been treated in two exemplary articles,\textsuperscript{21} so the choir and transepts seem unlikely to offer new insights. The nave of the Minster, however, is a \textit{tabula rasa}. Hardly a page has been published about its architecture,\textsuperscript{22} and its “classicizing” design poses fascinating aesthetic, stylistic, historical, and even institutional questions. After settling on the nave as a dissertation topic, I quickly realized that the furnishings in the choir (the reredos, sedilia, and former shrine) were themselves neglected masterpieces of the Decorated style. They are contemporary with the nave but antithetical to it. Unlike the building, the Minster’s liturgical furniture is aggressively modern and avant-garde, featuring some of the most cosmopolitan sculpture in all of fourteenth-century England.

These two divergent strains of the Decorated style -- historicist and contemporary -- can only be studied in unison at Beverley. The Minster is the only place in England where they co-exist. Despite its obscurity, Beverley Minster turns out to be a pivotal monument in Britain for a comprehensive understanding of the Decorated style. Proper study of the Minster in turn transforms our interpretations of fourteenth-century architecture throughout the

\textsuperscript{21} \textsc{Hoey} (1984); \textsc{Wilson} (1991).

\textsuperscript{22} \textsc{Dawton} (2000), 107-10; \textsc{Petit} (1848), 13-5.
entire country. This, in the end, is the true value of a monograph: focus on a single building is not architectural isolationism, but a springboard for global discovery. The specificity of one site is a vehicle for reassessment of the built environment on a much broader level.

**Historiography**

The scholarly commentary devoted to Beverley Minster is minimal. In 1829, antiquarians George Oliver and George Poulson both published volumes on Beverley; these were ostensibly histories of the town but also included the Minster as part of the general discussion. Unfortunately, both books were poorly researched and relied heavily on spurious local traditions. Poulson in particular had a penchant for simply making things up as he went along. As a result, both he and Oliver must be approached with caution, as it is often impossible to separate fact from fiction.

In 1848, J. L. Petit published a brief architectural description of the Minster in an article for the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. The first major article on the architecture of the Minster was published by John Bilson

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23 Oliver (1829); Poulson (1829).
24 Petit (1848).
in 1895. It contained the results of his excavation of the former chapter house, which had been destroyed at the Reformation. Bilson determined that the original chapter house had been octagonal in shape and was coeval with the rest of the east end (c. 1250). Bilson also published two additional short articles on Beverley in 1893 and 1917.

Incredibly, the next major article on the Minster did not appear until 1984, when Larry Hoey examined the choir and transepts. His analysis situated the east end in the larger context of the Early English style, especially in regard to Lincoln Cathedral and the Cistercian traditions of northern England. Seven years later, Christopher Wilson published a second article on the east end of the Minster. He attributed the building to the same anonymous architect who designed the eastern arm at Fountains and the nearby Cistercian abbey at Meaux. Wilson also analyzed the construction of the Minster’s high vaults and flying buttresses.

In the year 2000, the Friends of Beverley Minster issued a fine collection of essays dealing with the medieval and post-medieval history of the church.

25 Bilson (1895).
26 Bilson (1893); Bilson (1917).
29 Horrox (2000).
Although it contains little new information, the book is a very useful compendium of the published historical sources. It also contains two articles by Nicholas Dawton analyzing all of the Decorated sculpture (including tombs) in the building.\footnote{Dawton (2000); Dawton (2000).}

John of Beverley himself has recently been the subject of his first biography, published by Sarah Wilson in 2006.\footnote{Wilson (2006).} She discusses St. John’s background and career, and provides a long commentary on all the textual sources (\textit{vitae}, miracle stories, prose accounts) that comprise his hagiography. For the medieval constitution of the Minster and the lives of its canons and officers, Richard McDermid’s volume of the \textit{Fasti} is exemplary in its detail.\footnote{McDermid (1993).}

The most important set of primary sources for this dissertation is the Chapter Act book, the compilation of the Minster’s legal and administrative transactions between c. 1303 and c. 1338. Similar records from before and after this period have not survived, so the Act book is precious evidence of the inner workings of the Minster in the early fourteenth century. The original MS (now in The National Archives, London) was transcribed by Arthur Leach and published
in two volumes by the Surtees Society in 1898 and 1903.\textsuperscript{33} The building fabric is only mentioned in passing, but the Chapter Act book still offers substantial insights into the Minster’s architectural history. Leach’s volumes will be cited repeatedly throughout this dissertation.

Structure of the dissertation

The focus of this thesis is the Decorated work at Beverley. Chapter 1 sets the stage for this discussion, featuring a brief outline of the geography and history of the town and then a short introduction to John of Beverley and his cult. The remainder of the first chapter is devoted to the Minster’s architectural history prior to the fourteenth century. I proceed chronologically through all of the previous buildings that have stood on the site, including the destroyed Saxon and Romanesque Minsters. I then review the chronology and style of the east end that was built in the thirteenth century and consecrated in 1260.

Chapter 2 contains the analysis of the nave. I detail the Minster’s appearance at the start of construction and reveal how the Gothic and Romanesque buildings were originally joined together. I then outline the sequence of construction of the Decorated nave (that is, bays 2 through 7), which is here divided into six campaigns spanning the years c. 1308 to c. 1370. The

\textsuperscript{33} LEACH (1898); LEACH (1903).
discussion of each campaign features architectural analysis, along with primary sources and historical contextualization when that information exists.

Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the financial realities of constructing the nave. I include a detailed analysis of how the building was paid for, and the probable amounts of money contributed by the laity, canons, and municipal leaders of the town.

Chapters 4 through 6 are devoted to the shrine, reredos, and sedilia, respectively. I discuss the documentary evidence for the fabrication of the shrine of John of Beverley, including the contract that the canons signed with the original artist in 1292. I argue that in addition to serving as the backdrop for the high altar, the Minster’s reredos was also the platform on which John’s feretrum was displayed until it its destruction at the Reformation. I also analyze the reredos’s original program of sculpture and decoration. The thesis concludes by using the sedilia as a “test case” to examine the nature of artistic production in the fourteenth century, particularly the creative exchange between the sedilia and the famous Percy tomb that faces it across the chancel.
CHAPTER 1: TOWN, SAINT, AND MINSTER

The town of Beverley

Situated two hundred miles north of London and forty miles east of York, the town of Beverley lies off the series of chalk hills, or Wolds, that stretches from the River Humber to the North Sea (Figs. 1-2). In prehistoric times, this crescent of escarpments formed the original east coast of England. By the Mesolithic period (c. 8,000 B.C.), glaciers had scooped out a new valley beyond, forming a large marshland bisected by the River Hull. Beverley sat on the small chain of islands that rose above it, forming the only passable route to the plains of Holderness. Until the great drainage works of the eighteenth century, this area was prone to regular flooding, and several miracle stories from the twelfth century record that Beverley was surrounded by a large network of reservoirs. Even the town’s late Saxon name, Beverlac (or “lake of beavers”), shows that water, not land, was its most defining characteristic. For most of the medieval period, the Minster was an oasis among dense wetlands, towering over the

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1 The geography and earliest history of the area are described in EVANS (2000), 13-14; EVANS (1991), 1; MILLER et al. (1982), 1-3; HORROX (1989), 2-3.
surrounding “seascape” just as St. Etheldreda’s church at Ely loomed over the Fens of East Anglia.

Archaeological investigation over the past two decades has uncovered Neolithic and Iron Age settlements on the outskirts of Beverley, and there is evidence of Roman occupation during the second and third centuries. The town had little significance, however, until John of Beverley, bishop of York between 705 and 718, selected it at his place of retirement. His death and burial there in 721 transformed Beverley into the most important urban center of the East Riding. Pilgrims thronged to pay homage to his tomb, and a sizeable population settled to the north of John’s monastic compound. Proximity to the North Sea gave Beverley powerful trade advantages, and its commercial prosperity grew from the tenth century onward. Until the rise of Hull at the end of the thirteenth century, Beverley was the unrivalled import and export center for all of Yorkshire.

Beverley enjoyed an international reputation for the quality of its cloth. “Beverley blue,” dyed with the woad that still grows throughout the area, was the town’s most precious commodity. It is first mentioned during the reign of

4 POSTAN (1973), 34-9; LLOYD (1977), 112-16; LAMBERT (1912), 100-11; GLASSOCK (1973), 133-39.
5 LISTER (1924), 122-28; LLOYD (1977), 12-18.
Henry II, and was exported to Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Cloth was also the main staple of the robust trade connections between Beverley and Flanders. Even today, the name of the road leading from the east end of the Minster, Flemingate, advertises the tradesmen from Bruges and Ghent who settled there by at least the twelfth century. In addition to cloth, Beverley was famous for its leather, which was exported to southern and western England and parts of the Continent.

In the Middle Ages, the entire northeast quadrant of Beverley seems to have been filled with tanneries, to the intense chagrin of its neighbors. In the fourteenth century, the Dominican friars complained that the reek of decomposing hides was unbearable whenever the wind blew in the wrong direction.

The town acquired numerous grants and privileges from an early date. Popular tradition held that King Athelstan visited John’s tomb en route to Scotland in 938 and later credited John for his military victories. Athelstan was said to have rewarded Beverley with freedom from taxation and its famous right of sanctuary. Although the story is apocryphal, compilations of Beverley’s liberties increased after the Norman Conquest. In the early 1120s, Henry I

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7 Miller et al. (1982), 32-3.
extended the town’s annual fair from two to five days. In 1136, King Stephen confirmed a host of earlier privileges under William the Conqueror and Edward the Confessor.\textsuperscript{10} By the mid-twelfth century, Beverley had a total of three yearly fairs, more than York itself. These took place on the feast days of John of Beverley (May 7), the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24), and St. John’s translation (October 25).\textsuperscript{11}

Beverley was the eleventh most populous town in England in 1377, with twice as many inhabitants as Hull and about half as many as York.\textsuperscript{12} In the fourteenth century, the town was governed by a committee of twelve keepers ("custodes") or governors ("gubernatores"). Each was elected annually from the merchants’ guild on St. Mark’s Day (April 25) for a term of one year.\textsuperscript{13} Their constant lawsuits and zealous protection of Beverley’s privileges greatly contributed to the affluence of the town. Trade and commercial ventures brought enormous profits and a skyrocketing economy. In 1362, Beverley was the eleventh wealthiest town in the entire kingdom of England.\textsuperscript{14} Its income

\textsuperscript{10} \textsc{Horrox} (1989), 7.
\textsuperscript{11} \textsc{Edwards} (1967), 23-8; \textsc{Heard} (1962), 122-31.
\textsuperscript{12} \textsc{Edwards} (1967), 22.
\textsuperscript{13} \textsc{Leach} (1900), xxv-xxviii; \textsc{Horrox} (1989), 20.
\textsuperscript{14} \textsc{Glassock} (1973), 23-4; \textsc{Oliver} (1829), 35-7; \textsc{Ormrod} (2000), 79; \textsc{Prestwich} (1976), 15.
consistently outranked cities with much higher populations, and its standard of living was among the highest in the North.\(^{15}\)

Unlike York, Beverley was never walled, but was surrounded by a large ditch dating from at least the twelfth century. Entrance to the town was via four main gates known as Bars, although only North Bar (Fig. 6) managed to escape demolition in the nineteenth century.\(^{16}\) Built in 1409, it is remarkably well preserved, and the original building contract details the total number of bricks used in its construction and even their cost.\(^{17}\) Today, North Bar forms the dramatic backdrop to Beverley’s main square and its weekly Saturday market, just as it did in the Middle Ages.

**St. John of Beverley**

John of Beverley is traditionally believed to have been born around the year 640 in Harpham, a tiny village eighteen miles outside of Beverley. His parents, who were both of noble birth, enrolled him in the double monastery at Whitby under Abbess Hilda.\(^{18}\) John was then educated at Canterbury, where his prowess as a scholar and diplomat were quickly recognized. His first major

\(^{15}\) Poulson (1829), 38-41; Thompson (1917), 22-28.

\(^{16}\) For the Bars and defenses of Beverley, see Miller et al. (1982), 39-45.

\(^{17}\) Bilson (1896); Leach (1896).

\(^{18}\) For the issue of John’s high social status and birth to nobility, see Wilson (2006), 21-2.
ecclesiastical appointment was to the see of Hexham in 687, where John was bishop for the next nineteen years. During this period, John headed synods, performed several miracles, and ordained Bede -- his long-time personal friend -- as both a deacon and a priest. John was transferred to the see of York in 706 and seems to have remained bishop until c. 714, when old age prevented him from performing his duties. He appointed Wilfrid as his replacement and lived out the rest of his life in Beverley in silent prayer and contemplation. Even John’s death in 721 seems to have passed quietly, as Alcuin recounted so beautifully:

[John] entered the monastery with a devout heart,
There ending a life so worthy of God,
And, taking leave of his exile on this earth,
He returned, the heir to his own heavenly homeland.\(^{19}\)

Pilgrims thronged to Beverley to venerate John’s tomb immediately upon his death. His reputation for miracles was already widespread, and John remains one of the few English saints who possessed supernatural powers while he was still alive.\(^{20}\) According to Bede, two of these miracles were performed while John was dedicating churches, an activity he seems to have relished.\(^{21}\) That his relics prompted the construction of one of the finest buildings in England is

\(^{19}\) “Atque monasterium devoto corde petivit, / condignamque Deo vitam complevit ibidem, / iuraque tunc tandem terrae peregrine relinquent / est patriae proprius caelesti redditus heres.”
\(^{21}\) COLGRAVE and MYNORS (1969), 463, 465.
therefore a just turn of events. John’s posthumous reputation spread remarkably quickly. Already in 754, his death was recorded in a necrology in Bavaria, and his feast day was included in northern liturgical calendars by at least the beginning of the ninth century.22

In her recent monograph on John of Beverley, Susan Wilson outlined the most important textual sources for John’s life.23 The crucial account is Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the only *vita* composed by someone who knew John personally.24 Bede based most of his information on the eyewitness accounts of John’s favorite deacon, Berthun. Around 792, Alcuin turned the Bedan account into verse, but added little new information.25 Folcard’s *Vita Sancti Johannis*, composed c. 1060-9, was a powerful tool in the revival of Anglo-Saxon saints in the twelfth century.26 The *Miracula Sancti Johannis*, the largest collection of miracles, is attributed to William Ketell (a clerk of Beverley) and was probably compiled in 1140 or 1150.27

John of Beverley was particularly skilled at healing the blind and restoring speech to the mute. He was also, very notably, one of the only English saints

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25 Godman (1982), 87-95.  
26 Raine (1879), 239-60; Wilson (2006), 143-56.  
27 Raine (1879), 261-91; Wilson (2006), 157-76.
ever given the power to resurrect people from the dead. A miracle story from
the mid-twelfth century reports the death of a child who fell from the Minster
while watching an Easter play in the churchyard below. John miraculously
appeared and brought the dead boy back to life, to the astonishment of the
assembled crowd. There could be no greater demonstration of the power and
prestige of John’s cult. Resurrection was the *ne plus ultra* of divine intervention,
and it confirmed that John of Beverley stood at the apex of England’s saintly
hierarchy.

John also worked on a much more intimate scale. Wills and obits prove
that testators held John of Beverley in great affection, and he seems to have
been a recurrent figure in medieval personal piety. St. John’s name shows up
frequently in the marginalia of Books of Hours, showing that he had a strong
hold on people’s daily spiritual life. Everyday individuals seem to have viewed
him as a saint who was simultaneously powerful and friendly. The great mystic
Julian of Norwich herself singled out John as both a “full high saint” and a “kind
neighbor”:

> And Seynt Johnn of Beverley, oure Lorde shewed hym full hyly in comfort
> of us for homelynesse and brought to my mynde how he is a kynd

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28 *Raine* (1879), 328-30.
neyghbur and of oure knowyng. And God callyd hym Seynt Johnn of Beverley plenlyly as we do, and that with a fulle glade and swet chere, shewyng that he is a full hygh sent in hys syght and a blessydfulle.31

Although it is virtually unknown today, John of Beverley had the second most important cult in medieval northern England.32 Next to St. Cuthbert at Durham, John was the most popular saint in the North -- beloved for his antiquity, power, and divine example. The Miracula record that pilgrims journeyed to Beverley from all over Wales, Scotland, and Ireland to venerate his tomb and shrine.33 Even more importantly, they came from continental Europe.34 Although it is not generally well known, John of Beverley was one of the only English saints who generated pilgrimage on an international scale. His cult never approached the wild popularity of that of Thomas Becket; but even so, the shrine of John of Beverley was an important pilgrimage destination for people from France and Germany -- many of whom made the long trip north to see him and him alone.35

Unlike other Anglo-Saxon saints, John seems to have been quickly forgotten at the Reformation. It is difficult to understand why, as he was never

31 NORWICH (2005), 52-3.
32 WILSON (2003), 23-8; GODMAN (1982), 18-9; Raine (1859), 31-39; WALL (1905), 22-3.
34 WILSON (2006), 1.
35 Fowler (1913), 12.
targeted for iconoclasm. The economic depression and general decline of east Yorkshire during the sixteenth century may be partially to blame. Even among scholars who focus on medieval theology, John is now a shadowy and peripheral figure; the saint who was once a medieval “household name” is now as unknown as the remarkable church that he founded. One of the major aims of this dissertation is to rehabilitate the reputation of an unjustly neglected saint. John of Beverley deserves to be widely recognized -- not just among art historians, but by all scholars who work on the Middle Ages. Any discussion of the major saints in medieval England – indeed, of Europe in general – needs to include him.

The constitution of the Minster

By the fourteenth century, the tiny monastery that John founded had swelled into a massive establishment. By the time of the Norman Conquest, Beverley had turned into one of the most important religious houses in northern England. It was one of the oldest foundations in Yorkshire, and -- even more importantly -- it was one of the richest. The Minster’s annual revenue came to just over £900 per year -- a very high total for an institution of its size.\textsuperscript{36} Among all the great houses of the North, Beverley ranked as the sixth wealthiest -- lower

\textsuperscript{36} LEACH (1894), 101.
only than York, Durham, St. Mary’s (York), Fountains, and Furness.\textsuperscript{37} York and Durham were cathedrals and Beverley naturally had no hope of competing with them. But against non-cathedral institutions, Beverley was nearly the wealthiest in northern England, and the income of Fountains Abbey only exceeded it by £47 per year. Among comparable churches, the Minster’s wealth was vast. Beverley’s sister institution, Southwell, had a yearly income of less than £470 per year, despite having nearly twice as many canons.\textsuperscript{38} In the East Riding, Beverley’s wealth easily eclipsed all of its competitors, far exceeding the annual profits of Selby, Howden, Bridlington, Patrington, and Holy Trinity, Hull.

The Chantry Certificate for Beverley is one of the few valuation documents to have survived for east Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{39} Compiled by Edward VI’s commissioners in 1546, it provides a full inventory of the Minster’s staff, including most incumbents’ name, title, income, expenditures, and clear value. The Certificate is the most detailed record available for understanding the Minster’s constitution in the Middle Ages. As Arthur Leach first demonstrated,

\textsuperscript{37} Wilson (1991), 182.

\textsuperscript{38} Leach (1894), 102.

\textsuperscript{39} Page (1895), 525-536.
there were a total of 77 men on the Minster’s “payroll” on the eve of the Reformation:40

1 provost  
9 canons or prebendaries, including the archbishop of York  
3 officers (precentor, sacrist, and chancellor)  
9 vicars choral  
7 parsons  
15 chantry priests  
1 Clerk of the Works  
1 chamberlain  
17 clerks (or “berefellarii”)  
4 sextons (sacristans)  
2 incense bearers  
8 choristers

There was no comparable assessment before the Suppression, and the Taxatio Nicholai of 1291 is a cursory (and dubious) valuation of only the provostry and prebendaries.41 Still, as McDermid showed, the total given in the Chantry roster cannot be radically different from the previous few centuries.42 Only the number of chantry priests is known to have changed: there were six in the early fourteenth century, as opposed to nine in 1444 and fifteen at the Reformation – confirmation that perpetual commemoration skyrocketed in the late medieval

40 LEACH (1894), 100; LEACH (1898), xxxv.  
41 MCDERMID (1993), xxii-xxiii.  
42 MCDERMID (1993), xxii-xxiv.
period. Fewer support staff would have been required in the Minster’s early history, and the tally of liturgical celebrants (clerks, thuriblers, etc.) is difficult to gauge and no doubt varied over time. Nevertheless, most of the other positions would have remained stable, and for the time period covered by this dissertation, the Minster would have been made up of around 70 official personnel.

The Minster’s corporate structure was notable for both its antiquity and its eccentricity. Originally, Beverley (like York) was a community of seven canons sharing a refectory, dormitory, and common income. After the Norman Conquest, Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux (1070/71-1100) reformed the York chapter on the Continental model, assigning individual prebends to each canon and a dean to oversee them. At Beverley, however, the canons continued with communal life for another century, and their revenue was probably not divided until the archiepiscopacy of Roger of Pont l’Evêque (1154-1181). Even when true prebends were created at Beverley, they had “little or no territorial basis” and derived their names, in very peculiar fashion, from the Minster altar to

43 In the fourteenth century, the Minster’s six chantries were attached to the altars of Sts. Nicholas, Katharine, Peter, and Michael, as well as the high altar (Edward I’s chantry) and “the beam in the middle of the choir” (“trabs in medio choiri”). LEACH (1898), lxiv-lxxvi.

44 The clearest summary of the constitution is McDERMID (1993), xv-xxx; see also LEACH (1898-99), xxxiii-lxxvi and PALLISER (2000), 25-29.


46 McDERMID (1993), xvii, xix-xx.
which they were attached.\textsuperscript{47} Thus, for the entire Middle Ages, the canons of Beverley were not known by their manor or estate holdings, but as the prebends of Sts. Andrew, James, Martin, Mary, Michael, Peter and Paul, Stephen, and Katherine.

By resisting Anglo-Norman church reforms and never appointing a dean, Beverley retained more evidence of its Saxon heritage than any other comparable English institution.\textsuperscript{48} In the Middle Ages, this was clearly seen as a badge of corporate pride, and anyone forced to challenge the Minster’s labyrinthine structure was doomed to frustration. Like the Office of Circumlocution in Charles Dickens’s \textit{Little Dorrit}, Beverley managed to drown its foes in endless reams of paperwork and confusion; everything was obfuscated by forged charters, circuitous local traditions, and ancient Anglo-Saxon privileges that York itself could never hope to match. When Archbishop John le Romeyn (1286-1296) attempted to implement changes after his visitation of Beverley in 1286, he noted, with obvious annoyance, that the Minster’s constitution was “primitive”

\textsuperscript{47} McDermid (1993), xix.
\textsuperscript{48} McDermid (1993), xviii.
(“statum primitivum”) and that nothing like it existed anywhere else in the country.49

The succession of Beverley’s forty-one provosts (see Appendix B) could trace its institution back to 1092.50 The so-called Provosts’ Book, a rental and customary text compiled in 1416, credits Thomas of Bayeux with creating the position.51 The official duties of the provost were to oversee the parishes and land holdings of the East Riding, ensure the collection of thraves of corn, and appoint the Minster’s officers and clerks. In reality, he spent most of his time trying to stop the canons’ eternal squabbling over communal property.

Even by the Minster’s standards, the provostry of Beverley was a “most peculiar institution.”52 The provost was given no stall in choir, no seat in chapter, and no bona fide role in the administration of the church. Most provosts were appointed from the upper echelons of Court, and were thus “exalted, but often remote, figureheads of a largely external administration.”53 Exalted, indeed: among its illustrious lineage, the provosts of Beverley could boast thirteen

49 “Tantis dotavit libertatibus, quod nullam habet quoad conditionem status in Anglia sibi parem.” LEACH (1903), 156-7.
50 For discussion of the provostry, see McDermid (1993), xviii-xix, 1-3; Leach (1898), xxxvii-xlii; Leach (1903), v-ix; Palliser (2000), 45.
51 Leach (1903), 332-334. The original MS of the Provosts’ Book is in the East Riding Archive Office, PE 129/150; excerpts transcribed in Leach (1903), 305-339.
52 Leach (1903), xxxvii.
53 McDermid (1993), xv.
bishops, five archbishops, five chancellors of England, one treasurer, two keepers of the privy seal, and two keepers of the wardrobe. Their most famous alumnus, Thomas Becket, was provost of Beverley at the same time (1154-1162) he was chancellor of England. He eventually resigned the post when Henry II promoted him as archbishop of Canterbury. Becket’s position at Beverley had, ironically, been a reward for his exemplary royal service and intimate friendship with the king – all of which were about to come crashing to an end.

The Minster had three principal officers: the precentor, sacrist, and chancellor. Their relatively low status was yet another of the Chapter’s idiosyncrasies. Elsewhere, these officers ranked higher than the canons (hence their usual title of “dignitaries”), while at Beverley they functioned in a “curiously half-developed state” with far less authority. They were never collated to prebends and were paid by the provost himself out of his own funds. Accordingly, none of the officers at Beverley was entitled to a place in chapter, and they could only appear there by special invitation. Otherwise, their roles seem to have been fairly standard: the sacrist oversaw the church treasury,

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54 McDermid (1993), xviii.
55 On the officers, see McDermid (1993), xxiv-xxv, 112-126; Leach (1898), lv-lxxix.
56 Leach (1894), 113.
57 In the early fourteenth century, for example, the chancellor was summoned to appear a number of times: Leach (1898), 112, 268, 282, 327, 353; Leach (1903), 179, 327.
liturgical vessels, altars, and furnishings; the precentor supervised the choir and Song School; and the chancellor presided over the Chapter’s legal and educational affairs. He also appointed the master of the grammar school -- a reminder that in addition to its religious functions, Beverley was also one of the most vibrant centers of learning in the North.\footnote{LEACH (1898), lvii. For the medieval grammar school at Beverley, see LEACH (1899), xxxix-l and associated documents at 80c-116; LEACH (1898), lix-lxv.}

Due to the very high rate of absenteeism among the canons, the Minster’s officers were the highest-ranking figures in the day-to-day life of the church. Along with the vicars, they formed a more or less continuous “public” presence in their administrative, liturgical, and parochial roles. Their centrality was commemorated around the year 1520 when their names and titles were carved on the choir misericords, where they can still be seen today.\footnote{The inscriptions are as follows: “will[el]mi wyght | tempore cancellarius | hu|ius ecclesie” with a shield in the center; “arma magistri thome | donyngto[n] p[re]centoris hui|us] eccl|esie”; and “arma wilhelmi tait doctoris | thesaurii huius ecclesie 1520.” BILSON (1917), 228-230.} None of the canons -- not even the archbishop himself -- was ever singled out for this honor.
THE MINSTER’S FABRIC BEFORE THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The focus of this dissertation is the architectural history of the Minster during the Decorated period. In order to set the stage for Chapters 2 and 3, it is necessary to review the history of the previous buildings that have stood on the site. This discussion begins with the evidence for the destroyed Saxon and Romanesque Minsters at Beverley. It will then return to terra firma with the current east end built in the thirteenth century and consecrated in 1260.

The first Saxon building

Very little is known about the appearance of the earliest Minster at Beverley. The almost complete erasure of Saxon architecture under the Normans makes it very difficult to visualize the architectural landscape of England prior to 1066. The interior of the present Minster has never been excavated, so all of the archaeological clues inside the present structure remain unknowable. A full archaeological investigation of the nave, as was done at York in the late 1970s and early 1980s, might resolve some of these problems. It would also shed considerable light on English building practice throughout the entire Middle Ages. Wealthy donors, take note!

It is only possible to make a few comments about the church that John of Beverley constructed in the early eighth century. This building could easily have been constructed in wood, and its height and size would have formed a sharp contrast with the squat daub-and-wattle structures that made up Yorkshire’s architecture at the time. Recent evidence, however, has indicated that stone churches were built in Northumbria – where John himself had worked as bishop of Hexham – before the ninth century, so it is possible that John’s church was constructed in stone. The only textual evidence for the appearance of this building is the account provided by Bede in his Historia Ecclesiastica. Writing around the year 730, Bede recorded that:

[John] continued in the bishopric for thirty-three years and then ascended to the heavenly kingdom and was buried in the chapel of St. Peter in his monastery called Beverley, in the year of our Lord 721.63

The phrase “in the chapel of St. Peter” (“in porticu Sancti Petri”) is very problematic. The Latin word “porticu” is usually translated as “porch,” indicating a semi-autonomous structure affixed to one of the sides of John’s

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63 “Mansit autem in episcopatu annis XXX tribus, et sic caelestia regna conscendens, sepultus est in porticu sancti Petri in monasterio suo, quod dicitur In Silua Derorum, anno ab incarnatione dominica DCCXXI.” COLGRAVE and MYNORS (1969), 469.
church. However, Bede’s use of architectural vocabulary is notoriously imprecise and he was, alas, no Gervase of Canterbury. Bede uses the word “porticus” to describe several other buildings in the Historia, and his meaning appears to fluctuate every time.\(^6^4\) In typical Saxon fashion, the church at Beverley probably would have taken the form of an unarticulated rectangle, perhaps with a narrow east end and a series of steps leading up to the high altar. If John’s “porticus” was indeed a porch, it would have been attached to the north or south side of the Minster and not the west end, as burials in church entrances were not practiced in England until the end of the tenth century.\(^6^5\) This kind of porticus would have been accessible from the interior of the building, allowing pilgrims and worshippers to congregate around John’s tomb without disrupting the liturgical and parochial functions of the main vessel.

This does not, however, conform to what is known of high-status burials in the Anglo-Saxon period. The process of accreting lateral chapels outside the main walls (“nave” is not yet really an appropriate term) seems to have been quite rare in John’s period,\(^6^6\) and in any case would have been deemed undignified for someone of his exceptionally high stature. Tombs for illustrious

\(^{64}\) Compare, for example, Colgrave and Mynors (1969), 32, 41-2, 121-2, 247, 312-3.

\(^{65}\) Taylor and Taylor (1965-1978), vol. 1, 12, 14-7, 28-31.

\(^{66}\) Crook (2000), 54-7; Taylor and Taylor (1965-1978), vol. 1, 34-5; Thompson (1928), 69.
men were usually located to the south of the high altar in the early Saxon period. This would mean that John’s tomb stood in the eastern part of the church and not in its own dedicated area or “porch.” Less often, prestigious tombs were situated behind the high altar, or even below it in quasi-confessio formation. Either way, John’s wide fame and holy reputation at the time of his death make it much more likely that he was buried very close to the high altar.

If Bede’s account is to be trusted – which is likely given his personal friendship with the saint -- this means that the word “porticus” refers to the church as a whole and not a “chapel” per se. It also means that in its earliest years, the entire Saxon Minster at Beverley was dedicated to St. Peter, not St. John the Evangelist as it was during the later Middle Ages. The earliest surviving evidence for the dedication to John the Evangelist is in Folcard’s Vita Sancti Johannis, c. 1060-9, but this occurred more than three centuries after John’s death. The dedication could have changed at any time in between.

Little else can be said about John’s church at this early date. Some scholars have even wondered whether John’s monastery was located on a

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68 CROOK (2000), 48-51; McCLENDON (2005), 78-81.
69 RAIN (1879), 243.
different site altogether, perhaps miles from the current Minster.\footnote{See Blair (2001); Evans (1991), 244-6; Wilson (2003), 7-9.} That question, at least, has now been resolved. Between 1979 and 1982, the area to the south of the Minster known as Lurk Lane was excavated before a large housing complex was built on top of it. Archaeologists uncovered a series of ditches (datable to the early eighth century) which appeared to be the \textit{vallum monasterii}, or precinct wall, of John’s monastic compound.\footnote{Evans (1991), 246-7.} Unfortunately, no major buildings were uncovered, and it was not possible to determine the size of the original monastery. Nevertheless, the excavators’ findings did at least confirm the continuity of the Minster’s site, proving that the first Saxon Minster was located very near the present Gothic building.

Even more importantly, these excavations strongly suggest that the current location of John’s tomb in the second bay of the Gothic nave is in fact the original location of John’s burial, and that all the subsequent buildings on the site have been configured around it.\footnote{Surprisingly, none of the excavation reports mentioned this as the logical conclusion to their findings.} The tomb was probably the one immovable point in the building’s very protracted architectural history. There is no record of John’s relics ever being moved until his translation in 1037; and even then, the relics were divided and the tomb remained in its original position (see below).
For a person of John’s obvious sanctity, it was of course common practice to disturb the bodily remains as little as possible. If John’s tomb is still -- as seems very likely -- in its original location, the continuity of his burial is both impressive and deeply moving. The antiquity of John’s cult – one of the Minster’s major points of institutional pride up through the Reformation – is beautifully reflected in the physical permanence of the place where his relics were first deposited. When modern visitors gaze at John’s tomb in the twenty-first century, few of them realize that they are probably standing on the exact spot of the so-called “porticus” described by Bede nearly 1300 years ago.

The second Saxon building

Local tradition has long stated that John’s monastery was sacked during the Danish invasions of c. 866. In his archaeological report, Evans argued that gaps in several strata of his excavation proved that the Minster had been abandoned in the mid-ninth century, probably due to continued Viking activity in Yorkshire. He did note, however, that there was no firm proof of any destruction. Two scholars have questioned whether Beverley was ever touched by the Danes, or whether the site would have been abandoned even if the

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74 Evans (1991), 246.
Minster had been destroyed.\textsuperscript{75} In the absence of textual evidence, the question is unlikely to be resolved until more excavations can take place, or until ground-penetrating radar (GPR) can be used analyze the site, as was done by Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison in their 1999 monograph on Rievaulx Abbey.\textsuperscript{76}

Whether or not Beverley was continuously occupied, the Lurk Lane area was reconfigured in the tenth century. Many new structures were built. Along the southern perimeter of the monastery, excavators uncovered a series of rectangular workshops.\textsuperscript{77} The presence of large amounts of lead and window glass showed that one of them had been a glazier’s studio, almost certainly attached to the Minster. This strongly indicates that a new church was under construction at this time, and its provision for glazed windows suggests that it was very likely built out of stone.\textsuperscript{78}

Still, the existence of this tenth-century church at Beverley remained hypothetical until 2005, when new excavations were undertaken outside the buttresses of the Gothic nave.\textsuperscript{79} Outside the north and south aisles, archaeologists discovered tenth-century coffins – one of them dated by

\textsuperscript{75} PALLISER (2000), 24.
\textsuperscript{76} FERGUSSON and HARRISON (1999).
\textsuperscript{77} EVANS (1991), 246-7.
\textsuperscript{78} EVANS (1991), 246-7.
\textsuperscript{79} JOHNSON (2005).
dendrochronology to c. 992 – set at a slightly different orientation to the present building. These burials were separated by more than twenty meters but shared the exact same alignment, indicating that were arranged against a pre-existing structure. This can only have been the Minster itself. Finally, this was conclusive proof that the original Saxon church did indeed lay underneath the Gothic building, albeit on a different axis. The excavators could not determine anything about the form of this tenth-century church; but for the first time, there was confirmation that at least one of Beverley’s pre-Conquest buildings had been situated within the footprint of the current Minster.

Although Johnson did not make this conclusion in his report, this once again implies that John’s tomb remains in its original location and that it has acted as the “center of gravity” around which all of the later buildings were arranged. The coffins recovered outside the nave were probably those of wealthy people who chose to be buried in John’s sacred aura, receiving his intercessory powers by proximity and spiritual osmosis. In their desire to capitalize on John’s relics, these men and women were no different than the members of the Percy family who commissioned the famous tomb canopy in the mid-fourteenth century (Fig. 7).

Footnote:

80 Johnson (2005), 139-40.
The third Saxon building

Nothing is known about the Minster’s history for almost a century after the construction of the second Saxon building. Just before the Norman Conquest, however, a new flurry of activity began, and the Minster once again became a bustling construction site. Beverley was singled out for particularly splendid patronage by the last three Anglo-Saxon archbishops of York: Aelfric (1021-51), Cynesige (1051-60), and Ealdred (1061-69). They form a triumvirate of extremely generous benefaction to the Minster.

Why did these archbishops choose to spend so much money on Beverley? Why did they single out the church for such favoritism? In short, what was “in it” for them? The answer -- as always -- goes back to the power of the relics that the Minster contained. It must constantly be kept in mind that until the canonization of William of York in 1154, York Minster had no saint of its own -- a serious deficiency for the metropolitan church of northern England. Even before Becket, York was locked in an eternal rivalry with Canterbury, and desperate to compete with the southern archdiocese in any way that it could.81 The archbishops’ grand-scale patronage of Beverley must be an open acknowledgment (or hope) that the antiquity and power of John’s relics would

81 The best summary of this longstanding feud is still FAIRBANK (1895).
rebound on the mother church. Glorification of the Minster was the best way of increasing the Yorkshire’s saintly prestige – something none of the archbishops were capable of doing via their own institution. This kind of “sanctification by proxy” is a rare instance of the archdiocese working with Beverley in a spirit of true cooperation, and even deference. For a brief period in the mid-eleventh century, it was clearly felt that strengthening Beverley would in turn strengthen York. This solidarity was precisely the opposite of the attitude which prevailed throughout the later Middle Ages, when York and Beverley viewed each other as the bitterest of opponents.

The anonymous Chronicle of the Archbishops of York, composed in the middle of the twelfth century, details the exact activities of the Saxon archbishops. Aelfric began building a dormitory and refectory at Beverley, which was completed by his successors. Much more importantly, he secured John’s canonization in 1037, proving that official designation of the cult was one of the primary goals for his archiespiscopacy. The chronicler records that Aelfric translated John’s relics into a “shrine of gold, silver, and precious stones of incomparable work.” Little else can be said about the appearance of this shrine,

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82 Raine (1886), 343.
83 “Iste capsam auro et argento et lapidibus pretiosis opera incomparabili apud Beverlacum fabricari fecit.” Raine (1886), 343.
although the feretrum that replaced it in the fourteenth century will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 4.

John’s canonization prompted the first division of his relics. These had probably remained undisturbed in the tomb from the time of his death in 721. Even by medieval standards, the Anglo-Saxons had a profound antipathy towards disturbing the burial places of holy figures. On two occasions, the monks of Ely attempted to translate St. Etheldreda and she unleashed her fury on them, even poking out the eyes of two monks to show her disapproval. Several accounts from the north of England blamed major earthquakes on the mere contemplation of moving a tomb to the other side of the high altar. Bodily repose was sacrosanct, and for a man of John’s holy caliber, it would have been unthinkable to relocate the tomb in which he was originally laid to rest. No record of any relocation of John’s relics survives, and translations were treated so tenderly that at least one of the textual sources would probably have reported it. Movement occurred only when it was absolutely necessary, usually under the threat of military invasion or fire.

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85 MADDISON (2000), 14-5.
86 BYNUM and Gerson (1997), 5-6; WEBB (1956), 114-7; MOORMAN (1955), 44.
Canonization was, of course, ecstatic carte blanche for translation. In 1037, John’s tomb was opened and his relics were carefully divided. The majority were placed in the new feretrum and moved “supra altarem” to the east end of the building.87 This left a small amount of the original relics behind in the place where John had rested undisturbed for the previous 316 years. Unlike most other translations of English saints, we have concrete proof that this is exactly what occurred. In 1664, the cavity that contained John’s tomb was accidentally discovered and an account was made of its contents.88 The report is a fascinating document and an extraordinarily early example of the kind of “forensic” interest in relics and burial that has become popular over the last century. In the history of English medieval burial, the opening of John’s tomb was just as important as the much better-known investigations of Walter de Grey’s tomb at York or Cuthbert’s grave at Durham,89 which it preceded by two and a half centuries. The report, originally published by Dugdale, has received virtually no attention in the literature:

In ao 1664, upon taking up of a large and thick marble stone, lying in the midst of the Church of Beverley, near ye Entrance into the Quire, there was found under it a Vault of squared freestone,

87 Raine (1879), 124.
88 Dugdale (1859), 22.
89 Ramm (1971); Fowler (1901).
five feet in length, two foot in breadth at ye head, and one foot and an halfe at the foot. In which Vault was—

A Sheet of Lead foure foot in lengthe, containing the Dust of St. John of Beverley; as also six beades, whereof three were of Cornelian, the other crumbled to dust: there were also in it three great brasse pins, and four iron nayles.

Also, a Box of Lead, about seven inches in length, six inches broad, and five in heighth, lying athwert the plate of Lead. In this Box were—

Divers peices of Bones, mixt with dust, yielding a sweet smell.

All which were reinterred, by direction of the present Archbysshop of Yorke.\textsuperscript{90}

Even more thrilling than the tomb’s discovery was the realization that it had never been opened since the late twelfth century. This point is critical. The original lead seals of the tomb remained intact from 1197, meaning that the entire floor cavity was in its pristine, late medieval state.\textsuperscript{91} The men who opened the tomb in 1664 had unwittingly entered a time machine going back five hundred years. Their discovery of “divers” fragments of bone with the “sweet smell,” or odor of sanctity, confirms what is reported in hundreds of medieval accounts.\textsuperscript{92}

The division of John’s relics instituted the most important facet of Beverley’s sacred topography: its axial disposition of two relic locations. Body

\textsuperscript{90} DUGDALE (1859), 22.
\textsuperscript{91} DUCKETT (1882), 454-5.
\textsuperscript{92} Interestingly, there was never any attempt at Beverley to show that John’s body was miraculously incorrupt; every surviving mention of his relics refers to bones and dust.
division was of course standard practice throughout the Middle Ages, but the arrangement of both a tomb and a shrine down the central “spine” of a church was unique in England – that is, until York copied it in the late thirteenth century. Beverley served as the ultimate spatial exemplar when York Minster finally acquired its own saint at enormous expense. At St. William’s translation service in 1284, his relics were split between a conventional shrine at the high altar and a cenotaph in the second bay of the nave – just as had been done at Beverley for the previous 250 years. There could be no greater demonstration of the sanctity and power of John’s cult than its duplication by the metropolitan church over two centuries later.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to know anything about the appearance of the tomb or church that Aelfric would have seen at the canonization service in 1037. The tenth-century building mentioned above seems not to have been altered in the interim. Its antiquity is suggested by the activities of the next two archbishops, who lavished huge amounts of money on the fabric of Beverley. The sequence of events – shrine first, and then the building -- is typically medieval, and was repeated exactly in the fourteenth century, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

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Archbishop Cynesige (1051-60) endowed the Minster with “a high stone tower” in which he placed two bells.⁹⁴ He did the same for Beverley’s sister institution at Southwell,⁹⁵ revealing himself to be one of the most enthusiastic “builder” archbishops of the eleventh century. He also endowed both Minsters with books and ornaments.⁹⁶

What did Cynesige’s tower look like? There is nothing to compare it to, as every late Saxon tower of Beverley’s scale and ambition has been destroyed, and those that survive in parish churches (e.g. at St Peter’s, Barton-upon-Humber) are too early in date to serve as useful comparisons. But we do have a very good idea about the appearance of the piers that supported this tower. The chronicler of the account records that Cynesige also constructed a tower at Stow Minster (Lincolnshire),⁹⁷ and by some miracle, one of the arches that he built has survived to the present day (Fig. 8). Its style is exactly what we would expect of transitional Romanesque: severe, with flat pilaster-like strips, double roll-moldings, and chamfered capitals. The tower at Beverley would no doubt have been very similar to Stow, if not an exact copy. The chronicle is vague as to its

⁹⁴ “Ad ecclesiam Sancti Johannis apud Beverlacum turrim lapideam excelsam adjecit, et in ea duo praecepua signa posuit.” Raine (1886), 344.
⁹⁵ Raine (1886), 344.
⁹⁶ Raine (1886), 344.
⁹⁷ Raine (1886), 345.
location, and it is difficult to know whether it was a western tower or formed part of a proper crossing.

If it was a central tower, it formed a dramatic transition between the early Saxon nave and the new work of Archbishop Ealdred (1061-69). The same chronicle records that Ealdred endowed the Minster with a magnificent new presbytery, dedicated in honor of St. John the Evangelist. The impetus for this project was undoubtedly John’s canonization and the urge to house his new shrine in a manner befitting its splendor. Ealdred’s work was sumptuous and very expensive. Over his presbytery, and all the way to Cynesige’s tower, he installed a painted ceiling “made out of gold mixed with miraculous art of many shapes.” Until the painting of Prior Conrad’s “Glorious Choir” at Canterbury in the next century, Ealdred’s ceiling was probably the most renowned painted work in all of England.

Equally impressive (albeit much smaller in scale) were the furnishings that Ealdred endowed. He constructed a pulpit of “incomparable work” made out of bronze, silver, and gold, with a cross above it made from the same

98 “Veterem quoque ecclesiam adjecto novo presbyterio ampliavit, quod in honore Sancti Johannis Evangelistae dedicavit.” RAINÉ (1886), 353.
99 “Totamque ecclesiam a presbyterio usque ad turrim ab antecessore suo Kinsio constructam, superius opere pictoris, quod caelum vocant, auro multiformiter intermixto mirabili arte constravit.” RAINÉ (1886), 353-4.
Intriguingly, the chronicler records that both of these objects were of “Teutonic workmanship” (“opere Theutonico”), presumably by Continental artists who had set up shop in York. Ealdred deployed their work with great theatricality. Pulpit and cross (presumably a rood beam) formed the dramatic entrance to his magnificent new choir, while John of Beverley’s bejeweled new shrine – the raison d’être of the entire building – shimmered like a beacon in the distance.

The Romanesque building

After this burst of late Saxon activity, it comes as something of a disappointment that no description of the Minster survives for the next 120 years. Until recently, there was only one piece of evidence to confirm that there had been any building work during the Romanesque period at all. Hidden under the aisle roofs of the Gothic nave are four arches made out of chevron voussoirs, datable to c. 1140-60 (Fig. 9). They were used to form the rere-arches of the fourteenth-century triforium, and will be discussed further in Chapter 2. The joints between the stones are very irregular and stuffed with huge amounts

100 “Supra ostium etiam chori pulpitum opere incomparabili, aere, auro argentoque fabricari fecit, et ex utraque parte pulpiti aarcus, et in medio supra pulpitum aarcum eminentiorem crucem in summitate gestantem, similiter ex aere, auro, et argento, opere Theutonico fabrefactos erexit.” Raine (1886), 354.
of mortar, meaning that they must be recycled masonry from a mid-twelfth-century building on the site. As John Bilson showed with all his usual clarity, the zig-zag cannot be *in situ* remains of a previous nave, but was retained as scrap stone after its demolition and then re-erected above the Gothic arcades.\textsuperscript{101}

There has been much debate about the layout of this nave.\textsuperscript{102} As will be discussed in Chapter 2, several scholars had concluded that Beverley originally featured a narrow, aisleless nave like York, Ripon, and Kirkham.\textsuperscript{103} The excavation in 2005 showed that this view was categorically incorrect. In addition to the mid-Saxon coffins mentioned above, archaeologists revealed Romanesque buttresses (twelfth-century in date) directly underneath those of the fourteenth century. In fact, the Decorated buttresses had been formed by simply extending the foundations of the Romanesque walls by a “considerable” distance.\textsuperscript{104} This was incontestable evidence that the Romanesque nave lay directly underneath the Gothic (about one meter above it in height) and shared its exact orientation.

It also proved -- contrary to previous opinion -- that the Romanesque nave was a fully aisled structure, as can still be seen at Ely, Peterborough, and Norwich. Like those buildings, the nave at Beverley probably had a three-story

\textsuperscript{101} BILSON (1893).
\textsuperscript{102} MORRIS and CAMBRIDGE (1989), 12-19; HORROX (2000), 40-1; OLIVER (1829), 201-4.
\textsuperscript{103} HORROX (2000), 41-2.
\textsuperscript{104} JOHNSON (2005), 141.
elevation with a tall tribune, clerestory with thick wall passages, and arcades carved with zig-zag or billet. It is not possible to say whether this part of the building was vaulted or covered by a wooden ceiling or open-beam roof.

This nave replaced the tenth-century Saxon structure described above. There is no information as to whether the east end of the Minster was also remodelled at this time. Ealdred’s presbytery and its celebrated ceiling may have been deemed too precious to demolish, especially as they were the first building to house John of Beverley in his new shrine. Nevertheless, his east end was already a century old when the nave was remodelled, and it may accordingly have been deemed out of style. The very rapid destruction of buildings like Lanfranc’s choir at Canterbury shows that medieval people’s attachments to their own buildings are inherently difficult to judge.

It is difficult to imagine that the rebuilt nave at Beverley would have been allowed to appear so much more up-to-date and spacious than the east end, especially when the reverse was usually the case. A Saxon choir with a “high” Romanesque nave would have been a dramatic juxtaposition of styles. The chevron arches may therefore be the sole remaining evidence of a complete reconstruction of the Minster in the Romanesque period.
The first Gothic building

The next firm date in the Minster’s history is the fire that occurred on the night of September 20, 1188. Writing a decade later, Roger of Howden recorded that “the entire town of Beverley, along with the noble church of the holy Archbishop John, was burned.”\textsuperscript{105} Several other sources mention the conflagration.\textsuperscript{106} As always in the Middle Ages, it is difficult to know how severe the damage really was. Given that the Romanesque nave remained in use for another century and a half (until at least c. 1330), the fire could not have been particularly devastating, or else its effects were localized to the east end of the building. Nevertheless, it seems to have taken a long time to put the nave back into serviceable use. The lead plaque found inside John’s tomb in 1664 recounts the “rediscovery” of his relics nine years after the fire:

In the year of our Lord 1188, this church was burned in the month of September on the night after the feast of St. Matthew the Apostle:

And in the year 1197, on the six day after the Ides of March, a search was made for the relics of St. John in this place and his bones

\textsuperscript{105} “Eodem anno xii kalendas Octobris, feria tertia, in vigilia Sancti Mathaei apostoli et evangelistae, tota fere villa de Beverlaco, cum nobilii ecclesia Beati Johannis Archiepiscopi, combusta est.” STUBBS (1868-1871), vol. 2, 354.
\textsuperscript{106} LELAND (1907), 289.
were found hidden in the eastern part of this tomb along with smaller pieces mixed with dust, which were all reburied here.\textsuperscript{107}

This nine-year delay between the fire and the opening of John’s tomb implies that repair work to the nave had been delayed for nearly a decade, or else had taken a long time to complete. The focus of rebuilding was, as usual, the east end, allowing for construction of the first Minster in the Gothic style. The only evidence for this structure comes from a miracle story of c. 1213-15, which describes the collapse of a central tower. The text is illuminating and very little known:

There was at that time in the midst of the crossing of the church a very high tower erected, of astonishing beauty and size, so that in it were combined the cunning and achievement of mason-craft. The building of this tower had gone so far that the stonework was finished, and it only remained for its completion to set up on it a roof of stonework [i.e., a vault] of proportionate height.

The craftsmen who were in charge of the work were not as cautious as was necessary; not as prudent as they were cunning in their craft; they were concerned rather with beauty than with strength, rather with effect than with the need for safety. When they set up the four piers as supports to carry the whole mass, they let them into the old work ingeniously but not firmly, in the manner of those who sew new cloth into old.

Whence it came about that they made neither the bases nor the shafts of the columns of such strength as would suffice to carry the enormous mass of so wonderful and hazardous a construction; and although their weakness could easily be seen, as the work proceeded, by the gaping cracks of the parts and by the splitting of some marble columns from base to capital, yet they did not consider it necessary to desist from proceeding with the work they had begun, though it is clear enough that that building which is set upon a weak foundation is bound to fall. So the more they piled up an increasing heap of stone, so much the more did they hasten the downfall of the tower, the cracks in the bases and shafts became the more enormous the more they rashly overweighed them.\textsuperscript{108}

The text goes on to recount that in the month of October, the canons were chanting in their choir when several stones plummeted down from the tower. The priests were forced to relocate their service to the far end of the nave, but eventually fled the Minster as more stones rained down. Barely had the canons returned to their houses when the entire tower fell to the ground with “a violent crash, dreadful to human ears.”\textsuperscript{109} The fact that no one was killed or injured was credited to John of Beverley, as the sacristan – apparently a long-time insomniac - had accidentally summoned everyone to Matins an hour early.

The description of the collapse is somewhat formulaic -- one of a long line of texts to invoke the trope of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) and blame

\textsuperscript{108} \textsc{Salzman} (1952), 377-8. The Latin is in Appendix C, document 1.
\textsuperscript{109} “Ecce! Tota turris fundotenus collapsa, partes adjacentes secum trahens ad casum, vehementum dedit fragorem, in auribus humanis horrendum.” \textsc{Raine} (1879), 346.
construction problems on the hubris of the builders. But the passage is extremely useful nonetheless. The chronicler is unusually clear about what was built and how work far had proceeded. The structure is clearly designated as a very tall crossing tower. The workmen had reached the final stage of their work, all the while ignoring major structural problems. The cause of the collapse was the instability of the four new crossing piers, which were not adequately bonded into the “old work.” This can only mean the four main arms of the church. The tower was “ingeniously,” but not “firmly,” attached to the Romanesque nave, east end, and transepts. The writer’s analogy of sewing new material into an old garment is charming and poetic.

The text paints a vivid picture of the appearance of these crossing piers, allowing us a glimpse of what the first Gothic building looked like. The use of the phrase “marble columns” strongly suggests that the piers featured Purbeck marble -- just as we would expect in the early thirteenth century. Purbeck is notorious for buckling and splitting when placed under compression, so the description of the columns cracking “from base to shaft” is likely very accurate. The crossing piers were very tall and must have been fitted with long, en délit, Purbeck shafts. The hefty weight placed on top of them caused the piers, already inadequately buttressed, to buckle and collapse.
Given the passage’s emphasis on “cunning,” “imprudence,” and “ingenuity,” the tower at Beverley calls to mind the bizarre and highly inventive eastern crossing piers at St Hugh’s Choir, Lincoln (Fig. 10). These were the most virtuosic Purbeck-based pier designs of the entire Gothic period, and as they were built in the late 1190s, they would have been a dazzling model for Beverley’s new architect to follow. If we imagine two or three of these Lincoln (or “Trondheim”) piers stacked to the full height of a building and top-loaded with weight, it is easy to see why the tower proved such a risky venture. The piers would have been eye-catching showpieces for Beverley’s new Minster; but, as the chronicler indicates, the architect’s desire for “beauty” – perhaps to outshine his Lincoln rivals by “piling up” more and more masonry – exceeded both common sense and the capability of his materials.

It is not known how much of the Minster was rebuilt along with this tower. The most logical assumption is that reconstruction after the fire encompassed the entire east end and had reached the crossing by c. 1213-15. The intervening span of twenty-five years (1188-1213) would be reasonable for the completion of a new eastern arm in the Gothic style. If this building was indeed closely based on the Lincoln model, it would have been one of the most
precocious and avant-garde pieces of architecture in the entire country.\textsuperscript{110} On the other hand, construction may not have proceeded very far due to lack of money and the interdict under King John between 1208 and 1213.

Whatever the extent of the first Gothic structure, the collapse of the tower brought everything to a swift end. The decision was made to make a fresh start and all of the masonry surviving the fall was taken down to the ground. The next building to be constructed was the current east end that can still be seen today. Finally, discussion of the Minster can move out of the theoretical and the probable and begin to deal with a building that actually exists.

**The Early English east end**

The east end of Beverley Minster (Figs. 11-13) is one of the most impressive examples of thirteenth-century English architecture. Scholars’ list of superlatives has nearly run dry in attempting to praise it. The building has already been analyzed in two superlative articles by Christopher Wilson and Larry Hoey,\textsuperscript{111} and there is little that needs to be added to their discussions. This

\textsuperscript{110} It would probably have borne a strong resemblance to the western portals and tower bay of St. Albans under Abbot John de Cella (1195-1214), for which see HARRISON (2001); HOEY (2001), 184-5.

\textsuperscript{111} WILSON (1991); HOEY (1984).
section will, therefore, give only a brief description and summary of the east end in order to prepare for the discussion of the nave in the next chapter.

There is no firm evidence for the start date of the choir and transepts, but they were probably begun around the year 1220 or 1225. Collectors were canvassing for donations in 1221, and Archbishop Walter de Grey (1215-55) issued an indulgence for construction in 1232. In 1252, Henry III donated wood from Sherwood Forest for the beams of the roof, and the building was consecrated in 1260.

The work consists of a choir of four bays, western transepts of four bays each, and a one-bay eastern transept with projecting retro-choir. John Bilson measured the building in 1893 and his careful ground plan (Fig. 14) has never been surpassed. The double-transept plan (as at Canterbury, Lincoln, Salisbury, and Worcester) gives the east end its quintessentially English, rectilinear profile. The footprint of the building remains as it was set out in the

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112 The traditional start date of c. 1220-30 has recently been challenged by Norton (2009) and Harrison (2010). They have argued that the current east end of Beverley is in fact the building that was begun after the fire of 1188, and that the Minster was built before St. Hugh’s Choir at Lincoln. This would make the east end of Beverley a seminal monument – if not the seminal monument – in the creation of the Early English style. Although I disagree with their findings, my rebuttal of their arguments is very long and complicated, and will have to await future publication.

113 Lyte (1901), 318.

114 Raine (1872), 55-6.

115 Stamp (1927), 63.

116 First published in Bilson (1898), 199.
thirteenth century, with two exceptions. In 1489-90, the funeral chapel for Henry Percy, the fourth earl of Northumberland (d. 1489), was inserted between the angle of the northeast transept and retro-choir. Second, the two-storied chapter house, originally located between the northern transepts, was demolished in 1548. The money earned from selling off its materials was used to reimburse Sir Michael Stanhope, who had bribed Henry VIII’s commissioners and thus saved the Minster from certain destruction. Bilson’s excavations in 1890-91 showed that the chapter house was coeval with the east end and octagonal in shape, just as the more famous examples at Westminster and Salisbury. For three hundred years, the chapter house was accessed via the extraordinarily graceful double staircase that survives in the north choir aisle (Fig. 15).

The exterior of the east end (Fig. 16-17) is a model of legibility and consistency. The aisle bays are marked by thick buttresses, nook-shafted and capped by steeply pitched gables. Most of the bays feature a single lancet window, splayed and hood-molded, with narrow blind lancets on either side. Where the elevation meets a terminal facade, extra blind lancets are added to

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117 Bilson (1895).
119 Those in the aisles of the south choir aisle and southeast transept were remodeled in the Perpendicular style along with the east façade.
mask the thickness of the wall or interior staircases. Otherwise, the stately rhythm of blind lancet-lancet-blind lancet wraps around the entire east end.

The east facade originally featured a rose window and three tall lancets, but this was gutted in 1416 and replaced by a vertiginous, double-grilled Perpendicular window (Fig. 18).\textsuperscript{120} The remaining facades are in their original state, and those of the western transepts (Fig. 19-20) are archetypes of pristine proportion. The north and south portals -- each designated for pilgrims and the archbishop of York, respectively -- feature bold \textit{en délit} shafts on the model of Lincoln.

The building’s interior is marked by richness and homogeneity. Its riot of dog-tooth, Purbeck shafting, and sumptuous moldings is impossible to describe in detail (Figs. 21-22). They instantly counteract the notions of Cistercian “sobriety” and “purity” that most scholars have attributed to the building.\textsuperscript{121} The aisles feature a continuous dado of pointed-trefoil arcading with stiff-leaf capitals carried on Purbeck colonettes (Fig. 23), and the arcades are richly molded and carved with two orders of dog-tooth. The triforium (Fig. 24) is adapted from the aisles of St. Hugh’s choir at Lincoln (Fig. 25), and designed as two superimposed

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{120} The window was donated by Robert Rolleston, who held the prebend of St. Katherine from 1425-51. The will describing his bequest is transcribed in RAINE (1855), 139.
\textsuperscript{121} BRIEGER (1957), 209; BILSON (1898), 197; LEACH (1898), xiii, x-xi; WILSON (1991), 85-6.
\end{flushright}
layers of blind arcading. The interplay of their front and rear planes results in a lyrical, contrapuntal rhythm.

The clerestory is composed of two layers incorporating a wall passage. The front plane is an open “screen” whose outer arches leap balletically to negotiate the height of the central arch (Fig. 26). The monolithic Purbeck shafts beneath them are some of the longest in England, hence the network of original tie bars used to secure them.

As Christopher Wilson has shown, the design of the east end is very similar to the presbytery and Nine Altars extension at Fountains Abbey, built under Abbot John de Cantia (1220-47).\textsuperscript{122} Beverley and Fountains are probably therefore the work of the same architect, who may also have designed Meaux Abbey (destroyed), the nearest Cistercian foundation to the Minster.\textsuperscript{123} Hoey has profiled the architect’s borrowings from Lincoln Cathedral and the northern English tradition, as well as the subtle, eclectic ways in which he transformed them.\textsuperscript{124}

Two quatrefoils and some Purbeck shafting above the vault of the eastern crossing (Fig. 27) prove that a lantern tower was originally intended at the

\textsuperscript{122} \textsc{Wilson} (1991), 185--91.
\textsuperscript{123} \textsc{Wilson} (1991), 186-7.
\textsuperscript{124} \textsc{Hoey} (1986).
Minster. This tower was abandoned at an early point in construction, probably due to settlement from the church’s water-logged foundations – the by-product of the lakes that surrounded Beverley in the Middle Ages. In the thirteenth century, the shrine of John of Beverley would have sat behind the high altar and was meant to be sited directly underneath this tower, where it would have been bathed in cascades of heavenly light. The abandonment of the lantern led to the cutting-back of the original eastern crossing piers and their revetment in tier after tier of the most bizarre blind arcading (Fig. 28).

They are the one aesthetic misstep in the entire Minster. They have been called “extremely odd,” “anything but satisfactory,” a “regrettable departure from original intentions,” and specimens of “visual disorder.” Nevertheless, they would have broadcast the power and prestige of the relics below, enshrining St. John of Beverley like a gargantuan, glittering baldachin. The cult - as always -- was the engine of architecture. When the east end of Beverley was consecrated in 1260, the canons and townspeople could boast one of the most remarkable buildings in England.

125 Robert Willis was the first to explain that this was an abandoned lantern tower and not the remains of an earlier west façade. PETIT (1848), 7n.
126 PEVSNER (1972), 172; BILSON (1898), 202; WILSON (1991), 194; HOEY (1984), 213.
The Minster’s nave soon followed in similarly grand fashion, and that is the focus of the next two chapters.
PART I: THE NAVE
CHAPTER 2: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NAVE

Architectural description

The nave of Beverley Minster consists of eleven bays. The exterior of the building is one of the most unified in England, especially when viewed from the former site of the Archbishop’s palace, now a peaceful meadow (Fig. 4). The intersection of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century campaigns occurs at the corner of the western transepts and nave (Figs. 29-30). The two halves of the building flow seamlessly together, showing that continuity was the governing principle of the new design. The exact proportions of the Early English elevation (aisles, aisle roofs, and clerestory) are retained in the new work, and the roof height and bay width (with one exception) are also identical. The only major difference, spotted at once, is that the nave is filled with bar tracery -- the indispensable component of the Decorated style. Windows take up the full width of the aisle bays and two-thirds of the clerestory, showing that glass, light, and transparency were now the epitome of Gothic modernity. Despite the architect’s (and canons’) conservatism, they could never have seriously considered repeating the narrow lancets of the east end. Along with stiff-leaf foliage, lancet
windows were quintessentially thirteenth-century features and would have been wildly out of fashion by the beginning of the 1300s.

The tracery of the aisles (Figs. 31-32) is composed of four cinquecusted lights within two ogee sub-arches. The spandrels are decorated with the *roue tournante*, or spinning mouchette wheel. The window heads feature a large vesica or “lime leaf” shape filled with two different designs. On the north, they contain a series of convergent mouchettes (Fig. 33); on the south, there is the perennial Yorkshire favorite of the stem-and-leaf (Fig. 34). The tracery in the clerestory is noticeably later in style: three lights with stocky, divergent daggers and a total absence of the ogee curve. Here, the serpentine arcs of the aisles have already hardened into the Perpendicular rigidity that was to dominate English architecture for the next two centuries (Fig. 35). The design of the clerestory is yet another example of the Minster’s recursive and self-referential architecture, in which up-to-date designs were created by perpetually modifying what had come before.

The parapets of the aisles are carved with rosette diaper, while the clerestory features the sinuous, wavy cusping that is such a common feature of
the Decorated style in Yorkshire. Continuity with the thirteenth century was achieved by remodeling the parapets of the east end (including the clerestory pinnacles) at the same time, thereby giving the Early English work a retroactive modernity that it originally lacked. The parapets along the north and south aisles of the nave are also studded with narrative scenes that project above the shallow height of the balustrade (Figs. 36). They are now in deplorable condition, but originally showed Old Testament scenes on the south (Figs. 37-38) and New Testament scenes on the north. Similar narrative cycles are found on the parapets of the chapter house at York and – to remarkably theatrical effect – on both the exterior and interior of the chancel at Selby (Figs. 39-40), where they eavesdropped on the activities of the monks below.

Besides bar tracery, the buttresses of the nave are the only major departure from the Early English design. They project much more deeply than those of the east end and carry a set-off at the springing level of the window arches. On the south, this recession is marked by a series of elaborate tabernacles with gabled canopies standing on freestanding buttresses (Fig. 41). On the north

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1 See, for example, the aisle parapets at Howden, the west façade of York Minster, and both the interior and exterior balustrades of the choir at Selby.

2 Those on the south side show the Creation of Eve, Garden of Eden, Expulsion (spanning two panels), Adam Digging, and a final figure in very poor condition, presumably Eve Spinning. The figures on the northern parapet are mostly headless and very difficult to make out.
side, the same area features shallower niches with nodding ogee heads, foliate finials, and a large gargoyle below (Fig. 42). Both sets of niches originally featured tall, freestanding statues, but all of them have disappeared since the Reformation. Above, the simple (and decidedly clunky) peaked gables of the east end were narrowed and covered with delicately molded blind arches, surmounted by crocketted gables and lofty pinnacles (Fig. 43). The buttresses behind them are so thick that the flyers are mounted on lintel-headed arches to allow passageway along the exterior of the aisles (Fig. 44).

Unlike most English Gothic structures, which are so often composed of disparate parts, Beverley Minster is an architectural unity. There is no decisive break with the past, and one’s overwhelming impression is of streamlined, even aerodynamic, continuity. The fourteenth-century architect adopted the design of his predecessor in its entirety, but gave it a Decorated “face-lift” via maximum fenestration and a veneer of eye-catching sculpture. The nave is, accordingly, a “Decorated” building in the most literal sense of the term: the Early English structure was adorned and garnished through the application of glass and ornament.

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3 The gargoyles are entirely decorative and not designed to channel water.
4 This was echoed in the choir at Rievaulx, where replacement flyers were added in the fourteenth century. The passageway through them (cf. the fragment of the north aisle) appears to be an original feature. FERGUSSON and HARRISON (1999), 160.
The interior of the nave (Figs. 45-47) takes this architectural nostalgia to near-obsessive levels. In the central vessel, the old work is joined so artlessly to the new that most visitors have no idea that they were separated by nearly a century. When the Early English builders stopped work around the year 1260, they erected part of the first bay of the nave in order to buttress the central crossing tower. When construction resumed in the early fourteenth century (Figs. 48-50), most of the Minster’s major features were retained in the new design. Arcades, triforium, and clerestory sweep onward without a break or change in height. Each bay is articulated, both horizontally and vertically, with the same network of string courses and vaulting shafts. The design of the piers alternates just as it did in the thirteenth century, with round and filleted shafts in the cardinal directions. The piers rest on identical bases as those of the east end. The Minster’s “signature” feature – the contrapuntal alternation of the triforium -- is also repeated, spinning its way around the entire building. More than any other aspect of the nave’s design, it is the middle story that unites Beverley into a seamless, organic whole.

The new design is not, however, a slavish repetition of the past. It is a subtle and elegant transformation of the original source material. The architect

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5 The diagonals, however, are now all keeled – a sign that the lobes of the choir piers were now considered too out of style to be continued
makes several changes to bring the Early English design up to date with fourteenth-century architectural fashions. The description of individual campaigns below will discuss these changes in more detail, but many of them are noticeable at once in the center of the nave (Figs. 49-51). The outer screen of the clerestory – which had been the most virtuosic aspect of the Early English structure (Fig. 26) -- is reduced to three arches in order to allow for a much larger window behind. The soffits of these arches are decorated with ball-flower (not dog-tooth) -- a very rare appearance of this motif in the North. The design of the arcades is simplified and given wave moldings with robust, tubular concavities. As on the exterior, sculpture is also added: there are heads on the bottom of the vaulting shafts (Fig. 52), angels on the label stops (Fig. 53), and the aisles and pier capitals feature some of the most important sculpture produced in fourteenth-century England.

As noted above, the most dramatic change is the inclusion of bar tracery in the aisles and clerestory. It is only here, on the interior, that one grasps the full aesthetic and sensory potential of the Decorated window. Its transmutation of the Early English design is total. The dramatic increase in window size floods the nave with light, making it much more luminous than the east end and

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6 Ball-flower also occurs on the west façade of York Minster. COLDSTREAM (1980), 100.
transepts beyond. On a sunny day, the nave of Beverley is one of the most radiant in Great Britain. The aisles of the Minster are one of the very few English structures in which both the vault and window ribs spring from a single capital at the same level, providing an unobstructed view of the tracery.\textsuperscript{7} It is this concentricity that gives the aisles of Beverley their palpable sense of rationalized, elegant proportion.

Another major departure from the original design is the elimination of most of the Purbeck marble from the main vessel. In the nave, all of the abaci, vault responds, and most of the shafts in the triforium are made of limestone. The sudden disappearance of dark shafting between bays one and two of the nave remains the most visible indicator of the new work. Some Purbeck is retained in the clerestory and aisles to provide the ever-important linkage between old and new; but its abandonment everywhere else proves that Purbeck, like the lancet window, had become a relic of the thirteenth century.

On paper, this roster of alterations sounds clinical and unimpressive. In the building itself, the differences between nave and east end are substantial. It is remarkable how so few changes can create two dramatically different kinds of

\textsuperscript{7} The first English building with this feature was the centralized chapter house at Westminster, where concentricity of vaults and windows was adapted from the lateral chapels at Notre-Dame, Paris. \textsc{Wilson} (2010), 46-8.
architecture, each with their own spatial and kinesthetic properties. Despite the continuity that unites the two halves of the building, the nave has a limpidity and spatial amplitude that the east end cannot match. Seated in their stalls in the choir of the Minster, the canons were surrounded by one of the most ornate buildings in England -- a *horror vacui* of ornament and texture in every possible direction (Fig. 21). As mentioned in Chapter 1, I disagree strongly with the widely-held notions of sobriety and Cistercian “purity” that are usually ascribed to Beverley’s thirteenth-century work. These adjectives are not, to my mind, compatible with the building itself, with its thick impasto of moldings, prismatic shafts, cascades of dog-tooth, and dramatic contrasts of light and shade.

The designer of the nave of Beverley achieved his historicism by purging the east end of its superfluity of detail. The addition of sculpture and tracery notwithstanding, the nave of the Minster is fundamentally an architecture of simplification and refinement. It was created by stripping the choir and transepts down to their constituent parts. Due to the elimination of Purbeck, the elevation of the nave glows with a restrained and modest splendor that is the exact opposite of the east end. The most important (and surprising) result of the nave’s historicism is that its condensation of forms is the perfect analog to

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8 *Brieger* (1957), 209; *Bilson* (1898), 197; *Leach* (1898), xiii, x-xi; *Wilson* (1991), 85-6.
Bernard of Clairvaux’s “custody of the senses” – the vehicle by which the physical church becomes the mightly homeland ("ingens patria") of the faithful and the heavenly precursor to the realm beyond all human imagining ("regio inaestimabilis").

Ironically, it is the nave at Beverley -- not the east end -- that is the true spiritual heir to Yorkshire’s illustrious Cistercian tradition.

**Methodological approach and hindrances**

The unity of the nave makes it strangely impervious to the kind of analysis that has so long dominated the English tradition. From the antiquarians onward, establishing a definitive chronology of construction has been the primary – sometimes the only – goal of scholarly activity. The critical template formed by architectural historians like Robert Willis, John Bilson, William St. John Hope, and Alfred Clapham continues to this day. The subdivision of churches into discrete campaigns and architects is still the major preoccupation of English Gothic historiography. Even when supplemented by richer methodological approaches, a sequence of construction is rightly considered the essential point of departure for any serious discussion of a

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10 WILSON (1991), 181 noted that the same was also true for the east end of the Minster, given the rapidity and uniformity of its construction.

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medieval building. It is more crucial than ever when that building is published for the first time.

But here again, as so often, Beverley Minster is intractable. Although this dissertation is the first scholarly treatment of the nave, the building’s uniformity is a serious challenge to most traditional approaches. Historicism ensures that there are few diagnostic details to go on, and very little secure evidence with which to assign dating. Construction breaks and design changes are few and far between, or are so obvious that they require little explanation. The nave of Beverley continually flouts cherished standards of stylistic evolution and taxonomic classification. The canons’ urge to blur the lines between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was so successful that now, in the twenty-first, there can be considerable difficulty in disentangling them. The irony is delicious: the very continuity so praised by architectural historians is precisely what undercuts their ability to analyze it.

These caveats notwithstanding, it is still possible to give a fairly reliable chronology for the fourteenth-century work at Beverley. The building’s different phases can be ascertained through a combination of formal analysis, textual sources, and minute examination of the physical fabric. It is not possible to give the usual granularity of detail, and it must be kept in mind that the actual
construction process may have been far more complex than the building will ever allow us to understand. Dating for the nave is inherently imprecise. Nevertheless, the relative chronology of the building is secure, and it is possible to get a strong impression of how the nave was built, and in what order.

Below, I assign the construction of the nave to six campaigns, spanning the course of roughly eighty years from c. 1308 to c. 1388. Considering that work at Beverley was interrupted by two plagues and several periods of financial difficulty, completion of the building in under a century is still impressive, especially given its length.

The Minster’s appearance at the start of the fourteenth century

In the year 1300, Beverley Minster was a hybrid building: half Gothic and half Romanesque. It was made up of the Early English east end that stands today and the nave that formerly adjoined it. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Romanesque nave was built in the mid-twelfth century and was a fully aisled structure. It lay immediately below the current Gothic nave, and it is likely that the fourteenth-century builders reused the footings of the Romanesque arcades to construct their nave.11

In July 2010, I discovered important confirmation as to how the Early English and Romanesque buildings were originally joined together. Above the vault of the present Gothic nave, and against the lowest stage of the thirteenth-century crossing tower, one of the flash lines of the Romanesque roof has survived to the present day (Fig. 54). It appears to have escaped detection until now. The evidence is very difficult to see, hidden under the modern wooden gangways that criss-cross the vault, and I was only able to photograph it by dangling a camera suspended on a piece of rope. Be that as it may, the image shows clearly (if not very neatly) the diagonal sill of the northern half of the original Romanesque roof. This is exactly the point where the pre-Gothic building was bonded into the Early English tower, completed c. 1250. Half of the flash line is covered up by the higher vault of the mid-1300s, but enough remains to show that the apex of the twelfth-century roof sat directly below the peak of the current one, approximately thirty-eight feet lower in height.

Using the pitch of the original roof line, it is possible to extrapolate the height of the Romanesque elevation (Fig. 55). Around 1260, the Early English builders partially erected the first bay of the nave in order to buttress the crossing tower. They would have had to demolish one bay of the Romanesque nave in order to accommodate their work. The limit of their activities is marked by
a jagged vertical line on both the north and south elevations (Figs. 56-57), showing that only one arcade and one bay of the triforium were built in the thirteenth century up to the sill of the clerestory. Everything beyond them is part of the Decorated campaign; but in the year 1300, this aborted Gothic bay directly abutted at least five more bays of the Romanesque structure. The twelfth-century clerestory would have reached just higher than the top of the Early English respond (Fig. 55), and about eight feet higher than the upper string course of the new triforium. As the scarring of the vault proves, the original Romanesque roof remained *in situ* while the Early English bay was under construction, as its lack of a clerestory would have allowed it to fit comfortably below. Its unbuilt upper story must have been filled with some kind of temporary window in order to keep out the elements and admit light to John of Beverley’s tomb on the ground floor. The twelfth-century roof was bonded into the masonry of the Early English tower and therefore remained in its original position until the Gothic clerestory was built in the fourth campaign. Even then, its usefulness did not come to an end. As Armstrong and Cant showed in 2009,\(^\text{12}\) some of the Romanesque roof timbers were reused in the Gothic roof, where they can still be seen today.

\(^{12}\) Armstrong and Cant (2008).
A ramshackle conjunction of Gothic and Romanesque greeted every pilgrim, parishioner, and user of the Minster for at least the half-century between c. 1260 and c. 1330. The completed Gothic transepts (not to mention the central tower) would have soared above the Romanesque nave. Their unequal heights were also matched by stark divergences in style. In the first and second bays of the nave, Gothic and Romanesque would have appeared to have crashed into one another. Although the juxtaposition of these two very different buildings strikes us as intrinsically bizarre and uncomfortable, similar sights would have been commonplace as the “building boom” of the thirteenth century drew to a close. By the year 1300, easily half of the major churches in England were amalgams of Romanesque and Gothic, and it was inevitable that they would sometimes collide in the heart of the building, just as at Beverley. The subsequent remodelling of so many Romanesque naves in the Decorated and Perpendicular periods has eradicated what would have been a deeply familiar feature of medieval churches in the early fourteenth century.

The only place where this dramatic clatter of styles can still be seen in England is the nave of St. Albans (Fig. 58), where the Romanesque nave of c. 1110 is abruptly propped against the four Early English bays built under Abbot William of Trumpington (1214-35). The “old” and the “new” are conjoined with
nothing but a crude pilaster buttress to separate them. Their appearance is uncannily close to what the eastern nave at Beverley must have looked like around the year 1300, even down to the uneven heights of the Gothic and Romanesque elevations. The survival of this presumably “temporary” arrangement at St. Albans, eight centuries later, proves that what we perceive as dramatic discontinuities in style must have been accepted (however grudgingly) as a routine part of great church architecture in the Middle Ages.

At both St. Albans and Beverley, the disparity between Romanesque and Gothic was conspicuous, even confrontational. It was probably also deliberate. At the Minster, it cannot be a coincidence that these two campaigns intersected at the exact location of St. John of Beverley’s tomb and the sacred relics it contained. Every pilgrim, parishioner, and visitor to the church – in short, everyone in the public expanses of the nave to the west of the pulpitum – would have seen the architectural dissonance that surrounded the Minster’s second-holiest site of devotion. The disturbance here was a constant reminder that construction had been halted, that money had dried up, and that the great work of rebuilding the church (and thereby housing St. John’s relics in due splendor) had been cruelly interrupted. Architectural disjunction was far more than a simple jumble of styles; it had a strong financial, even ideological, component. The break in the
nave at Beverley was a continual, gut-level reminder that money was desperately needed to resume construction.

As such, the Minster was one of the most graphic examples in England of the “culture of incompletion,” in which buildings were deliberately left unfinished in order to foster donations. As the canons of Beverley understood very well, interrupted buildings were a visceral inducement to financial contribution. The dissonance of the first and second bays at Beverley would have been far more effective in encouraging gifts than unsubstantiated pleas for money or even indulgences, despite the remission of forty days in purgatory.

In the year 1300, the appearance of the Minster’s nave was the antithesis of the historicism that is praised today. In fact, the visual dialectic between Romanesque and Gothic may itself have been the cause of the canons’ decision to build in such a retrospective style. It is easy to imagine members of the Chapter -- along with the town governors, guildsmen, and other donors -- standing in the east end of the nave in deep dissatisfaction with what they saw before them. They would have yearned for the days when construction could resume, and marvelled at how different their building would look when the Gothic nave could at last be completed as it had been begun. The design of the Decorated

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work allowed their love for their own building to continue beyond the crossing, where in most other churches it would have been abandoned for good.

The canons were soon able to realize their dream of building again -- and their judicious use of architectural theater must have accelerated their ability to pay for it.
The start date of construction

There is no firm date for the start of work on the nave. After the roofing and vaulting of the east end in the 1250s and its consecration in 1260, the canons no doubt needed to catch their collective breath and get their finances in order. The cost of building one of the most sumptuous buildings in the kingdom must have pushed the canons’ treasury to the breaking point. Although there is not a single piece of evidence for the cost of the thirteenth-century work, it must have been extremely expensive, and the Chapter probably had to pay off substantial amounts of debt.

While the nave was constructed entirely in the fourteenth century, planning for it began a decade (if not more) before 1300. In fact, the very first folio of the Chapter Act book is an indulgence of forty days to all contributors to the Minster’s fabric fund. The first folio is dated March 24, 1290. After effusive praise for all those who build and maintain churches, Archbishop John le Romeyn (1286-96) informs every priest in Yorkshire that “our church at Beverley, in which the relics of the glorious Confessor John are honorably housed, is in need of repair to

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14 LEACH (1898), 2-3.
the structure of its sumptuous work.”

15 As the fabric of the eastern arm and transepts had been complete for thirty years, this indulgence can only refer to construction of the nave itself. The phrase “needs repair” (“indigeat reparatione”) is standard indulgece parlance for a building in an unfinished state, but could also indicate that the Romanesque structure was still in poor condition following the fire of 1188.

Other indulgences may have been issued prior to 1290, although none have survived. Nevertheless, the commissioning of a new shrine for St. John’s relics in 1292 (see Chapter 4) shows that the desire for rebuilding had reached full force by the last decade of the thirteenth century. The canons’ desire to rebuild their nave was no doubt exacerbated by York Minster, their fiercest competitor and occasional nemesis. During the first half of the 1200s, building works at York and Beverley had run in parallel, as both institutions constructed new transepts in the Gothic style.16 Unlike Beverley, however, York continued to build and build with hardly a pause for air. York’s stupendous new chapter house and vestibule (Figs. 59-60) – the most stunning display of French

15 “Cum itaque ecclesia nostra Beverlacensis, in qua gloriosi confessoris Johannis venerabiliter conduntur reliquiae, reparatione indigeat in structura operis sumptuosi.” LEACH (1898), 2.

16 For the thirteenth-century transepts at York, see HOEY (1986); BROWN (2003), 11-45.
Rayonnant ever attempted in England – were completed by the mid-1280s.\textsuperscript{17} They were dramatically new in every way. While the work at Beverley languished, York had catapulted into a radically avant-garde style. More was soon to follow. On April 6, 1291 Archbishop le Romeyn (1286-96) laid the foundation stone for the southeast corner of York’s new nave (Fig. 61) -- the sprawling replacement for the aisleless building originally constructed under Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux (1070/71-1100).\textsuperscript{18}

The Chapter at Beverley must have been painfully aware that York was about to begin the most important construction project on English soil. The only other grand-scale building in the North -- the Angel Choir at Lincoln -- had already been complete for eleven years, and construction at St. Mary’s Abbey, York, was about to draw to a close. It must have been obvious to the entire Chapter at Beverley that York’s new nave was about to transform the architectural landscape of the North. Furthermore, the translation in 1284 of the mother church’s new saint, William, would have been a disturbing reminder that time was marching relentlessly on.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{17} Brown (2003), 47-85; Gee (1977), 136-45.
\textsuperscript{18} Le Romeyn borrowed heavily from bankers in Rome and the Jews of York in order to finance construction. Brown (2003), 89.
\end{footnotes}
It is striking, however, that Archbishop le Romeyn’s indulgence for Beverley was issued a year before the start of work on his own nave. In the absence of other documents, it appears that at this time – perhaps due to York’s confidence in the cult of their new saint – relations between the metropolitan church and Beverley were in a rare phase of cordiality. The same (albeit brief) solidarity is confirmed by the next indulgence issued by Archbishop Corbridge (1300-04) on April 11, 1302. It uses the exact same wording as le Romeyn’s text, except that the shrine (“capsula”) is now mentioned in addition to the fabric. Corbridge clearly acknowledged that the work at Beverley was among the most important in Yorkshire, as he ordered that fundraising for the Minster should take precedence over all other diocesan projects except his own. At the time of Corbridge’s indulgence, the nave at York had been under construction for eleven years and was speeding toward the west facade.

As I show in greater detail in Chapter 4, fundraising documents for the Minster mention the shrine and fabric jointly until the year 1308, at which point references to the “ferertrum” or “capsula” disappear entirely. It was by this date, therefore, that Beverley’s new shrine must have been complete. All monies were

19 LEACH (1898), 3-4.
20 “Excepto negotio fabricae nostrae Beati Petri Eboarcensis, quod prius exponi volumus.” LEACH (1898), 3.
21 BROWN (2003), 89-92.
then directed to the construction of the nave and the refurbishment of the east end (see Chapters 4-6). This hierarchy of events was typically medieval. The shrine was the “engine” of the entire building and the catalyst for its reconstruction; a newly built Minster was unthinkable without the proper receptacle for the relics it was meant to contain. Gervase of Canterbury’s Tractatus remains the most penetrating commentary we have about architectural practice in the Gothic period; but even here, his overwhelming concern is for the proper provision of relics, shrines, tombs, and subsidiary altars. His attention to the architecture itself, while thrilling, is only a tiny portion of his work. Despite the vast size and expense of Canterbury Cathedral, Gervase defines it as a vehicle for relics and cultic imagery: saints come before architecture, every time. This exact same principle is at work at Beverley, where the canons’ priorities are just as clear. The shrine of John of Beverley had to come first, and the reconstruction of the nave could then follow.

When did construction actually begin? The evidence of the building itself suggests a start date immediately after completion of the shrine. The earliest foliage (in the capitals of the south aisle) is a “textbook” example of carving from 1310-15 (Fig. 62) and is likely to preclude an earlier date. There is crucial

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22 GERVASE (1879), 1-29.
evidence from textual sources as well. In the Chapter’s convocation on February 5, 1305, the Minster’s goldsmith and mason (“aurifaber” and “caementarius”) were reprimanded for their absenteeism and told to return to Beverley within a month, lest they lose their corrodies.\textsuperscript{23} Three weeks later, the Chapter wrote a special letter to Oliver of Stainfield, who is addressed as “our mason” (“caementario nostro”). He is told that the leave of absence which had been arranged for him by Henry of Lasey, earl of Lincoln, and his mother, Lady Alice, has come to an end and that he must return to Beverley by the middle of Lent.\textsuperscript{24} On the same day, Henry Maynel, the Minster’s goldsmith, was summoned to return as well.\textsuperscript{25}

It appears that neither of these men actually did so. In another convocation on June 2, 1305, Oliver of Stainfield was ordered to pay one mark per year to the Fabric fund for the duration of his absence.\textsuperscript{26} The penalty is very small – the proverbial “slap on the wrist” – and strongly suggests that the Minster cannot have been a busy construction site at the time. The implication is that there was very little for either Stainfield or Maynel to do at the Minster, and

\textsuperscript{23} Leach (1898), 50.
\textsuperscript{24} Leach (1898), 54-5.
\textsuperscript{25} Leach (1898), 55-6.
\textsuperscript{26} “Oliverus de Stainefeld, Caementarius noster, quamdiu residens non fuerit, non faciendo quod officio suo incumbit, solvat magistro operis ad fabricam ecclesiae nostrae annis singulis unam marcam.” Leach (1898), 73.
that they had taken up employment elsewhere in the meantime. After this point, however, no more penalties are recorded against them, so it seems that they had returned to Beverley by the conovation of 1307. By this point, the arrival of the shrine was imminent and preparation for work on the new nave was probably under way.

It is very likely that Oliver of Stainfield was in fact the Minster’s full-time architect, as an ordinary stone carver or setter would never have been mentioned by name, nor specially recalled by the Chapter. Stainfield was, therefore, the probable designer of the new work when building resumed at Beverley soon after 1308. It is Oliver of Stainfield who deserves credit for the Minster’s first foray into historicism, although it is unknown for how long remained at the building. His magisterial design -- the first of the six Decorated campaigns at Beverley – is the focus of the next section.

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27 Harvey (1954), 282.
THE SEQUENCE OF CONSTRUCTION

The first campaign

THE LOWER PART OF THE SOUTH AISLE (BAYS 1-6)

The first part of the nave to be built was the six eastern bays of the south aisle, between the south transept and the south porch (Figs. 63-64). This campaign was interrupted at an unknown date, probably around 1315, and only the lower third of the walls was actually built. On the interior, only the blind arcading of the dado was completed; everything above it was finished during the second campaign. On the exterior, work stopped at the sill of the windows (eleven or twelve masonry courses above the plinth), and the buttresses were built up to the second string course at the bottom of the tabernacles (Fig. 65).

Construction began at the east end of the aisle. The first bay clearly shows the transition between the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century work (Figs. 66-67). The masonry between the transept and nave is beautifully coursed around the corner (Fig. 68), and the Early English builders constructed three arches before ceasing operations around the year 1255. The design is identical to all of the blind arcading in the east end. Bases, capitals, dog-tooth, and moldings
are all copies of the previous work, and were carved from the same templates. Three trefoiled arches are supported on *en délit* Purbeck shafts, all resting on compressed water-holding bases. As in the center of the nave, this new arcading originally abutted the stonework of the Romanesque aisle. Some kind of temporary infill would have joined the two campaigns together, and it may have been possible to retain the round-hounded window above (and perhaps even the vault?) with wooden struts or falsework.

When work resumed after 1308, the Romanesque aisle was demolished in its entirety. The smooth, continuous coursing on the exterior (Figs. 65, 69) shows that all six Gothic bays were laid out simultaneously and constructed in a series of horizontal layers. The masonry wraps around the buttresses and aisle walls with a minimum of interruption. On the interior, there is no mistaking the change between the Early English and Decorated work, but they are beautifully and elegantly harmonized. In the first bay (Fig. 67), the first three trefoils date from the thirteenth century, while the fourth and fifth are the new work of Oliver of Stainfield. His arches had to be compressed to fit in the available space, resulting in a strange, almost horseshoe-like shape.

The arcading in the rest of this campaign (Figs. 70-71) is divided into five symmetrical arches, each narrower than the Early English work and with a
higher level of springing. Other minor differences between c. 1260 and c. 1310 can also be spotted. The bases of the Decorated work are taller and more octagonal, showing the new penchant for polygonal shapes; the dog-tooth in the soffits of the arcades is less prominent; and the moldings are somewhat flattened. In addition, Purbeck marble is used only for the the inner four colonettes, while the inner and outer jambs are made of coursed limestone.

The remaining changes are less cosmetic. Figural sculpture – a feature entirely absent from the east end – now adorns the Early English design. The label stops (previously blank) are carved with whimsical sculptures of animals, monsters, royal figures, and townspeople (Figs. 72-73). They are particularly worthy of study, as they appear to have never been restored. Between the third and fourth arches, the capitals take an unmistakable, fifty-year leap forward, subtly announcing the arrival of the Decorated style. The rather tepid stiff-leaf of the east end (Fig. 74) is replaced with the nobbly, crackling, heavily drilled foliage typical of the early fourteenth century. All of the capitals are deeply undercut with cavernous interiors (Figs. 75-76). The capitals feature bold leaves (many of them oak) as well as crocket-like fronds, twisting vines, acorns, and animals. When these capitals were painted, there would have been an even greater contrast between the formulaic stiff-leaf (a plant that never, after all,
existed in the natural world) and the naturalistic forms of the Decorated carvers. This contrast between the generic and the particular, between the stylized and the individual, encapsulates the differences between the Minster’s old and new work.

From the very start, the Decorated work at Beverley featured lush, ostentatious sculpture, just as it would continue to do for the next forty years. The new arcades of the south aisle are carved in Tadcaster stone, from the new quarry that supplied the raw material for the rest of the nave.¹ The hood-molds above the arches and the upper infill are still carved out of the Newbald stone used in the east end, presumably left over from the thirteenth-century campaign.

The third bay also features a section of Newbald that has been recycled from the Romanesque building (Figs. 77-78). Many of the blocks are quite damaged, and the spalling on the corners likely occurred when the nave was demolished. The Romanesque stone had to be set vertically in order to match the height of the taller Gothic courses, and some of it is so badly weathered that it must have originally been set on the exterior of the building (Fig. 78). Most of this work also features long diagonal tooling -- proof that the Romanesque masons of Beverley cut their stones with an axe, just as they did at Canterbury

¹ Clifton-Taylor (1987), 131-5; Bilson (1893), 21-2; Page (1912), 23-31.
Cathedral. When Gervase attempted to quantify the differences between the Romanesque and Gothic buildings there, he noted that each group of masons had used a different kind of tool. Whereas William of Sens’s workmen had carved their work with a chisel, those employed under Archbishop Anselm had used an axe.²

Aside from the furnishings of the east end (see Chapters 5 and 6), the south aisle features the only surviving evidence of the polychromy that once decorated the nave. This is now very difficult to see with the naked eye; but under a bright flashlight, the moldings of the trefoils reveal patches of dark red, and the tips of the dog-tooth retain vestiges of gold leaf. There is no doubt that this is genuine medieval work, as it occurs only on the Tadcaster blocks and abruptly stops where Hawksmoor’s stone from the eighteenth-century restoration intervenes. The original effect would have been ravishing. The five arches of each bay were once bathed in red and the interstices of the moldings shimmered with gold – all set against the polished gleam of Purbeck shafting below.

The first campaign was begun around 1308, but was interrupted fairly early on. This pause in construction was most likely caused by the outbreak of

² “Ibi arcus et caetera omnia plana, utpote sculpta secure et non scisello, hic in omnibus fere sculptura ideonea.” GERVAESE (1879), 27; WILLIS (1845), 58-9.
plague in 1315-17, the worst pestilence to occur in England since the sixth century.\(^3\) Although this disaster has been eclipsed by the much more famous Black Death, the mortality rate in England was severe, and there was a second outbreak in 1321.\(^4\) Contemporary chroniclers recorded that burials could not keep pace with the dead, and that food was so scarce that adults cannibalized their own children.\(^5\) The plague was intensified by horrific weather: in 1316, rain is said to have begun in early May and continued non-stop through September, with an intensity that “no mortal had ever seen.”\(^6\) As Lucas and Glassock have shown, there was a universal failure of all crops in most, if not all, countries in Europe during this period.\(^7\) In 1317, heavy Spring rains prevented the sowing of oats, barley, and spelt, and hay could not be cured.\(^8\) John of Trokelowe, writing at St. Albans in the early fourteenth century, lamented that London was populated by corpses and emaciated children.\(^9\) Even the king found it difficult to get provisions. When Edward II and his household arrived at St Albans on the feast of St. Lawrence, he could not get enough bread to feed his court.\(^10\)

\(^3\) Russell (1966), 466.
\(^4\) Donkin (1973), 78.
\(^5\) Seebohm (1865), 269; Sellers (1913), 440-49.
\(^6\) Lucas (1930), 346; Waters (1925), 103.
\(^7\) Glassock (1973), 141-56; Lucas (1930), 359-71.
\(^8\) Bolton (1980), 95.
\(^9\) Lucas (1930), 356.
\(^10\) Lucas (1930), 356.
The true effect of plagues on the medieval built environment remains open to debate, as there is usually very little evidence to correlate death rates with finances and construction. In the case of Beverley, however, we are on much firmer ground. It is certain that the failed harvests of 1315-17 would have been an utter disaster for the Minster. The Chapter’s economy was based almost entirely on the renders of corn which it collected from tenants all over the East Riding – a right which was said to have been bestowed by King Athelstan in the tenth century.\textsuperscript{11} Well over half of the Chapter Act book is taken up with discussion of the thraves and the canons’ zealous protection of their “donations.”\textsuperscript{12} It must constantly be kept in mind that the canons had almost no liquid cash, and that corn was the Chapter’s most precious commodity. At Beverley, corn (not gold) was the “mortar,” to borrow Kraus’s phrase,\textsuperscript{13} and the collapse of the East Riding’s entire agricultural infrastructure between 1315 and 1317 would have brought the Minster to the brink of destitution. The Chapter would have had difficulty in paying for its basic necessities, let alone the salaries and \textit{per diem} payments of masons and craftsmen on a large construction project. Work on the south aisle must have been suspended during this time, probably

\textsuperscript{11} The story was apocryphal and “authenticated” by several forged charters in the mid-eleventh century. \textsc{barnwell} and \textsc{horrox} (2000), 3; \textsc{raine} (1859), 212-18.

\textsuperscript{12} See, especially, \textsc{leach} (1898), xcviii-cv.

\textsuperscript{13} \textsc{kraus} (1979).
until at least 1323 or 1324, when several summers of improved harvests would have enabled the Minster’s economy to get back on its feet.

Whether work continued on the south aisle after the plague is more difficult to determine. The current tracery is not coursed in with the buttresses on the exterior, but was inserted during the second campaign, as I show below. If Oliver of Stainfield did build windows in the south aisle -- or had begun to do so -- they must have been dismantled at the start of the next campaign.

As the first campaign drew to a close, the blind arcading of the south aisle was complete up to the sill of the windows, and the buttresses outside had reached the level of their first set-off. Until the tracery was built in the following decade, the south aisle would not have been usable, as it was less than four feet in height. The entire aisle would have been unusable, and its masonry stood outside the Minster. In order to keep out wind and rain, the southern arcades of the Romanesque nave must have been blocked with some kind of temporary wall or infill. These interruptions to the site’s daily functions were to continue for the next sixty years – evidence that the dust, noise, and inconvenience of construction were perennial fixtures of nearly every medieval church.
The second campaign

THE NORTH AISLE (BAYS 1-6)
THE TRACERY OF THE SOUTH AISLE (BAYS 1-6)

Unlike the blind arcading on the south, that of the north aisle (Figs. 79-80) formed a decisive break with the Early English work that preceded it. The full, florid sinuosity of the Decorated style had arrived in Yorkshire and the siren call of the ogee arch proved impossible to resist.

The thirteenth- and fourteenth-century work joins up in the eastern bay (Figs. 81-82), as it did on the other side. The Early English builders constructed three (or four) arches of the blind arcade and the vault respond above it. When work resumed, probably c. 1325, the new arcading (Figs. 83-84) featured heavily crocketted ogee arches with lush finials that appear to be blowing softly in the wind. Even here, there is continuity with the thirteenth century in the lower cusping, where quasi-trefoils mirror the silhouette of the previous design. Bases are again subtly modernized, and the outer shafts are made of limestone rather than Purbeck. The capitals of the north aisle (Figs. 85-86) are less ostentatious than those on the south: thinner, flatter, and with less attention to naturalistic detail. It is now the label stops that predominate. They are carved with the famous series of troubadours and jongleurs and their panoply of musical
instruments (Figs. 87-88) – a charming display of secular devotion, and one of the most complete records of music-making that has survived from the late Middle Ages. Ironically, the sculpture is far better known to musicologists than it is to art historians.\textsuperscript{14} Unfortunately, the carving was drastically renewed in the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{15}

The construction of the blind arcading is remarkably efficient. Each arch is composed of only three blocks of stone (Fig. 89): one keystone and one base from which two arches spring in either direction. Also typical of the Decorated style is the arcade’s subtle manipulation of scale. The three inner arches of the north aisle are slightly broader than those of the outer flanks, creating a kind of forced perspective that lengthens the appearance of each bay.

As mentioned already, the most important transformation of the new design is its inclusion of bar tracery. As on the south aisle, the thirteenth-century string course is lowered to accommodate a three-part diagonal sill -- an elegant transition between the space of the aisle and the tall windows behind (Fig. 90). Even here, there are echoes of the thick-wall construction that had dominated England from the Anglo-Norman period. The windows are surrounded on both sides by a complex network of shafts, each with its own function, whether

\textsuperscript{14} Montagu and Montagu (1978); McPeek and McPeek (1973).
\textsuperscript{15} Neave (2000), 82-3.
supporting the vault or the thick window ribs above. The descent of the vaulting shafts all the way to the plinth below (Fig. 91) joins the two “stories” of the aisle together – one of the few Decorated concessions to the Rayonnant linkage of triforia and clerestories.

In France, these shafts would have been pushed to the point of insubstantiality, belying their structural role. At Beverley, however, the English love of profuse shafting proved irresistible, and the responds and capitals are some of the largest in the entire building. As always in the Decorated style, the fundamental cohesion of Rayonnant was rejected, and it was instead treated as an assemblage of motifs to be applied for decorative effect. Even so, the amount of square footage devoted to glass in the aisles at Beverley is substantial, showing that Continental practice was a conscious model for emulation. The Minster’s aisle windows occupy a far wider portion of each bay than even the self-consciously French elevations at Westminster and the nave at York.

When was the north aisle built? As Nicholas Dawton has shown, the label stops were carved by a new team of sculptors, none of whom had worked on the south aisle.\textsuperscript{16} This probably confirms that the original personnel left Beverley during the plague of 1315-17 and did not return. Work on the north aisle could

\textsuperscript{16} Dawton (2000), 121.
have started in the mid-1320s, and was probably complete by the end of the next
decade. One of the new sculptors at Beverley -- the so-called Clifford Master --
also carved some of the capitals in the nave and six pieces of sculpture on the
Percy tomb.\textsuperscript{17} His work can also be seen on the reredos and its staircase, which
were constructed the 1330s, as I show in Chapter 5.\textsuperscript{18} Finally, several original
fragments of glass from the aisles have been analyzed by David O’Connor, who
argued that they dated from “around 1340 at the latest.”\textsuperscript{19} All of the evidence
points to a date for the north aisle in the 1330s, contemporary with the reredos
and possibly the sedilia (see Chapters 5 and 6).

The abandoned walls of the north aisle were also completed in this
campaign. The flowing tracery here is clearly the work of the same designer, and
the coursing on the exterior proves that the spandrels of the windows and the
upper parts of the buttresses were constructed at the same time (Fig. 92). The
windows and buttresses are seamlessly integrated with the work of the first
campaign, just as we would expect. Neither one of the aisles could be vaulted
until the new arcades were erected in the third campaign, but the exterior
envelope of the Gothic nave was at last complete.

\textsuperscript{17} DAWTON (2000), 122-5.
\textsuperscript{18} DAWTON (1989), 122, 127.
\textsuperscript{19} O’CONNOR (1989), 71.
The Romanesque nave still lay between the two Gothic aisles, taking up the center of the building. Its reconstruction is the topic of the next four sections.
The third campaign

ARCADES AND TRIFORIUM TO THE PORCHES (BAYS 2-7)
VAULTING OF THE AISLES (BAYS 1-6)

When the north and south aisles were under construction, work had taken place on the periphery of the Minster. With the debut of work in the main vessel of the nave (Figs. 93-94), it was now impossible to avoid major disruption to the church’s liturgical and parochial functions. The third campaign involved the demolition of the five remaining arcades of the Romanesque nave, and their reconstruction in the Decorated style.

The completion of the first bay in the thirteenth century has already been discussed. When work resumed c. 1340, construction began with the Early English bay and proceeded from east to west in the usual fashion. Small changes in detail show that building was more advanced on the south side than the north. On the first two southern arcades, the label stops were carved with small sculptures of musicians playing a lute and a recorder (Figs. 95-96). They were the continuation of the musician series in the north aisle. After the construction of these two arcades, it was evidently realized that these sculptures were too small to be seen from the ground floor. In between the fourth and fifth arches on the south side, the label stops suddenly double in size and it is now angels, not
men, who play the musical instruments (Figs. 97-98). The secular band has become a celestial orchestra, sanctifying the daily activities of all those who walk below.

On the north side, the corresponding arcades feature the larger label stops from the start (Fig. 99), proving that the two southern arches had already been built when the north elevation was taken up. These two bays have other features in common, particularly the recycled chevron discussed in Chapter 1 (Fig 9). These are hidden from view under the aisle roofs, where they were used to construct the round relieving arches on the back of the triforium. The zig-zag was discontinued in all of the remaining bays of the nave, and the rest of the arches were constructed in Tadcaster stone. As with the Perpendicular renovation of the nave at Winchester, the masons at Beverley seem to have realized that it was actually more time-consuming to reuse Romanesque material than to build new work from scratch.  

The other feature shared by bays two and three is their use of Purbeck marble in the rear shafts of the triforium (Figs. 100-101). These colonettes formed a notional link with the middle story of the east end, giving the illusion that its syncopated arcading had carried on straight through without a break. Like the

\[20\] Willis (1972), 122-5.
musician label stops, the Purbeck shafts were abandoned in the fourth bay, probably because they turned out to be nearly invisible from the ground floor.

All of these changes – label stops, chevron, and Purbeck -- indicate that the design of the nave was still being worked out in its early phases of construction. The major problems were quickly resolved, and bays four through seven continued with no noticeable changes. The work is identical on both sides all the way up to the north and south porches. Here, there is a vertical seam of masonry running up the entire elevation, indicating that a major pause in construction was reached. The break can be seen on the exterior of the aisles, the outside of the clerestory (Fig. 102), on the back of the triforium (under the aisle roof), and also above the nave vault (Fig. 103). The entire building was halted at this point for the full height of the elevation. Such a massive sheer wall could never have been supported with temporary falsework or scaffolding, and it must therefore have been supported by a substantial pre-existing structure. This was almost certainly the Romanesque west façade, which would have been located on the same site as the current north porch. The façade acted as a colossal buttress to “lock in” all seven bays of the Decorated nave once its final, westernmost arcades had been built.
Beyond this general east-west progression, there are no other clues about the sequence of construction. As mentioned in the introduction, diagnostic details are few and far between. Piers and moldings are identical in every bay of the nave, and all were completed to the original design. There are minute changes to the bases, sub-bases, and capitals in the triforium, but it is impossible to arrange any of them into a plausible building pattern, and they cannot be attributed to changes in master mason or the workforce. The most likely explanation is that these pieces were simply mass-produced by the sculptors and installed in the building as required. Their arrangement in the completed structure does not, therefore, establish chronology or even show intent. Their disposition is essentially random.

Once the triforium was complete, it was at last possible to build the permanent roofs over the aisles and vault them from the capitals of the new arcades. The rib moldings in the aisles have a different design than the Early English springer that was provided for them in the thirteenth century, resulting in an awkward junction between them. Similarly, on the back of the second arcade on both sides, the transition between the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century arch moldings had to be disguised by delightful sculptures of men sticking out their tongues (Fig. 104).
It is also worth mentioning that the settlement of the south aisle wall (which now leans backwards by at least eight inches) had already occurred by the mid-fourteenth century, probably due to poor reinforcement of the Romanesque foundations.\textsuperscript{21} When the time arrived to erect the vault above it, small “extension” voussoirs had to be added to the original ribs (Fig. 105) in order to clear the aisle’s slightly increased span. The rest of the voussoirs had evidently been carved in the first phase of construction and kept in storage until they could be installed in the building.

When the third campaign at Beverley drew to a close, the first two levels of the nave were complete and the aisles were, at last, fully operational spaces. As soon as they were roofed and vaulted, both aisles must have been colonized with chapels, altars, screens, and tombs. Canons and laity could finally put the new nave to the purposes for which it was intended. The natural question is: when was this point reached? It is difficult to know the answer. Dawton has shown that some of the sculptors of the arcade capitals also worked on the Percy tomb and reredos;\textsuperscript{22} therefore, several of the arches underneath must have been constructed in the late 1330s or early 1340s. There is no other data to determine

\textsuperscript{21} JOHNSON (2005), 141 noted that the Gothic builders’ extension of the Romanesque buttresses was very sloppy work.
\textsuperscript{22} DAWTON (2000), 110-9.
when bays six and seven finally reached the “finish line” of the Romanesque façade. Given the clerestory’s probable date of c. 1360, as I argue below, a completion date of c. 1350-55 for phase three seems likely.
The fourth campaign

THE CLERESTORY (BAYS 2-7)

All of the windows in the clerestory are identical, but their tracery is much later in style than the flowing design of the aisles (Figs. 57, 106). They are a hybrid of Decorated and Perpendicular. Each is composed of three cinquecusped lights within two intersecting arches. The acrobatic flurry of movement in the aisle tracery below seems to have frozen into proto-Perpendicular rigidity. The heads of the windows are compressed and feature only two divergent mouchettes. There is not an ogee curve to be found, and the spinning pinwheels from below have been replaced by simple diamond shapes. The design of the Minster’s new tracery proves that the English heyday of the brash, swaggering curvilinear window had passed. For the first half of the fourteenth century, the massive eastern windows at Selby (Fig. 107), Carlisle (Fig. 108), Howden (destroyed), and Holy Trinity, Hull (Fig. 109) had been the epitome of Gothic innovation, with their soaring expanses of glass and endless networks of serpentine curves. They were the ultimate showpieces of the Decorated style.
Fashion changed remarkably quickly in fourteenth-century England. By the start of the fourth campaign at Beverley, the aisle windows – some of the most urbane designs to be found anywhere in the North – had themselves fallen out of vogue. They were replaced with the much calmer empanelment that was to dominate England until the early Tudor period. Even the comparative narrowness of the clerestory windows is an indication that light was now less important than geometric regularity. The glass takes up less than two-thirds of the total width of the bays, and the design blends unobtrusively into the background. It is as if the windows from below have been purged of their fussy ostentation and bluster.

Yet when both sets of windows are viewed simultaneously from the exterior of the Minster (Fig. 110-111), there is no doubt that they were meant to be seen as a unified ensemble. While all of the flowing elements are eliminated in the upper windows, the outline of its basic shapes – arches, vesicas, and lopsided circles – echoes the visual pattern of those below. The mouchettes, cusped lights, and kite-shaped interstices in the clerestory are all deliberate repetitions of similar features in the aisles. As always at Beverley, “old” and “new” are inextricably linked. New designs are not created by bursts of invention or blatant ingenuity, but by using the building itself as the
fundamental point of departure. The clerestory is yet another example of the Minster’s continuous modification of its own architectural past.

The same is true of the design of the clerestory as a whole (Figs. 112-113). It is a clear continuation of its predecessor in the east end (Fig. 114). In the new work, the number of arches is reduced from five to three to allow for bar tracery in the rear wall; the capitals are no longer spools, but carved with angular quirks; and there is ball-flower instead of dog-tooth on the soffits of the arches. But the construction of the front layer as a detached “screen” has been continued in the Decorated design, even though two-layered clerestories were woefully out of fashion by the mid-fourteenth century. The sharply pointed side arches, Purbeck shafts, and even the nearly invisible corbels on the rear wall are all derived from the Early English campaign. The clerestory is, therefore, a kind of “double” historicism: the front layer reverts back to the thirteenth century, while the tracery returns to only a few decades before.

Historicism again makes it impossible to date the clerestory precisely. Curvilinear tracery was still very much in fashion in Yorkshire in the 1350s, and it is difficult to believe that a flowing design would not have been repeated at that date. As far as I know, Pevsner is the only one who ever attempted to give a date for the clerestory of the nave, and his rather noncommittal designation of
“perhaps of c. 1360” does not inspire confidence. Nevertheless, that date does mesh nicely with the sequence of construction that I have already proposed. If the nave was begun in the mid-1330s, a completion of the first seven bays of the nave within thirty years is entirely feasible. The intervening three decades of the third campaign would explain the change to a Perpendicular aesthetic, which by 1360 had begun to spread like wild-fire throughout the rest of England.

More important than the design of the clerestory is the method of its construction. The coursing of the rear wall passage is remarkably even and uniform. There are no visible breaks between bays, and the masonry above the windows of the inner wall stretches virtually uninterrupted down all seven bays of the clerestory (Fig. 115). On the exterior, the coursing is also quite uniform, although restoration work sometimes makes it difficult to see the medieval pattern clearly. Taken together, the evidence strongly suggests that the entire clerestory was erected at one time and in a single campaign, rather than moving diagonally from east to west. The upper story seems to have risen gradually as a series of horizontal layers. Courses were laid down more or less in tandem and slowly stacked up until they reached the sill plate of the roof.

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23 Pevsner (1972), 171.
This process could only have occurred if workmen had access to the entire clerestory at once. It is, therefore, very likely that the central vessel of the nave was covered by a temporary roof that served as a platform for construction. This would have been easily accommodated on top of the completed triforium, where the thick walls of the unbuilt clerestory could serve as a stable foundation. Such an arrangement provided the huge advantage of allowing the central vessel of the nave to remain in use while building work proceeded above. As the aisles had been vaulted in the third campaign, the temporary roof would therefore have made the *entire* nave usable to clergy and parishioners alike. The building’s multiplicity of liturgical, parochial, and social functions could carry on undisturbed, and there would have been unrestricted access to St. John’s tomb in the second bay.

The constructional advantages of the temporary roof are obvious. In addition to sheltering the nave below, it served as the “base of operations” for the erection of the clerestory. Here, the workmen could pile their stone and other materials, and they had easy access to both sides of the building without having to go down hundreds of stairs to the ground and come back up. The roof could also serve as the foundation for scaffolding, cranes, wheels, and other moving
machines. High above the floor of the nave, construction could proceed with a minimum of disturbance, streamlining production and the delivery of materials.

The temporary roof I am proposing would have been an elegant and pragmatic solution to the construction of the nave. But did it really exist? Strangely enough, confirmation comes from the twentieth century and not the Middle Ages. When the nave of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC was built in the 1970s, its method of construction was uncannily similar to what Beverley must have done in the fourteenth century. A crude photograph from the time (Fig. 116) shows a concrete and timber platform supported on metal beams, stretching across the top of the triforium and obscuring the clerestory above. Construction in Washington proceeded for eight years on the upper side of this temporary roof.24 This allowed the Cathedral to continue as a venue for religious and State functions, many of which were televised and could not be interrupted by scaffolding or the detritus of construction. At Beverley, a similar platform served the same (albeit less “Hollywood”) purpose, allowing parishioners to attend services and receive pastoral care while the clerestory continued to be built without interruption.

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24 FELLER (1973); WILLIAMS (1974).
The *ad hoc* and admittedly unattractive appearance of the roof at Washington is a reminder that for most of the medieval period, churches were nearly continuous sites of construction: difficult, messy, and problematic. Still, the temporary roof at Beverley need not have been a “bargain basement” affair. It could have been painted or otherwise decorated, and thus formed a semi-attractive backdrop to John’s tomb for the duration of construction. At Canterbury, Gervase recorded that a temporary screen set up by William the Englishman was filled with beatifully painted sheets of glass.\(^{25}\) This was obviously expensive work, but given the rapidity of construction at the Cathedral, the monks must have known that it would be demolished within only a few years. Even the very short time that the screen remained in use was evidently thought to be worth the expense. Although the evidence at Beverley is entirely lacking, it is certainly possible that the temporary arrangement at the Minster was a quasi-work of art in itself. If this was indeed the case, the Decorated roof in the nave would have been an uncanny throwback to the glorious painted ceiling installed by Archbishop Ealdred (1061-69) three centuries before.

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\(^{25}\) *Gervase* (1879), 14.
When the fourth campaign was finished, the arcades, triforium, and clerestory were complete all the way to the Romanesque façade. It is important to reiterate here that the termination of work at this spot was deliberate and brought about by the exigencies of construction. It was not, as is often claimed, caused by the Black Death, which is now invoked to explain every major construction break, anomaly, or difficulty encountered in the fourteenth century. The Black Death has become the art historical bogeyman. We have no hard data or evidence about how exactly the Black Death affected the built environment in the Gothic period. While the loss of life in the plague was certainly substantial in Yorkshire, there is no indication (as there is for 1315-17) that it would have had a profound or debilitating effect on the construction of the nave.

The break at Beverley was planned with a high degree of sophistication and forethought. If work did stop at Beverley during the Black Death, it left no trace on the surviving masonry.
The fifth campaign

ROOFING OF THE NAVE (BAYS 1-7)

Thanks to an impressive investigation by Alison Armstrong and David Cant, a great deal is known about the roof of the Minster’s nave. Their report of 2008 is very thorough and it is only necessary to summarize it briefly here. As the authors showed, the roof of the nave is composed of three sections (western, central, and eastern), each comprising eight beams (Fig. 117). All three sections were inscribed with a series of Roman numerals to indicate the order in which the beams were to be installed in the building. All of these markings remain in situ.

Armstrong and Cant’s critical discovery was that the roof at Beverley had been erected from west to east, and not vice versa. This defies the expectations of usual medieval building practice. Fabrication of the roof began at the seventh bay of the nave and proceeded towards the western crossing, where it was bonded in to the masonry of the central tower. As the authors noted, the most logical explanation for this “reverse” construction was that it allowed the first beams of the roof to be braced against the Romanesque west facade. Whatever

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26 ARMSTRONG and CANT (2008).
27 ARMSTRONG and CANT (2008), 76.
its form, the westwork at Beverley therefore acted as a buttress to the nave’s roof in addition to all three stories of the elevation below.

Once the roof beams had been sheathed in lead, all seven bays of the nave were weather-proof and secure. Unfortunately, dendrochronology was not performed in 2008, so it is impossible to know when exactly this point was reached.
The sixth campaign

VAULTING OF THE NAVE (BAYS 1-7)

Once the fifth campaign had been completed, it was finally possible to vault the nave (Figs. 118-120). This process was the greatest demonstration yet of the inherent conservatism of Beverley’s design. When it came time to “crown” the new building, the Minster was given a simple quadripartite vault, just like all of the vaults in the east end (Figs. 22, 121). Similar vaults had been built over the nave aisles at the end of the third campaign (Fig. 122), but in any other building in England, the central vessel would have been the grand occasion to “pull out all the stops” and unveil a highly complex and show-stopping design. It should come as little surprise that Beverley did precisely the opposite. Bay by bay, the simplest Gothic vault possible rose over each section of the nave, exactly as it had done in the choir and transepts a century before.

This was an extraordinary act of renunciation. By the middle of the fourteenth century, English vaults were the most precocious in the Gothic world (Figs. 123-124). Even a cursory glance at the exceedingly complex patterns of the Lady Chapel at Wells (Fig. 125) or the parish church of Ottery St. Mary (Fig.

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28 The literature on Decorated vaults is voluminous. See BONY (1979), 44-56; FRANKL (2000), 187-91; WILSON (1990), 199-204; BOND (1906), 232-47.
126) shows the relentless virtuosity that the canons were deliberately giving up. By way of comparison, a simple tierceron vault -- such as the one that debuted in the nave of Lincoln Cathedral in mid-thirteenth century (Fig. 127) -- would have already been considered retrograde by Decorated standards. But even this was too great a contrast with the Minster’s east end. Up to the very end, the choir and transepts remained the touchstone for everything that was built at Beverley in the fourteenth century. Novelty was unimportant: what mattered was concordance, permanence, and stability.

Vaulting began in the second bay of the nave, adjacent to the crossing tower. This was the logical point to begin, as all of the builders’ scaffolding and moving apparatus were located in that position at the end of the fifth campaign. It is here that the temporary roof over the triforium once again proved its usefulness, becoming the base of building operations for a second time. The platform was at exactly the right level to complete the job, and the Chapter must have saved a substantial amount of money by not having to re-erect scaffolding to provide access. Located six feet below the top of the responds, the roof was the ideal surface from which to rig the centering for the vault and support the wooden falsework while the mortar dried in the webs. Work could have
proceeded swiftly from one bay to the next all the way down to the Romanesque façade.

Unfortunately, the job turned out to be much more difficult than the masons would have liked. Due to an error in the initial setting-out of the building, the north and south walls of the nave had fallen out of alignment by as much as three feet. The problem began with a simple mistake, but whoever was responsible created an enormous headache over the course of the next four decades. In the corners between the transepts and nave, a squat buttress had been built during the Early English campaign to mark the transition between the old and new work (Fig. 128). The distances for setting out the nave were measured off of these corners, but it was not realized that the north buttress was in fact nine inches shorter than its counterpart on the south. The aisle walls were laid out on the assumption that they were mirror images of one another, although they were out of step from the very beginning. The result of this initial miscalculation was compounded in every bay, with the result that nine inches has become several feet by the time the Romanesque façade was reached. The piers of the main vessel were positioned directly in front of the aisle responds, and so the mistake was transferred over to the main vessel. The vault that had to...

29 BILSON (1898), 252-4; BARNWELL and HORROX (2000), 3.
30 BILSON (1898), 251.
be erected over them followed this anomalous pattern, and now resembles a series of distorted parallelograms (Figs, 119, 129). As John Bilson noted, however, their odd appearance is more noticeable on a ground plan than it is in the actual building.  

When the Romanesque nave was intact in the center of the Minster, it would have been impossible to get a clear sight-line across the church in order to realize what had occurred. When exactly the mistake was realized is unknown, but by that point it was impossible to correct the damage. The only course of action was to continue building, and to vault each bay as effectively as possible. This must not have been an easy task. None of the vault quadrants is rectangular, and each one straddles multiple bays. The technical problems of completing the vault would have been significant, and this was probably some of the most difficult work accomplished in the Minster’s long history.

One final aspect of the vault’s construction is unique, and that is that the material of the infill is brick rather than stone. Although brick vaults were commonplace on the Continent at this date, the practice was slow to catch on across the Channel, and the nave of Beverley was the first large vault to be built

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31 Bilson (1898), 251.
in England in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{32} Bricks were a staple of the Netherlands, and perhaps the presence of so many Flemish people in Beverley explains why this material was chosen. In the East Riding, brick was also used in the vaults of the aisles at Howden (cf. the fragments still \textit{in situ}) and on the south transept and choir at Holy Trinity, Hull.

When the vault was finally completed, the Decorated nave at Beverley was finally finished. When exactly this phase was reached is impossible to say, although a date of c. 1370 seems likely. All seven bays of the nave -- including the aisles, roofs, and vault -- were now complete, and the only remaining order of business was to demolish, at long last, the temporary roof over the triforium. It is difficult to imagine the joy and anticipation that must have existed when light first poured down from the clerestory to the ground floor, or the newly constructed vaults were finally visible, soaring high above. It would have been a moment of revelation.

\textsuperscript{32} For brick in medieval England, see \textsc{Brooks} (1939); \textsc{Clifton-Taylor} (1987), 211-7; \textsc{Wight} (1972); \textsc{Salzman} (1952), 140-8.
CHAPTER 3: FUNDRAISING FOR THE NAVE

For most of the churches built in fourteenth-century England, there is very little information about the economic realities of their construction. It is often not possible to say a single thing about fundraising, daily expenses, total cost, or the make-up of the labor force. For Exeter and York, on the other hand, surviving Fabric Rolls give a wonderfully clear picture of how these buildings were built and paid for.¹ They shed considerable light on construction practices, the payment of suppliers and craftsmen, acquisition of materials, and the employment of artists and masons. For most other contemporary buildings in England, however, these fiscal realities are dismally unknowable. The economic concerns which so obsessed every medieval builder and patron are often matters of pure speculation. For many scholars, medieval churches seem to float serenely in a neo-Platonic world unsullied by the sordid transactions of money.

Beverley is a refreshing exception to this trend. Although it has never received mention in the literature, a surprising amount of financial information has survived about the Minster’s construction in the early fourteenth century. Although the picture is often fragmentary, it can be unravelled with a bit of perseverance and detective work, and it is possible to say quite a bit about how

¹ ERSKINE (1981); ERSKINE (1983); RAINE (1859).
the nave was financed. Unfortunately, most of this evidence is limited to the primary sources covered in the Chapter Act book, so little information is available after c. 1339.

The Chapter Act book shatters any illusions that Gothic construction was primarily an exercise in spiritual devotion, spatial manipulation, or theological propogation. Cash is king. The documents reveal an institution utterly obsessed with money, property, and the solidification of its own assets. Easily eighty percent of the book deals with the collection of overdue renders of corn and other property. Financing was absolutely central to the nave’s construction, and the Chapter shows remarkably little concern for the appearance of the building or its architectural properties. Architectural genius is useless without the cash to back it up; prodigious new designs, while thrilling, do not mix mortar, deliver stone, or erect scaffolding. The canons of Beverley were unrepentant that money was the prime mover of their Minster.

The town

The money to pay for the Minster’s nave came from three main sources: the town, the laity, and the Chapter. Beverley was one of the earliest towns in
England to be officially incorporated, receiving royal confirmation of its charters in 908 and the privilege of charging tolls at its bridges and gates. Even in the Middle Ages, Beverley’s municipal government was well known for its efficiency and well-oiled infrastructure. The Minster was the locus around which the town’s civic and spiritual life revolved. Municipal life was dominated by the guilds, who were soon to co-opt the nave as the main venue for their chapels, tombs, and corporate self-identity. Their contributions to the Minster fabric would have been substantial.

The involvement of the guilds was crucial to every aspect of the building’s construction, even in its holiest sites of devotion. It is no coincidence that it is guild members, not ecclesiastics, who are prominently featured on the only two remaining vestiges of St. John’s cult. Three guild leaders are carved on the underside of the corbel that once supported John’s standard in the southwest transept (Fig. 130). Three more guildsmen -- clearly very wealthy judging from their finery and absurdly long, pointy shoes -- are depicted on the back of the reredos, directly below the platform for St. John’s shrine (Fig. 131). Both of these sculptures are accidents of survival, and guild imagery must have been featured

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3 English (1997), 93.
5 For the guilds at Beverley, see Horrox (1989), 19-30; Leach (1900), 37-105.
throughout the building. It no doubt decorated the tomb in the nave as well. The guilds inserted themselves into both of the holiest cultic sites that remain in the building.

The depiction of the guilds here is confirmation of their criticality to cult, building, and town. They must have paid handsomely for the privilege, and their contributions to the furnishings at Beverley were doubtless the proverbial “tip of the iceberg.” Donations by the guilds to the fabric fund must have been very substantial for the duration of the fourteenth century. Unfortunately, only one piece of direct evidence for this has survived. In 1321, the guild of Corpus Christi ordered its treasurer to pay its arrears to the Minster’s Clerk of the Works, as the guild’s contribution to the fabric was overdue by several months. The total amount owed was £18 11s 2d, which was an astonishing forty percent of the guild’s annual income. In the year that the first campaign (the south aisle) was coming to a close, the guild donated nearly half of its annual profit to the Minster’s fabric fund. Obviously, it is dangerous to extrapolate fiscal trends based on this meager amount of data; but given the usual financial oneupsmanship that occurred between guilds in the Middle Ages, this must mean

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6 East Riding Archive Office, BC I / 34 / 57.
7 East Riding Archive Office, BC I / 34 / 57.
that many of Beverley’s secular organizations contributed significant percentages of their income to the nave’s construction.

The centrality of the guilds is shown nowhere more clearly than on the reredos, where the three leaders are by far the most prominent group on display -- far more prominent, even, than the Virgin herself (Figs. 131, 144). The guildsmen proudly face the world and pilgrims below -- unflappable and serene -- while the Virgin must earn her keep by stuffing demons into the gaping mouth of Hell.

**The laity in Yorkshire**

In addition to the town authorities, money for the nave also poured in from the laity. There is no systematic information about contributions from Beverley’s parishioners, but wills and testaments demonstrate that the Minster and its relics had a profound hold on local affection. Evidence from the fourteenth century is unfortunately sparse, but John’s tomb and shrine are frequently mentioned by testators in the fifteenth century, and small donations (often of a few shillings) are found throughout the five volumes of the *Testamenta Eboracensia*.

Of the wills and obits that have been published for Yorkshire from the fourteenth century, a total of thirty-seven per cent (216 of 583 in total) include

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8 Raine (1836-1902), esp. vol. 3, 12, 17-8, 22, 36-7, 56, 58, 78, 112, 148, 156.
small donations to John’s shrine or tomb – a very high amount, as these records cover the entire archdiocese, not just places that were local to Beverley.\textsuperscript{9} As we would expect, for people in or near Beverley, the donation rate to the Minster was close to seventy per cent, although many people contributed only one or two shillings.\textsuperscript{10} Donations from parishioners at the time of death were likely a continuous, although not especially lucrative, source of revenue for the Chapter.

Cash was of course solicited on a much wider scale. Mention has already been made of the two indulgences by Archbishops le Romeyn and Corbridge in 1290 and 1302.\textsuperscript{11} Pilgrimage was also another source of income, and in 1318, the canons began active promotion of a new series of miracles centered on St. John’s tomb in the nave. The timing is easily understandable, as the resplendent new shrine had arrived a decade earlier and a year had passed since the plague of 1317. Certificates for these miracles were issued by the canons for every parish in the archdiocese of Yorkshire. There is no question that these miracles were a deliberate means of increasing traffic, as the documents state explicitly that they are intended to expand the crowds of devoted (“amplioris venerationis

\textsuperscript{9} See the index for Beverley in RAIN\textsuperscript{E} (1836-1902), vol. 6, 323-7.
\textsuperscript{10} See the tabulations in RAIN\textsuperscript{E} (1836-1902), vol. 3, 322-5; vol. 6, 325-9.
\textsuperscript{11} LEACH (1898), 2-4.
frequentia” and “devotionis frequentia”) who visit the church.\textsuperscript{12} The Middle Ages could be refreshingly transparent. What they do \textit{not} state is that a journey to the tomb plunged every pilgrim into the heart of one of the most important and expensive building projects in England. As discussed in Chapter 2, miracles, tomb, and construction were interdependent and self-reinforcing.

On July 22, 1318, the Chapter reported that Agnes of Sherborne, a madwoman (“quae mentis alienationem”), spent many days in the Minster in a continuous fury, but was miraculously restored to sanity (“restituit sanitati”) by standing next to St. John’s tomb.\textsuperscript{13} The next miracle was reported four years later. John Dandi of Melton was taken to Beverley for one week, and as he was unable to walk, he had to beg for food from everyone by “creeping and crawling” (“reptando et serpendo”) through the Minster.\textsuperscript{14} On February 22, 1322, he was placed near the tomb of John of Beverley and found himself completely cured upon awakening.

On June 12, 1323, the Chapter issued another Letter Patent certifying the miracle of Maud of Settington, who was unable to stand for three months and could only go from place to place by “miserably using her hands” (“suis manibus

\textsuperscript{12} Leach (1898), 362; Leach (1903), 26, 32.
\textsuperscript{13} Leach (1898), 362.
\textsuperscript{14} Leach (1903), 26.
miserabiliter se promovit”). After spending nearly three weeks in and around the tomb, she was restored to perfect health through the healing power of St. John.

These accounts have none of the usual medieval ambiguity about sites of devotion; it is clear that the intercessory powers of the tomb -- not the shrine -- were solely responsible for generating these miracles. It is striking, and surely deliberate, that none of the miracle stories from the early fourteenth century takes place in the east end. The Miracula of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had repeatedly made it clear that it was at the shrine, not the tomb, that true miracle-seekers gathered to await divine intervention. In the fourteenth century, it was precisely the opposite: the tomb is now the venue for miracles, and the shrine is hardly mentioned at all. The canons had modified the setting of the miracles to reflect the latest venue of construction, which was now the western arm of the building instead of the east.

After 1323, there is no record of further miracles at the tomb, but there is no reason to think that they stopped occurring. Quite the opposite, in fact: the trail stops here only because the Chapter Act book end and because the survival rate of other primary sources is so poor. Divine occurrences of all kinds were

15 LEACH (1903), 32.
16 For example, RAINES (1879), 352, 361, 377, 379, 401, 412, 434-44.
surely reported at the tomb for the duration of the nave’s construction. The fact that pilgrimage was actively promoted must mean that these miracles stories were successful in encouraging people to make the trip to Beverley. How much these people actually contributed remains an open question, and it was probably not a terribly high amount. Nevertheless, the Chapter clearly considered pilgrims to be an important source of revenue that was worth actively promoting. The canons’ advertisement of St. John’s tomb is one of the most notable examples of medieval “PR” to have survived from the fourteenth century.

**The laity outside Yorkshire**

Unusually, it is the contributions of the laity *outside* Beverley for which good financial evidence survives. The Chapter had an official infrastructure in place, perhaps going back several centuries, for soliciting lay donations throughout the entire British Isles.\(^{17}\) A network of official collectors known as “procurators” or “quaestors” was appointed to one or more dioceses at a time.\(^{18}\) These men travelled around their respective territories, wandering-minstrel style, regaling people with stories of John of Beverley and encouraging them to

\(^{17}\) For money collection for the fabric at Beverley, see LEACH (1898), 98-102; LEACH (1898-99), 56-9.

\(^{18}\) The best summary of the collection process remains LEACH (1898), xliiv-lvi.
make donations. Each procurator was deputized by the Chapter and given official paperwork to prove his authenticity. They offered, in effect, a kind of reverse pilgrimage: if someone could not come to Beverley, Beverley would come to them.

The broad geographical scope of donations attests to the power and longevity of John’s cult throughout England, Wales, and Scotland. I deal with the quaestors in much more detail in the discussion of the shrine below (see Chapter 4), but it is worth considering here how exactly this system of collection operated. On November 23, 1308, Elias of Lumby was named the Minster’s official collector for the dioceses of York, Durham, Carlisle, and Lincoln.\(^\text{19}\) Besides the divine favor of St. John of Beverley, what did Elias stand to gain? Miraculously, we know the answer. The official bond that he signed with the Chapter has survived to the present day.\(^\text{20}\) It was issued on December 18, 1308 and lays out exactly how the collection process worked.\(^\text{21}\) Every year, Elias agreed to give the Chapter the flat sum of £20, which was to be paid in quarterly

\(^{19}\) Leach (1898), 104.
\(^{20}\) Leach (1898), 230-1.
\(^{21}\) Leach (1903), 98-100.
installments on the following feast days: the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (i.e., Candlemas), Ascension Day, St. Peter ad Vincula, and St. Martin.\textsuperscript{22}

If Elias generated anything in excess of £20, he was obligated to give the Chapter a full account of his revenues after deducting his personal expenses and those of his horse and servant. Elias was allowed to keep all of his profits. If he did not raise the full twenty pounds, only the net value (his collections minus expenses) needed to be given to the Chapter. The bond ends with a very stern warning that the Chapter will pursue Elias’s “heirs and executors” (“heredes meos et executores”) for any money not delivered, and that if he disappears or defaults on his payments, the “crash of justice” (“strepitu judiciali”) – a wonderful, evocative phrase -- will come down upon him.\textsuperscript{23}

The arrangement was clearly beneficial for both parties. It is very unlikely that any of the quaestors would have willingly taken on the commission if they were not sure of making at least the minimum annual fee of £20. If they did not, they would have been left with nothing after an entire year of hard work. Particularly industrious or charismatic collectors could probably have earned generous profits, all of which went directly into their own pockets. Most of the quaestors’ yearly expenses were taken care of as well. At the same time, the

\textsuperscript{22} LEACH (1898), 230-1.
\textsuperscript{23} LEACH (1903), 100.
Chapter was guaranteed £20 a year from each procurator without having to lift a finger to obtain it. The collectors themselves saw to all the details, and the canons simply reaped the profits each quarter. Although the canons may have been annoyed by ambitious quaestors who reported large annual profits, the Chapter had effectively “subcontracted” a steady income stream of at least £60 per year, which was a substantial amount of money.

The Chapter Act book proves that the quaestors generated positive revenue for at least eight years of the early fourteenth century. After 1328, the procurators are not referred to again; but as with the miracles at the tomb, this is not an indication that their activities ceased. “Collection by proxy” probably continued for the rest of the fourteenth century. It would be fascinating to know how their profits fluctuated over the course of the decades, and how affection for John of Beverley changed as the Reformation approached. Unfortunately, none of that information has survived in the town archives in any form.

The canons

Even more than the laity, it was the canons themselves who took on the burden of financing their church. Medieval bishops were traditionally the most
generous contributors to the fabric funds of their own cathedrals.\textsuperscript{24} England is well known for its illustrious line of great “builder” bishops: Northwold at Ely, Roger of Pont l’Eveque at York, and Wykeham at Winchester, to name only a few.\textsuperscript{25} It is very unlikely, however, that the Archbishop of York -- the titular head of Beverley Minster and its ninth canon – would have ever made significant contributions to the fabric of the nave. Relations between Beverley and York were often strained to the breaking point, and few archbishops went out of their way to assist Beverley. Even during periods of solidarity, it is doubtful that any Archbishop would have made more than token contributions to Beverley in the 1300s, as York Minster was under continuous construction during this time. Like Archbishop Walter de Grey (1215-1255) before them,\textsuperscript{26} the fourteenth-century archbishops were probably content to issue indulgences on Beverley’s behalf and little else.

It is usually assumed that nothing is known about the financial contributions of the canons to the building work at Beverley. This is not the case. No one yet seems to have noticed the survival of one letter – alas, there is only one from the entire fourteenth century – that discusses the canons’

\textsuperscript{24} See, in particular, Salzman (1952), 125-43; Knowles et al. (1972), 34-9.
\textsuperscript{25} Draper (1979), 25-7.
\textsuperscript{26} Raine (1872), 55-6.
contributions. It is a crucial document for our understanding of the construction of the nave. For the the light that it sheds on Beverley in the fourteenth century, this document is just as valuable as the shrine contract discussed in Chapter 4.

On January 26, 1307, the Chapter of Beverley ordered the Clerk of Works, Alan of Humbleton, to withhold £8 6s 8d from the corrodies of five canons (£41 13s 4d in total) until they had reimbursed the fabric fund for the same amount. Each of the canons was under formal reprimand for not making their annual contribution to Minster. It is clear that this money was targeted for the building work then in hand, as the letter is addressed to the Clerk of the Works, who oversaw the fabric accounts, and the text refers three times to work of the church: “operis Ecclesiae nostrae,” “de argento operis praedicti,” and “nomine operis praetaxati.” The critical point is that previous entries in the Chapter Act book show that all five of the canons under discussion were in sound financial standing prior to 1307. They had no debts whatsoever before the beginning of that year. The money they owed in 1307 was, therefore, for the current fiscal year only and cannot have been “rolled over” from earlier periods.

27 LEACH (1898), 185-6.
28 LEACH (1898), xciv.
29 LEACH (1898), 185.
30 LEACH (1898), 134, 156, 177-9, 180.
The letter shows the contribution that each of these five canons was required to donate to the fabric fund in 1307. Using a bit of mathematical analysis, it is possible to extrapolate a great deal of information from this small statistic. Using the Fasti, we can determine which prebend was assigned to each of the five men who are mentioned in 1307. With this information, we can then fill in the annual income for each of the prebends in question. True tabulation of the canons’ income was made only at the Suppression, but as McDermid has shown, these figures were surprisingly stable throughout the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\footnote{McDermid (1993), xx-xxxi.} We can then divide the amount owed by each canon, £8 6s 8d, by the clear annual value of each prebend. The result tells us the percentage of the canons’ yearly income donated to the Minster fabric fund in 1307:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canon</th>
<th>Prebend/Altar (estimate)</th>
<th>Annual clear value</th>
<th>Donation to fabric in 1307 (as % of income)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert of Pickering</td>
<td>St. Peter</td>
<td>£46 6s 11½d</td>
<td>18.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Nassington</td>
<td>St. Martin</td>
<td>£57 1s 7d</td>
<td>15.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Aimeric</td>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>£35 18s 0d</td>
<td>24.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Dinnington</td>
<td>St. James</td>
<td>£47 1s 4d</td>
<td>18.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William of Soothill</td>
<td>St. Katherine</td>
<td>£44 5s 0d</td>
<td>19.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is, unfortunately, the only point of comparison for the entire fourteenth century. But it shows that in 1307, the five canons in question were required to give a minimum of fifteen and a maximum of twenty-five percent of their annual income to the fabric fund. Taking the average of these five figures, we get a mean value of 19.11% for the canons’ contributions to the Clerk of the Works. Even taking into account imprecise reporting and statistical inaccuracies, this figure is surprisingly close to twenty per cent, suggesting that as a corporate body, the Chapter was donating one fifth – or two tenths -- of its income to the completion of the Minster’s new work.

This is a very high amount. It was customary for canons of other establishments to pay a tenth of their income to the Fabric fund, as at St. Albans, Wells, Glastonbury, and Bristol, among others. Doubling this figure proves that the canons of Beverley were making a very strong personal contribution to the work of the new shrine and nave. Their investment in the building -- while not a massive financial burden for men of their wealth -- was intense. Absenteeism was rife among the canons throughout the fourteenth century, and most of them moved in the ethereal circles of London court life, perhaps coming to Beverley

32 KNOWLES et al. (2001), 45-9, 61, 67, 92, 211; SALZMAN (1952), 122-28, 131, 149-54.
only several days per year.\textsuperscript{33} As Rosemary Horrox has noted, a prebend at Beverley greatly accelerated the trajectory of one’s ecclesiastical or royal career.\textsuperscript{34} But these advantages came with a price. For most of the fourteenth century, acceptance of a prebend at Beverley – for which there were often long battles requiring the Pope’s intervention\textsuperscript{35} – appears to have required serious outlays of cash.

The sum total for the five canons already mentioned was £41 13s 4d. If we assume a similar financial commitment from the Minster’s other four prebends, the total contribution of the canons in 1307 amounted to just over £77. We also have financial information for the Minster’s three officers (sacristy, chancellor, and precentor) and can tabulate their contributions if the same twenty-percent donation to the fabric is assumed. As the leader of the Minster, the provost was probably expected to contribute even more generously, adopting the magnanimous role traditionally held by the bishop or archbishop. A contribution of two tenths by the provost is likely to be conservative. Even so, the donations of Beverley’s officers in 1307 must have looked something like the following:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} MCDERMID (1993), xv-xix; LEACH (1898), 123-36.
\item \textsuperscript{34} BARNWELL and HORROX (2000), 4.
\item \textsuperscript{35} See, for example, MCDERMID (1993), 20, 28, 41, 44, 51, 52, 88, 99-101.
\end{itemize}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Incumbent in 1307</th>
<th>Annual clear value</th>
<th>Donation to fabric (at rate of 20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>Walter Reynolds</td>
<td>£11317s 9½ d</td>
<td>£22 7s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacristy</td>
<td>Robert of Nottingham</td>
<td>£24 9s 8d</td>
<td>£4 9s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor</td>
<td>Robert of Bythum (?)</td>
<td>£13 16s 0d</td>
<td>£2 6s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precentor</td>
<td>Richard de Insula</td>
<td>£13 16s 8d</td>
<td>£2 6s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adding up all of the above information, we learn that the grand total of money contributed by the members of the Chapter in 1307 was, at a minimum, £110 2s 6d. This analysis cannot, of course, claim to be completely accurate, and a statistician would no doubt balk at all the missing variables in all of these calculations. Nevertheless, I believe that this is a fairly correct indication of the amount of money directed to the Beverley’s fabric fund from the Minster’s own personnel. If the funds known to have come from the quaestors in the same year (at least £60) are then added, we have a verified total of at least £170 specifically earmarked for the building fabric in 1307. This does not include guild contributions, indulgences, wills and testaments, or lay donations in general.

Taken together, it is very likely that well over £200 would have been contributed to the fabric fund at Beverley in 1307. This is probably a conservative estimate. Naturally, the most important question is whether this figure was typical of the fourteenth century or represented an anomaly. As
argued above, actual construction of the nave probably began the following year, in 1308 or 1309, so it is very likely that the contributions of the Chapter only increased over the next few decades. In the history of building work at Beverley, 1307 was a comparatively minor year when compared to the riot of activity in the 1330s and 1340s. Mandatory contributions during this time could therefore have risen sharply.

In the heyday of the nave’s construction, the canons’ obligations as the Minster’s main financiers could have been onerous indeed. In the mid-fourteenth century, members of the Chapter may have longed for the glory days when only a “mere” two tenths of their income was co-opted by the Clerk of the Works.
PART II: THE FURNISHINGS
CHAPTER 4: THE SHRINE

Description

The shrine of St. John was the crowning glory of Beverley Minster. Shimmering in bejeweled splendor above the high altar, it was a continual reminder of the saint’s omnipresence, sanctity, and thaumaturgical powers. It was a public guarantee of miracles and divine intercession. It was also the physical demonstration of the canons’ sovereignty -- the sacred vessel in which their authority and that of their building was vested.

The shrine was venerated by thousands upon thousands of pilgrims in the Middle Ages, including many kings and queens of England.\(^1\) It was also the centerpiece of the most important celebration in the life of the town. Every year during Rogationtide (the week leading up to Ascension Day), the shrine of St. John was processed through the streets of Beverley past throngs of onlookers and elaborate wooden castles constructed by the guilds.\(^2\) Dressed in their finery, the burgesses of Beverley marched behind the relics, which they were sworn to

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protect with their lives if necessary. This was one of the greatest public spectacles in medieval Yorkshire and the opportunity for every guild to solidify its corporate reputation and publicly outstrip its rivals. Rogation Day was also the start of Beverley’s most important annual fair. Profits from the fair’s tolls, levies, and other taxes generated nearly a third of the town’s annual income. When the shrine had completed its journey through Beverley and its suburbs, it had sanctified the urban topography in the most literal sense of the word. It had activated the urban economy and united the population in a rare display of cohesion.

In medieval Beverley – as so often in the Middle Ages -- civic pride, status, commerce, and relics were inextricably bound up together. The shrine was their point of intersection.

**The contract and “opere cementario”**

The first shrine for John of Beverley was made in 1037 at the time of the saint’s canonization. The anonymous mid-twelfth-century *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* records that Archbishop Aelfric (1023-1051) translated John’s relics from his old wooden tomb into a shrine of “gold, silver, and precious

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3 Raine (1837), 105-6.
4 Leach (1898-99), vol. 6, 60.
stones of incomparable work.”⁵ No other description of this shrine survives; but according to several miracle stories, it was elevated on a tall platform under which people could walk, incubate, and venerate the relics directly overhead (see below).⁶

This shrine – which would have been one of the most ravishing works of the Saxo-Romanesque period -- remained in use for over 250 years. In 1292, the canons of Beverley commissioned a new shrine from Roger of Faringdon, a goldsmith operating out of Westminster. He was evidently one of the most renowned artists of his day. Although the Chapter does not explicitly state the reasons for its commission, the timing is easily understood. With its pre-Conquest detailing, the original feretrum must have seemed decidedly old-fashioned by the end of the thirteenth century, especially given the “shrine mania” that swept through England between the years c. 1270 and c. 1350.⁷ The sheer number of institutions that replaced their shrines or shrine bases during this time – Lincoln, Hereford, St. Albans, Oxford, Chester, Glastonbury, Lichfield, and Old St. Paul’s, to give only a partial list – meant that Beverley Minster was among the first to participate in what became a national obsession.

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⁵ “Iste capsam auro et argento et lapidibus pretiosis opera incomparabili apud Beverlacum fabricari fecit.” Raine (1886), 343.
⁷ Coldstream (1976).
As the “building boom” of the thirteenth century came to a close, institutions must have felt the need to house their saints in shrines worthy of their new surroundings. And as they hinted but never stated explicitly (see below), patrons seem to have understood that the new Decorated style – the essence of opulent modernity -- was the ideal aesthetic vocabulary for shrines’ profusion of ornamental detail. As this chapter will show repeatedly, shrines and the Decorated style were made for one another.

At Beverley, two other events will have spurred the canons into action. In 1281, the translation of St. Hugh of Lincoln into the newly consecrated Angel Choir was the greatest display of saintly pageantry since Becket’s translation sixty years earlier. The festivities were attended by every major royal and ecclesiastical figure in England. They would have been an unnerving reminder that despite the completion of their magnificent east end at great expense only twenty years before, the canons of Beverley could not rest on their laurels. An even greater sense of urgency would have been incited by St. William’s translation at York Minster in 1284. It is known that the entire staff of Beverley attended this ceremony, as their personal invitation from Archbishop Wickwane (1279-1285) survives in the Chapter Act book, and on another occasion, the archbishop specifically asked the Chapter for their prayers of
The celebration of St. William’s translation would have struck Beverley’s provost and canons as both impressive and deeply alarming. Sitting comfortably in the twenty-first century, it is easy to see that William’s cult was doomed to failure and obscurity; in 1284, Beverley’s authorities had no such luxury. They would have been very anxious that the metropolitan church’s new cult could easily rival the Minster’s own, if not eclipse it entirely. Beverley was threatened with the end of its virtual monopoly over Yorkshire’s saintly landscape for the previous two and a half centuries.

A new shrine was the canons’ ideal means of reasserting their pre-eminence, along with the reconstruction of their nave in the Gothic style. Shrine and architecture were interdependent, symbiotic, and synergetic. By some miracle, the legal contract which the canons and artist signed has survived in its entirety. It is a remarkable document – the only shrine contract, as far as I know, to have come down to us from the entire medieval period. Surprisingly, it never receives more than brief mentions in the literature, and is worthy of much richer treatment. I include a partial translation of the contract here for the first time:

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8 Leach (1903), 298-9; Brown (1907), 294; Raine (1894), 210-1.
Friday after the Feast of St. Michael, 20 Edward I [September 29, 1292], this contract was read, acknowledged, and enrolled, wherein Roger of Faringdon, goldsmith, servant of William of Faringdon, goldsmith, agrees to make for the Chapter of St. John of Beverley a new shrine, which is to be five and a half feet long, one and a half feet wide, and of proportionate height. It is to be beautiful, proper, and suitable, adorned with plates and columns in the manner of stone and with cunningly worked statues of delicate and splendid work; the number, size, and position of said figures to be determined as the Chapter sees fit. It is to have tabernacles and pinnacles and other ornaments of goldsmiths’ artifice both in the front and on the back. Other materials, such as quicksilver and charcoal, necessary for constructing the work, with the exception of silver and gold, are to be provided at Roger's own expense.

Should any statue or other work belonging to the shrine not meet with the Chapter’s approval on account of material or workmanship, whatever it may be, it will be remade at no extra charge. The Chapter binds itself and its successors to pay in money or in bulk the amount of metal used in each column, statue, etcetera, and no more; the said Roger offering William de Faringdon, goldsmith, as surety for any damage that may be occasioned to the Chapter through his default, and the artist will assume no other commissions or projects until the shrine has been completed. Dated Beverley, 18 Kal. Oct. [14 Sept.], A.D. 1292.¹¹

This document offers rare insight into artistic patronage in the Middle Ages. It first sets out some basic facts about the shrine’s appearance and materials. Two of the dimensions – five and half feet in length, one and a half in

¹¹ The Latin is in Appendix 3, document 2.
width -- are stipulated, which the goldsmith will then raise to a “proportionate height” (“altitudinis proportionate”). The Chapter is to be the sole provider of all of Roger’s silver and gold, which was presumably stored in the Minster’s treasury (likely in the lower story of the chapter house) where it could be under the sacrist’s strict control. Roger of Faringdon himself is to assume the cost of all other materials without reimbursement from the Minster. His (former?) master, William, agrees to indemnify the Chapter against financial loss, effectively “co-signing” the document and giving the canons an early form of property insurance.

When it comes to the actual form of the shrine, however, the contract is remarkably vague. It specifies only vague details such as “plates,” “columns,” “tabernacles,” and “statues.” Its terminology is standard and generic -- a roster of conventional shrine features that had been in use since time immemorial. Like the depictions of Becket’s shrine in the stained glass of the Trinity Chapel, the Beverley contract is not descriptive of an actual monument or its particularity.\(^\text{12}\) It is a textual shorthand -- a kind of vernacular ekphrasis -- for what would have been the canonical and intensely familiar feature of every great pilgrimage church.

The Beverley contract evokes only the general appearance of a deluxe shrine and unequivocally leaves the details to the artist himself. This should come as no surprise: it was Roger himself, working in the most vibrant artistic center in the country, who was au fait to the latest artistic trends and innovations. The canons were in no position, either individually or collectively, to stipulate bar tracery, crocketted gables, or incipient ogee curves; these were beyond their knowledge and, frankly, probably of little interest. The Chapter’s demands are instead qualitative and aesthetic: the shrine must be “delicate” and “splendid” and it must be “beautiful, suitable, and proper.” It is this final adjective (“proper,” or “ydoneum”) that seems to encapsulate the canons’ goals. Paul Binski has shown the ways in which thirteenth-century English architecture was suffused with notions of decorum, comportment, and the embodiment of moral behavior.13 The Beverley shrine contract provides extremely rare proof of a patron adopting this specific language of artistic and kinesthetic propriety. More than anything, the Minster’s new feretrum must be fitting and appropriate. It must be literally “apt” (“aptum”) – sufficiently grand for the relics it contains and for the building which in turn contains it. Only Roger can transmute this stylistic respectability into physical reality.

Thus, although the canons are footing the bill, they are in a strangely subservient position to the artist. There are strong parallels here between the commissioning of an art object and a piece of architecture – which is, of course, exactly what a shrine was. Gervase of Canterbury’s *Tractatus* makes it clear that William of Sens had the tactical advantage in nearly every one of his interactions with the monks of Christ Church between 1174 and 1178.\(^{14}\) When he was not in complete control, William was able to bring them around to his way of thinking through flattery, diplomacy, and deference to the “liveliness of his genius” and his “good reputation.”\(^{15}\) No matter how much topography, function, finances, liturgy, the cult of saints, sociopolitical realities, or hundreds of other factors affected the design of medieval churches, the irreducible fact is that the architect had profound technical and mental advantages over his employers, and a breadth of knowledge for which they had no conceptual apparatus and very little direct experience. The Beverley contract shows exactly this principle at work between the Chapter and Roger of Faringdon. Like most patrons, the canons knew what they wanted -- a glorious shrine without rival in England -- but they were dependent on the artist to determine nearly every aspect of its formulation.

\(^{14}\) *Gervase* (1879), 6-7.

\(^{15}\) “Hunc, caeteris omissis, propter vivacitatem ingenii et bonam famam in opus susceperunt.” *Gervase* (1879), 6.
and production. The ability to refuse any of the final product is a notional
gesture to the canons’ authority and probably little more. They are the
quintessential patron who has paid “top dollar” and must simply sit back and
wait. And wait they did -- far longer than they could have imagined (see below).

One phrase in the contract is of the highest interest. This is the strange
locution, “ad opere cementario,” used to describe the plates and columns
attached to the shrine. This expression is as delicious as it is puzzling. A smooth
translation is impossible, but “in the manner of masonry” or “like the work of a
stonemason” comes closest to the original meaning. St. John’s shrine is known to
have been made out of wood covered in metal, especially as it had to be portable
for the Rogationtide ceremonies every year. The finished shrine was therefore a
wooden box contrived to appear as solid metal, which was in turn made to look
as if it were partially stone. This deliberate interplay or “cross-pollination” of
materials is one of the best-loved hallmarks of the Decorated style. For the first
half of the fourteenth century, English Gothic was an architecture of
dematerialization – not in the Rayonnant sense of dissolving masonry into
diaphanous walls, but of creating buildings and objects that were literally “de-
materialized,” in which the authority of the artist’s materials was continually
denied or subverted. Glass doubled as jewels on reliquaries and furnishings (see
below); stone took on the features of precious liturgical vessels; tombs echoed the texture of hammered metal; paint was a stand-in for precious marbles and sculptural friezes; and entire buildings adopted the brittle ductility of goldsmiths’ work. Media were pushed to the limits of interchangeability and made to assume the appearance of precisely what they were not.

The paradigmatic example of this kind of illusionism is the Octagon at Ely Cathedral, whose wooden lantern – exactly like the shrine at Beverley -- was engineered to appear as if it were made of stone. As far as I know, “de opere cementario” is the only surviving instance from the entire Middle Ages of a patron specifically requesting this kind of “inter-materiality” – and, by extension, acknowledging that it was the essence of architectural modernity. In their usual elliptical fashion, the canons were showing their awareness that transposition of materials would endow their shrine (and, by extension, their institution) with additional prestige and luxury.

The other meaning of the phrase “cementario” relates to its more common use for stonemasons -- those who build great churches and other great construction projects. In all of Beverley’s primary sources, every occurrence of the word “cementarius” refers to the men who physically build churches or oversee their construction. In specifying that parts of the shrine must look like
stonemasons’ work, the canons seem to have in mind the standard components of cathedral architecture: richly molded arches and arcades, blind tracery, and large-scale sculptural detail. These are, in fact, exactly what the “cementarii” in the Minster’s employ would soon begin building in the south aisle of the nave. The choice of words is unlikely to have been coincidental: every other mention of “stonemasons” refers to the blind arcading and buttresses – not shrines and reliquaries – that the Chapter was paying its own employees to build.

What the canons are asking for, in other words, seems to be the general concept of micro-architecture. It is axiomatic that the Decorated style took the Rayonnant penchant for small-scale architecture to near-obsessive levels, covering every available surface with blind tracery and shrunken facades, gables, portals, and niches. But the Beverley contract is once again (as far as I know) the only surviving example of a medieval patron specifically acknowledging, in print, that micro-architecture was the defining characteristic of English Gothic at the end of the thirteenth century. Westminster was unquestionably the locus classicus of micro-architecture in the early Decorated period, so it would appear that the canons selected Roger as artist for his ability to create a shrine in the same ultra-contemporary style. Without having the explicit vocabulary to do so, the use of the word “cementario” specifies that the “house” of the Minster’s
patron saint should resemble a diminutive church or chapel -- just like the kind that stonemasons build on a much grander scale. That this request came in the same year that the Eleanor Crosses were begun -- themselves employing a revolutionary form of micro-architecture -- shows the canons’ cosmopolitanism, the height of their institutional aspirations, and the esteem in which their holy relics were held.

Chronology and fundraising

The contract is the only direct reference to the shrine’s manufacture, but a trail of other documents shows when it was finally completed and delivered. This took the surprisingly long time of sixteen years. The contract seems to indicate a sense of urgency, or at least the understanding that work will proceed expeditiously. Roger is forbidden to work on any other assignments before the shrine is complete, essentially forcing him into the medieval equivalent of a “non-compete agreement.” The cause of the shrine’s delay is unknown, and it would be fascinating to know how the canons felt about it. There must have been a great deal of anxiety that the shrine’s design was becoming less and less ground-breaking with each passing year. Given the extraordinary rate of creativity and artistic innovation at the end of the thirteenth century and
beginning of the fourteenth, there was a very real danger that the shrine could appear old-fashioned in under a decade. The Chapter must have been very concerned that their enormous expenditure could result in a shrine that was fifteen years out of date, during which time competing establishments would have moved on to other things. As the canons were all too aware, this was precisely the scenario that greeted the completion of their east end in 1260.

The evidence for the completion of the shrine is as follows. According to the Wardrobe accounts of 1299, Edward I donated 7s each to the tomb, high altar and standard of John of Beverley.\textsuperscript{16} One year later, he made an unspecified donation to the tomb and the standard, and the queen also donated 7s to the tomb.\textsuperscript{17} The feretrum is notably absent here, so it cannot have been complete by this date. The king can hardly have been expected to donate to a shrine that was on the verge of being replaced.\textsuperscript{18} In April 1302, Archbishop Corbridge (1300-1304) issued a forty-day indulgence for contributions to the Minster fabric and also the “celebrated shrine holding the relics of the holiest Confessor John, already begun and of sumptuous workmanship, but which the church does not

\textsuperscript{16} LEACH (1898), xxix.
\textsuperscript{17} POULSON (1829), 592-4; HORROX (2000), 39.
\textsuperscript{18} This is also an indication that while the shrine was being made, the tomb temporarily took precedence as the main site of veneration.
have sufficient resources to complete.” Corbridge openly considered the ongoing work at Beverley (both the shrine and the nave) the most important in Yorkshire next to his own, as he ordered that fundraising for Beverley should take precedence over all other diocesan projects except those at York Minster.

Three years after this indulgence -- and a total of thirteen after the signing of the contract -- work on the shrine continued, but with major setbacks. On June 2, 1305, John the Goldsmith was summoned to the Chapter and reported that he had lost (“decremento”) the extraordinary sum of £10 14s in silver while attempting to refine it. By way of comparison, this amount was larger than the entire annual income for each of the Minster’s three officers (chancellor, precentor, and treasurer), and only slightly less than the annual clear value of the prebend of St. Katherine. Although the amount seems alarming, losses on this scale must have been somewhat common or at least anticipated, as the Chapter replaced all of the silver after the clerk of the works testified that John had used “as much diligence as he was able” (“adhibuit diligentiam quam potuit”).

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19 “Cupientes igitur ut nostra Beverlacensis ecclesia et celebris capsula, pro reliquis sanctissimi Confessoris Johannis recondendis, in ipsa sumptuoso opere jam incepta, ad cujus consummationem ejusdem ecclesiae non suppetunt facultates.” LEACH (1898), 3.
20 LEACH (1898), 3.
21 LEACH (1898), 74.
22 See the summary of the canons’ and officers’ revenues in the Taxatio Nicholai (1291), the Valor Ecclesiasticus (1535), and the Chantry Certificate (1548): McDERMID (1993), xxiv, 2, 101.
23 LEACH (1898), 74.
apparent minimum of fuss with which the money was restored shows what a luxurious and decadent object the shrine must have been.

On July 7 of 1308, the accounts of the Master of the Works for the previous eight years were totaled up in addition to the works for the shrine. The feretrum account had an excess of £21 14s 10d, while the fabric fund had a deficit of £9 3s 6d; and at this point, the whole balance of the shrine account was transferred over to the fabric.\textsuperscript{24} This can only mean that work on the shrine was now complete and that its funds could be diverted elsewhere. The rededication of the high altar by Archbishop Greenfield (1304-1315) in the same month was also prompted by the shrine’s final arrival and its installment in the Minster, as will be shown in greater detail below.\textsuperscript{25} No donation document after November 1308 ever refers to the shrine again (only the “nova fabrica” or “ecclesia nostra”), meaning that all subsequent donations to the fabric were earmarked for the nave.

For Beverley, we are fortunate to have very rare evidence for how this magnificent and expensive shrine was paid for. The depiction of guildsmen on the south capital of the reredos (Fig. 131) proves that civic leaders must have

\textsuperscript{24} \textsc{leach} (1898), xciv.
\textsuperscript{25} Royal visits also confirm the shrine’s date of completion by this time. On July 12, 1312, Queen Margaret heard mass in the Minster and afterwards presented a medium-sized golden necklace that was immediately attached to the shrine (“quod feretro B. Johannis protinus est affixum”). \textsc{leach} (1898), 294. On October 18, 1318, Edward and Isabel offered a gold cloth to the high altar, one nut to the shrine (“feretro, i nuchteam”), about 13s to the small shrines, and 7s to the tomb. \textsc{leach} (1898), 364.
played a large role in donating money and spear-heading fundraising efforts. But a small chunk of the shrine’s total cost was met by a public campaign that solicited donations directly from the laity. The geographical scope of these collections was very far-ranging, encompassing all of Britain. The names and tenures of several of the collectors survive. On December 8, 1305, John of Fitling was appointed as procurator to the dioceses of York and Lincoln for a term of three years. He must have performed his duties well, as his job was reaffirmed on February 18, 1306 and again on September 29, 1306. On November 23, 1308, Fitling’s commission ended and Elias of Lumby was assigned collector for the cities and dioceses of York, Carlisle, Durham, and Lincoln. On November 23, 1312, Elias and John of Langtoft became joint collectors for York, Durham, and Carlisle. On August 13, 1313, John became sole collector and Elias of Lumby was ordered to surrender his official paperwork.

The Minster gave each collector an official dossier to prove to potential donors that they were legitimate. These documents were vital. As the Chapter Act book makes clear, fraud and deception were rampant. Over and over again,

26 LEACH (1898), 102.
27 LEACH (1898), 112, 157.
28 LEACH (1898), 229-30.
29 LEACH (1898), 298-9.
30 LEACH (1898), 306.
entries provide a unique glimpse of what must have been a common occurrence in the Middle Ages: the Gothic scam artist.\textsuperscript{31} England seems to have been full of “copycat” collectors who passed themselves off as official Beverley quaestors before disappearing with people’s money. The problem was widespread and apparently very lucrative, testifying to the popularity of St. John’s cult and its hold on lay affection throughout all of Great Britain. Fraudulent fund-raising was so prevalent that on May 11, 1307, Edward I ordered every single sheriff and bailiff in England, Wales, and Scotland to arrest all those “illegal and shameful people” (“illicite et inhoneste”) who pretended to be working for the Minster as collectors.\textsuperscript{32} The king specifically states that their dishonesty is hindering the completion of the shrine and the construction of the building.\textsuperscript{33} These false collectors were equipped not only with counterfeit letters of reference, but also bogus relics. On November 23, 1308, Elias of Lumby was deputized to arrest all those “forgers who pretend to be our collectors, with all their false relics and fake documents” and prosecute them in ecclesiastical and civil courts.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Leach} (1898), 301-2, 313-4, 333, 389.
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Leach} (1898), 204.
\textsuperscript{33} Interestingly, Edward’s injunction mentions that donors were giving not only cash, but also “animals, bequests, and other good things” (“pecuniam, animalia, legata et alia bona”) to the Minster’s fabric. \textit{Leach} (1898), 204.
\textsuperscript{34} “Ac ad arrestandam omnes et singulos falsarios qui se fingunt nostros esse quaestores, cum omnibus falsis reliquis suis et fictis etiam munimentis suis quibuscumque.” \textit{Leach} (1898), 229-30. Beverley’s real collectors had relic collections as well: on February 19, 1310, William of
When not combatting fraud, the Minster’s true collectors played a vital, if small, role in raising capital for the shrine. Unlike for the nave, we have no idea exactly how much money they raised. Still, the fact that the quaestors’ commissions were repeatedly renewed and protected shows that their efforts must have been profitable enough to justify the effort. Immediately one wonders how these procurators were viewed in competing dioceses, intruding on other construction projects where local authorities struggled for the same limited pool of resources. As can be expected, they often seem to have been greeted with annoyance and hostility. Even in documents written in Beverley, where the quaestors were naturally portrayed in a positive light, evidence shows that the Minster’s collectors could be deeply resented. On August 22, 1306, Alan of Humbleton, Clerk of the Works, asked the bishop of Lincoln to allow John of Fitling to collect money in his diocese, as Fitling was unable do so without the bishop’s express permission.\footnote{LEACH (1898), 148.} The implication is that local authorities had made his life difficult, and that he was prevented him from speaking to people about John of Beverley or the Minster’s construction projects.

\footnote{Humbleton, official collector for Lincolnshire, retired and was ordered to return not only his documents, but also “all of our relics” (“omnes reliquias nostras”) to the Minster. \textit{LEACH} (1898), 280.}
Some parishes welcomed the quaestors, but only for purposes of deception and theft. On November 15, 1306, the Beverley Chapter demanded that the Dean of Graphan release John of Fitling from prison and return the money that had been confiscated from him, lest the canons take up the matter directly with the king.\textsuperscript{36} Other kinds of financial embargo were more transparent. On September 12, 1309, the Chapter wrote to Robert Winchelsea, Archbishop of Canterbury (1294-1313), asking for a special dispensation to collect in his province.\textsuperscript{37} The Archbishop had summarily revoked the rights of all collectors (including those for hospitals and the destitute) who did not have his express consent.\textsuperscript{38} Given the furious (and often very undignified) rivalry between the archdioceses of York and Canterbury, it is easy to believe that no such permission was given. None of the surviving references to quaestors ever refers to territories in or near Kent, although several miracle stories prove that John of Beverley’s cult was especially popular there.\textsuperscript{39} Collection in the southern counties would therefore have been quite lucrative, and the evidence strongly suggests that the archbishop of Canterbury forbade it for precisely this reason.

\textsuperscript{36} LEACH (1898), 171-2.
\textsuperscript{37} LEACH (1898), 252-3.
\textsuperscript{38} LEACH (1898), 253, 253.
\textsuperscript{39} WILSON (2006), 121-2, 144, 157, 169-70.
CHAPTER 5: THE REREDOS

Description and chronology

Aside from the pulpitum, the reredos (Figs. 132-133) was the most important spatial division in Beverley Minster. Located between the eastern piers of the eastern crossing, the reredos separated the presbytery from the retro-choir, delimiting the vast sweep of the eastern arm into two distinct sections. It was the physical and visual climax of the choir, the fulcrum between the Minster’s primary liturgical and devotional spaces. When viewed from the west (Fig. 132), the reredos appears to be a deluxe version of the countless altar screens that once decorated every great Gothic church. But it is far more than that. Only upon entering the retro-choir (Fig. 133) does one make the rather startling discovery that the reredos is both two-storied and two-sided, with an independent east facade. Here, the Decorated love of concealment and surprise is put to dramatic effect.

Both sides of the reredos were conceived independently, each for its own audience and functions. Contrary to usual practice, the screen is not merely a flat wall, but takes up the full width of the crossing piers, inscribing a rectangular

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1 For the reredos, see DAWTON (2000), 119-26; BILSON (1917), 221-5; STONE (1955), 170-2.
envelope of space behind the high altar. At Beverley, the term “reredos” is a
misnomer: the screen is actually a small transverse chapel whose rear façade
adopted the functions and monumentality of a conventional altar screen. The
interior of this space featured some of the most opulent decoration in the Minster
and could be entered from the east via a row of tall arcades. The “attic” above
consists of a broad platform (Fig. 134) framed by a low balustrade with four
double-decker pinnacles, accessed via the spiral staircase against the northern
crossing pier. This upper story is now bleakly empty, but for three centuries it
served as the platform for John of Beverley’s shrine, towering over canons,
pilgrims, and high altar alike.

This hybrid arrangement was dictated by the limited amount of space in
the east end. The presence of the Beck canal to the east prevented the Minster
from being expanded eastward, and so the two bays of the retro-choir had to fill
the combined functions of a feretory and a Lady Chapel. Either one of these
would have been a tall order in the cramped space available, but this area was
also the most hotly coveted burial site in the Minster, as wealthy benefactors
scrambled to erect tombs in sacred proximity to both St. John and the Virgin

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2 Camden (1806), vol. 3, 151-7; Poulson (1829), 121-6.
Mary. Crowding was intense and every inch of “real estate” counted. The placement of the shrine on the top of the reredos alleviated most of these problems, freeing up the ground floor for circulation and giving pilgrims a dedicated space for worship. The solution adopted was admittedly unconventional; but in typical English fashion, architectural obstacles were treated as springboards for highly inventive and beautiful solutions.

Next to the reredos, the northern side of the eastern crossing is now taken up by the Percy tomb. Screen and tomb make such a good pair that they are usually assumed to be a joint ensemble -- a kind of massive stone diptych for the so-called “mature” Decorated style. But the reredos was made separately and was already in place when the tomb was installed. As several scholars have noted, the Percy monument is not bonded in to the adjacent staircase and the junction between them required emergency alterations. Below the level of the original tomb chest, removed in the 1820s, the fillets on the exterior of the staircase had to be hacked off to provide a flat surface (Fig. 135). Above this, the fillets are intact, indicating that the reredos was in situ when the tomb was

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3 See the indices for Beverley in the Testamenta Eboracensia. Raine (1836-1902), vol. 6, 233-4.
4 Goldberg (1984), 65; Dawton (2000), 134
5 Dawton (2000), 133; Oliver (1829), 337 n. 64.
inserted. The reredos initially stood in splendid isolation -- the canons no doubt realizing that a gaping hole in their crossing was the best way of encouraging benefactors to fill it. This did not take long. The exact date of the Percy monument is still open to debate, but the evidence of its heraldry – England quartered with France under Edward III – means that the tomb post-dates 1340. The reredos is therefore a product of the late 1330s or early 1340s. This chronology fits exactly with construction in the rest of the building, and Nicholas Dawton has shown that at least one of the reredos sculptors, the Clifford Master, also worked on the Percy tomb and nave.

A new reredos was probably envisioned as early as 1292 when Roger of Faringdon received his commission. The canons would have been eager to display their new shrine in a manner befitting its splendor and expense. Like the shrine, however, the reredos took much longer to complete than anticipated. At least three decades passed between the completion of the feretrum and its installation on top of the reredos. The delay was no doubt caused by lack of money. The nave was an exponentially larger and more expensive project that

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6 The relative dating of both monuments is confirmed by the panels of blind tracery on the buttresses. On the reredos, these are a halting foray into Curvilinear; on the tomb, they are acrobatically flowing, at least a decade later.
7 Goldberg (1984), 68; Dawton (1989), 129.
8 Dawton (2000), 120.
would have been given priority over liturgical refurbishments, no matter their importance. Prior to the early 1330s, there was probably not enough money for construction in both the nave and choir simultaneously, and the shrine remained in its previous position until the reredos could be paid for and built.

John of Beverley may have been a saint, but he had to wait in line like everyone else.
THE WESTERN FACE OF THE REREDOS

Description and condition

The western side of the reredos (Fig. 132) was the stage set of the opus Dei -- the proscenium against which the Minster’s liturgical theater was enacted. Its decoration was stacked into two main tiers: twenty-four tall niches on the bottom, and an upper row of panels surmounted by rippling canopies. Prominent buttresses and cornices divide the screen into a proto-Perpendicular grid. A plinth of quatrefoils runs near floor level, separated by vertical strips with foliage (Fig. 136). Above, the main niches are topped by crocketted gables resting on strangely depressed (almost round) arches (Fig. 137). All of these retain sculpted corbels and hexagonal socles for statues. Rosette diaper covers the buttresses and spandrels, while the gables are filled with foliage and surprisingly irreverent caricatures of people and animals.⁹ The panels of the upper tier are a third the height of those below, with flat rear walls that could not have accommodated sculpture. They would have been painted instead. At the very top is a wavy parapet with the same design as the exterior of the clerestory,

⁹ DAWTON (2000), 121, notes their similarity to figures on the tomb of St. William at York and the shrine base of St. Werburgh at Chester.
but with pierced cusps and spandrels. The undulating profile is especially effective here, backlit by the windows of the east facade.

Alas, none of the screen as it appears now is actually medieval. It is entirely the work of William Comins, who restored it between 1824 and 1826. But as I hope to show below, Comins’s work was a near-copy of the original that spanned the climax of the choir for more than two centuries. The medieval screen survived unaltered through the Reformation, when its panoply of images must have made it a prime target for iconoclasm. Most of its statues were probably removed or destroyed by the end of Edward VI’s reign. The first surviving account of the reredos does not occur until a century later, and even here there is only an indirect reference. On March 23, 1663, the borough of Beverley paid £1 6s 8d for “setting up the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the ten Commandments in the Minster Chancel”\textsuperscript{10} – presumably on painted wooden boards that were draped over the original screen.

The medieval work was consumed by Hawksmoor’s colossal altar screen in the 1720s.\textsuperscript{11} There is no proper engraving or drawing of its appearance, but it can be seen looming in the background of John Carter’s drawing of the Percy

\textsuperscript{10}Dennett (1933), 129.
\textsuperscript{11}For Hawksmoor’s screen, see Hall (1993); Whiteing (1955), 4-5.
tomb in 1791 (fig. 138). Hawksmoor’s screen was very tall, consisting of eight Corinthian pilasters, a triumphal arch, huge neo-Classical cornices, and a pedestal with an enormous eagle with outstretched wings. An eyewitness observed that “you will not quickly meet with a more capital piece of absurdity,” and it is easy to see why Hawksmoor’s screen quickly fell out of fashion – if indeed it had ever been in fashion at all. It was ordered removed on September 15, 1824. Workmen soon discovered that the medieval screen had been encased in a cocoon of plaster, concrete, and mastic. The canopies and most of the protruding surfaces had been ruthlessly cut back, but much of the Decorated reredos remained in situ, albeit in a dreadful state. After a thorough survey by Fowler, it was decided on December 20, 1824 that the screen should be cleaned and restored back to its original condition.

It took Comins two years to complete his work. His reredos is usually dismissed as a pre-Victorian fantasy with no basis in fact. Its current appearance certainly does not inspire confidence: the masonry is suspiciously crisp and any semblance of authenticity is undermined by the revolting mosaics installed by

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12 GOUGH (1786-1796), vol. 2, plate CX (facing 310); HALL (2000), 101-2; DAWTON (2000), 133.
13 WHITEING (1955), 4.
14 YOUNG (1771), 148-9 n.
15 MacMAHON (1958), 129.
16 MacMAHON (1958), 130.
Powell in 1897. But engravings of the reredos before its decoration in the late nineteenth century (fig. 139) show a serene work of remarkably high quality that could easily pass for medieval. Comins deserves far more credit than he usually gets. His work was so faithful to the screen’s original appearance that most of it can be studied as if it were the real thing. Its verisimilitude is not a matter of simple, academic curiosity. It is, in fact, one of the most important recent discoveries in the field of Gothic sculpture: the current reredos at Beverley is an impeccable facsimile of one of the most neglected masterpiece of the Decorated style. Its true importance needs to be publicly acknowledged and is a significant lacuna in the literature. Along with the Percy tomb, the western reredos at Beverley deserves a place in every major discussion of English sculpture in the fourteenth century – a dialogue from which it has, until now, been completely excluded.

The evidence for the screen’s authenticity consists of two groups of fragments that were saved after Comins’s restoration. The first is a large block of stone (Fig. 140), sixteen inches by fifteen inches, that was found in one of the Minster’s former outhouses (!) in the mid-1990s.\textsuperscript{17} It is immediately recognizable as two of the main niches and gables, along with finials and crockets separated

\textsuperscript{17} DAWTON (2000), 121.
by the remains of a buttress. Even in their ruined state, the fourteenth-century features are identical with Comins’s work. He duplicated their dimensions exactly. The rosette diaper from the original and restored screens is an exact match, and he even copied the original’s strange elliptical arches – features which, ironically, most Gothic revivalists would have edited out as inauthentic. The uniformity of the reredos made Comins’s job far easier than might be imagined: as each tier was composed of identical compartments repeated twenty-four times, even fragmentary survivals in a single section would have permitted a fairly straightforward reconstruction.18

The second group of fragments from the screen is now locked in a display case in the southwest transept. It consists of micro-architectural remnants of buttresses, gablets, canopies, and tracery. In October 2008, I removed these fragments and compared them side by side with Comins’s restoration. In every case, I found a precise match. Even where the originals were in poor condition, Comins had correctly extrapolated new masonry based on the original moldings. Tracery and arch springings were accurate in every detail, and he even reproduced seemingly insignificant details like the fleurons above the plinth.

18 If the dimensions of the raised plinth below the central arches are original and not invented by Comins, the height and width of the current high altar are identical to their measurements in the Middle Ages.
There is, therefore, no reason to doubt two previous reports that Comins made plaster casts of everything he found,\textsuperscript{19} and that these served as the basis for an obsessively accurate reconstruction. The precision of Comins’s restoration has never been recognized. Dawton, while noting the present screen’s “spirit of authenticity,” cautioned that it can give “no more than the most general impression of its original appearance,” while Lindley noted that the medieval and renewed screens have only a “general fidelity” to one another.\textsuperscript{20} On the contrary, Comins’s restoration is one of the most historically accurate to be found in any English Gothic church. Medieval architectural historians constantly lament the destruction wrought by diabolical nineteenth-century restorers, so it is important to give credit where it is due: Comins’s work was a triumph of the restorer’s art.

\textbf{Appearance and iconography}

If the western reredos is accepted as authentic, several aspects of its design are provocative. The first feature to deserve close attention is the the plinth of quatrefoils running behind the high altar, at the top of the stairs (Fig.

\textsuperscript{19} Oliver and Poulson, writing three years after the screen’s completion, recorded that Comins “was convinced that it might be restored in all its details” and that his finished project was “an exact renewal.” \textsc{poulson} (1829), 682; \textsc{oliver} (1829), 333.

\textsuperscript{20} \textsc{lindley} (2007), 176.
The design is an exact copy of the quatrefoils which were then under construction in the triforium of the nave (Fig. 141). As mentioned in Chapter 2, these quatrefoils were the most visible manifestation of the historicism that united the fourteenth-century work with the Early English choir and transepts. In the Decorated triforium, stiff-leaf spurs were replaced by rosette studs, but the contour of the quatrefoils and the all-important alternation of front and back layers was retained. The seamless continuation of the triforium -- spinning its way around the entire building -- united the Minster with the kind of “harmony” and “concordance” that Abbot Suger had advocated two centuries earlier.\(^{21}\)

The reappearance of these same quatrefoils on the west side of the reredos is a stylistic and ideological pronouncement.\(^{22}\) They demonstrate that continuity was not practiced solely in the nave, but that it extended to every part of the Minster, uniting “old” and “new” from the choir to the nave and back again. The duplication of this design at the literal foundation of the high altar and the shrine proves that historicism was the governing principle for all of the fourteenth-century work at Beverley. It was the \textit{modus operandi} of the entire building. It was in the east end that the Early English triforium had debuted a century before,

\(^{21}\) Panofsky (1979), 50-1, 90-1.

\(^{22}\) They are not, frankly, aesthetically successful – yet more confirmation that Comins was copying original features.
surrounding the reredos in every direction. Its repetition in the center of the exact space where it began, but in a subtly modernized form, was a gesture of poetic completion. Historicism had come full circle.

By contrast, the niches, canopies, gables, and diaper of the western reredos placed Beverley in the vanguard of the Decorated style. All of these features were precocious and stylish, keeping pace with the latest developments throughout the country. Their juxtaposition with the quatrefoils below was a dramatic and deliberate contrast. As so often at Beverley, there is a delicious tension between nostalgia and innovation, and between past, present, and future. Just like the nave, the western reredos was simultaneously ground-breaking and retrospective. Like the nave, it flouts accepted stylistic and chronological hierarchies in a way that seems designed to send modern architectural historians into fits of confusion and annoyance.

As admirable as Comins’s work is, it is a pale reflection of the screen’s original splendor. This side of the reredos would have been the most stunning ensemble in the Minster. Every inch of its niches, canopies, and diaper would have been covered with gold and paint, and its statues would have been framed by glittering crockets and finials. Along with the shrine above, the reredos would have sparkled brilliantly in direct sun; or, by hundreds of candles, it
would have glistened with a constantly flickering, refracted light. Its original magnificence is lost forever, but we have a very strong clue as to how it might have looked: all of the fragments from the display case are covered in faded red paint, showing that the reredos’s “primer coat” – and one’s overall impression of the area around the high altar – would have been a sea of red. There is no record of the original retable that this work once framed, but this was no doubt a very expensive piece. Like the shrine, it may also have come from a Westminster studio and perhaps even rivaled the great retable in the Abbey.

The greatest loss of all is the twenty-four statues that once filled the screen’s main niches. These would have been among the Percy team’s most stunning work; in fact, had the reredos figures survived, the Percy artists might be better known for the reredos than the tomb itself. With their original polychromy, the screen’s canopies stood as a phalanx of heavenly tabernacles – the analogs to the “many mansions” established by God to house the faithful until the end of all time. The sculptures they contained would have been the most important and ideologically charged in the entire Minster. At the physical and visual climax of the building, the screen was the Chapter’s most spectacular opportunity for institutional self-representation and self-aggrandizement. On its

23 For the allegorical and metaphysical meanings of niches in Gothic architecture, see CROSSLEY (1987), 62-3; MALONE (2004), 20-36, 81-6, 112-23.
most basic level, it would have extolled the Chapter’s power, glory and antiquity as guaranteed by its patron saint.

The total of forty-eight figures – half sculpted and half painted -- allowed for a complex and far-ranging iconography. No description of the original cycle survives, and it is only possible to make general comments about what was represented. One of the screen’s primary goals would undoubtedly have been to proclaim the glory of John of Beverley and, by extension, his church. It must have featured many of the “greatest hits” of Anglo-Saxon sainthood: Wilfrid, Cuthbert, Etheldreda, Swithun, Oswald, Edmund, Wulfstan, Alban, Amphibalus, and Edward the Confessor. It would also have shown the illustrious succession of the archbishops of York, establishing them as John of Beverley’s rightful descendants. The sheer number of available spots probably allowed for the inclusion of recent archbishops like Roger of Pont l’Eveque (1154-1181) and Walter de Grey (1215-1255), bringing their saintly deeds into the present. They would have created a tangible link between the relics in the shrine above and the Minster’s ultimate authority, casting each archbishop of York as John of Beverley’s earthly and spiritual descendant.

The cinematic, epic-like sweep of these figures would have protracted the Chapter’s authority into the dimmest recesses of Anglo-Saxon memory, all the
way back to the baptism of Paulinus and the Christianization of northern England. Historical figures such as Athelstan, Thurstan, kings, and queens no doubt joined saints and angels as the heavenly witnesses to St. John’s sanctity. They would have broadcast the holiness of his relics, which in turn sanctified the Minster and its daily activities. As the ever-present backdrop to the liturgical choir, the altar screen was the ultimate corroboration of the canons’ power and influence.

Medieval screens were a vehicle for truth, both real and manufactured. Like the much taller reredoses at Winchester, St. Albans, and Christchurch Priory, the Beverley reredos declared the Chapter’s ideal vision of itself. While it is now recognized that the west façade of every Gothic cathedral evoked the heavenly city of Jerusalem, art historians have been slow to consider the ways in which smaller, interior facades like the Beverley screen functioned in a similar fashion. The western reredos conveyed profound realities -- both theological and corporate -- with a similar degree of ontological transparency. Whatever statues once populated it, the reredos would have been a physical evocation of supremacy and sainthood. Its abundance of niches and figures was unassailable proof of the Minster’s antiquity and splendor. The relationship between

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sculpture and institution was inherently reciprocal: the reredos legitimized the canons, who in turn legitimized its vision of reality.
THE EASTERN FACE OF THE REREDOS

Description and architectural analysis

The eastern side of the reredos (Figs. 133, 142) is divided into three bays by an arcade of tall arches. Its two piers are composed of eight polished Purbeck shafts surrounding a square core resting on prismatic sub-bases with deep quirks (Fig. 143). The capital above the southern pier is carved with the Legend of Theophilus (Fig. 144), while the northern depicts guildsmen in elaborate costume (Fig. 131) – evidence of the guilds’ deep involvement with the cult, shrine, and Rogationtide celebrations. Above are two niches with extraordinary filigree canopies, undercut to the point of insubstantiality (Fig. 145). The spandrels of the arches are filled with rosette diaper and capped by the same wavy parapet as the opposite side. The rear and side walls of the interior are covered with remarkably voluptuous blind tracery – the closest that England ever came to full-blown Flamboyant (Figs. 146-147). Flattened ogee arches, compressed vesicas, and encircled quatrefoils set the mouchettes into a flickering, upward movement.

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25 BILSON (1917), 221-5.
The inside of the reredos is crowned by a tierceron vault carried on slender Purbeck shafts with sub-bases decorated with quatrefoils (Figs. 148, 154). The twenty-five vault bosses are some of the finest sculpture in the Minster. Nicholas Dawton has attributed them to the Annunciation Master of the Percy tomb and one newcomer, the Reredos Master.26 Dawton’s legend (Fig. 149) shows the arrangement of subjects, which were primarily foliage, green men, animals, and angels. There are also three narrative scenes: a beautiful Coronation of the Virgin which miraculously escaped iconoclasm (Fig. 150); an acorn gatherer, symbolizing Christ harvesting the souls of the faithful; and a dragon poisoning fruit vines, an allegory for the corruption of evil.27

The eastern reredos is unique in the liturgical furnishings of Gothic England. As several scholars have noted, its form is derived from the typology of choir screens, specifically the so-called “veranda” model of pulpitum at Exeter (Fig. 151), Southwell (Fig. 152), St. David’s, and Chichester.28 On conventional choir screens, the thickness of the interior passageway and its staircases was masked by sheer walls on either side – the west carrying the central entrance

28 For the Exeter pulpitum, see BISHOP and PRIDEAUX (1922), 62-4; VALLANCE (1947), 65-9; HOPE (1917), 56-7; SEKULES (1991), 177. For the Arundel screen at Chichester, see HOPE (1917), 59. For the Southwell pulpitum, see HOPE (1917), 61.
with its flanking altars, and the east backed against the monks’ or canons’ return stalls. In the veranda model, the eastern wall remained solid, while the west was pierced by large arcades, creating an interior atrium covered by a vault. Above, the upper story stretched as a massive balcony.

Seen from the Lady Chapel, the Beverley reredos is a clear adaptation of the veranda model, as if one of those screens had been hoisted up, rotated 180 degrees, and re-deposited behind the high altar. Architectural permutations of this kind are typical of Decorated ingenuity, in which forms were stripped from their original contexts and subjected to continual adaptation and reinvention. But this was not all creative bravura. As mentioned above, the reversal of the pulpitum resolved most of the spatial and functional difficulties of the far east end. Its upper story -- whose exact functions on pulpita are still not entirely clear -- became the platform for the shrine, and the space previously occupied by altars was transformed into kneelers for the pilgrims to venerate the relics above them. This was a strangely just turn of events: in every medieval building, the choir screen was the universal indication of spatial privilege, dividing the laity from the clergy and the nave from the choir. At Beverley, this same structure now denoted an even more sacred transition, between the territory of the canons and the abode of a saint.
The inspiration for Beverley’s reredos undoubtedly came from Exeter Cathedral, where the veranda form was invented. It is precisely dated thanks to the survival of so many Fabric Rolls, where the screen is always referred to as “La Pulpytte” or “La Poulpyte.” The very detailed accounts show that it was begun in 1317 and completed in 1326. It is hardly surprising that Beverley looked to Devon for inspiration, as even in the early 1300s, Exeter must already have had a national reputation for producing what are still the most beautiful and elaborate furnishings of the Decorated period -- not just the pulpittum, but also the high altar screen (1316-25), flanking sedilia and tomb of Bishop Bitton (d. 1307), and the famous wooden throne built for Bishop Stapledon (1316-24).

Exeter was synonymous with modern and prestigious liturgical furniture. It is no coincidence that the Minster’s sister institution, Southwell, began a new pulpittum in the late 1330s which followed the Exeter model -- a luxurious veranda screen covered with ogee arches, mouchettes, and spiky gables (figs. 152).

But the connections between Beverley and Exeter are more than functional and typological. As Richard Morris was the first to note, the two piers and bases supporting the arches at Beverley are identical to the same elements on the

Exeter screen (Figs. 151). The moldings are an exact copy down to the millimeter. Together, they are the best proof we have of what must have been a widespread trade in prefabricated parts of Purbeck marble in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It has long been recognized that many thirteenth-century Purbeck tombs are so similar that they must have been mass-produced. Just as different “types” of caskets can be chosen today from display cases in funeral homes, wealthy medieval patrons could order and pay for pre-made Purbeck effigies. How exactly this process worked is unknown, but the piers and bases at Beverley and Exeter prove that the same kind of standardization applied to architectural elements as well. Purbeck quarries must have circulated some kind of “catalog” or pattern book from which potential buyers could select designs. Whatever the exact mechanics of this operation, the arcade supports at Beverley were effectively “sub-contracted” out and arrived on site, complete and ready for installation. Given the exact duplication between Beverley and Exeter, it appears that both institutions probably used the same marble, William Canon of Corfe, as their supplier.

Three other small details, easily missed, show that the east reredos was also aligned with works in the capital. The Chapter’s obsession with

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31 Morris (1978), 28 n.33; Morris (1979), 26, 29.
Westminster continued unabated after the completion of the shrine. Small crosses are carved on the tiny crenellations of the buttresses on the eastern screen (Fig. 153), a feature which debuted on the cornice above the upper arcades at St. Stephen’s Chapel, Westminster. Another direct lifting from that building is the ring of quatrefoils decorating the sub-bases of the reredos’s vaulting shafts (Fig. 154). Similar bases (but with trefoils instead) were found on the bases of the responds at St. Stephen’s, Westminster (Fig. 155). Both of these features are homages to the work of Michael of Canterbury and an acknowledgment that St. Stephen’s was unquestionably the most important building in England in the first half of the fourteenth century. They are also extremely rare features in the North -- yet more evidence that the designer of Beverley’s furnishings had his finger “on the pulse” of the most up-to-date developments in the Decorated style.

Inspiration for the reredos also came from the other most important building in London, Old St. Paul’s. One of the slender buttresses on the north side of the Beverley reredos features tracery with impaled trefoils – that is, trilobes that appear to be balanced precariously on ogee arches inside a crocketed gable (Fig. 156). These first appeared in the lower apse windows of

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33 WILSON (1990), 192.
Saint-Urbain at Troyes (Fig. 157) and were one of the most important French importations to the New Work at Old St. Paul’s after 1260. As two of Hollar’s engravings show, impaled trefoils were featured in the tracery of the eastern and lateral aisle windows at the Cathedral. This feature was, again, extremely rare in Yorkshire outside of the heavily French and Rayonnant-inspired York Minster (cf. the chapter house vestibule and the blind arcading of the nave aisles). Their inclusion at Beverley, albeit on a small scale, is another nod to architectural sophistication.

Execution and original appearance

Despite the splendid appearance of the east reredos, it is a hodgepodge of different styles. The combination of Exeter piers and bases, proto-Flamboyant tracery, and Yorkshire sculpture gives it an undeniably ad hoc quality, as if the designer had selected the most thrilling features from each region of the country and amalgamated them into one ensemble. That is, of course, precisely what he did. The eclecticism of the design process was the epitome of Decorated creativity: in the early fourteenth century period, Gothic was an architecture of deracination and reassembly. As has long been noted, it was based on a rejection

of the fundamental cohesiveness of the Rayonnant style, whose motifs were stripped from their original contexts and applied for maximum ornamental impact. It is this approach – of viewing architecture as an assemblage of details to be mined and reshuffled – that the reredos shows more clearly than any comparable monument in England. The screen’s constituent parts are thrown together like a kind of massive and resplendent jigsaw puzzle.

Yet this approach had its drawbacks when it came to the mechanics of construction. Next to the eastern crossing piers, the reredos is the only part of Beverley Minster that stands out for its very poor quality of execution. There are so many oddities that many of its components -- not just the Purbeck bases -- appear to have been produced off-site. The builders had considerable difficulty in getting them to join together. The construction of the vault was very haphazard, and the bosses of the ridge rib are all several degrees off-kilter (Fig. 148). Many of the junctions between the ribs and keystones are jammed with huge amounts of mortar to fill the gaps. In addition, damage from chisels and hammers shows that the masons had to roughly shoe-horn many of them into place. The junctions are so inaccurate that that the builders seem never to have

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36 BONY (1979), especially 3-12.
constructed a vault of this kind before, or they were forced to use stones that had been incorrectly measured.

A larger problem was the mismatched diaper on the arcade spandrels, which by any standard was an error on a colossal scale (Figs. 158-159). Most of the diaper is correctly positioned, but those attached to the southern halves of the arches are aligned diagonally.\(^{37}\) The result is very noticeable. Diaper and arch were formed from a single stone, but when they were laid flat in the banker, the sculptors neglected to take into account their final position in the building. When the voussoirs were erected at the correct angle, the diaper followed the curvature of the arch and fell out of horizontal. The infill above the arches, inserted after the centering was removed, is correctly positioned and abuts the voussoirs clumsily. An even larger mistake is that none of the diaper is of uniform size. Diaper was apparently more difficult to achieve than it appears, as its treatment here echoes the chaotic and mosaic-like treatment of diaper in the gallery spandrels at Westminster.\(^{38}\) No one yet seems to have appreciated the irony that while England was obsessed with diaper, it was actually not very good at making it.

\(^{37}\) Strangely, the diaper on the northern arches was done correctly. It seems that the tracing out of the design was left to the individual sculptor and only one of them prepared his work correctly.

How did the canons feel about this litany of mistakes? It is difficult to believe that they would have let these blunders stand at the very climax of their church, below the precious relics of their patron saint. Yet they remain to this day. How did patron, artist, and spectator perceive such discrepancies in the Middle Ages? How did medieval perceptions of *errata* differ from our own? The fact that the diaper was left *in situ* means that there must have been an acceptance, however begrudging, that their survival outweighed their deficiencies. Removal and correction may simply have been too expensive. A possible solution is that when the diaper was painted and gilded, it was easier to mask the differences between them. I know of no source that documents the use of plaster or stucco in the Middle Ages, but perhaps some kind of infill could have been used to camouflage the diaper and create a corrected version on top of it. The problem would therefore have been avoided entirely.

The rest of the reredos’s original appearance is equally unknowable. Although all of the masonry here is original, I have not been able to locate any traces of its original gold or polychromy. The lights of the blind tracery on the rear and side walls were undoubtedly painted with figures, just like those of the
sedilia (see below) and the Huggate tomb now in the northwest transept. No description of the original iconography survives, and here—just as with the sculpture on the opposite wall—iconoclasm must have been punitive. The original paintings (eighteen in all) would have been carefully chosen to telegraph the dual cults of St. John and the Virgin Mary. It is impossible to overstate these figures’ importance. The pilgrims would have gazed at them while they venerated the relics above, and they would have been the most visible imagery here, at the very culmination of the pilgrimage experience. Framed by exquisite blind tracery, they were the culmination of the coup-de-theatre that had been so carefully orchestrated from the moment the pilgrims entered the building.

Just as on the western reredos, on the opposite side of the wall, they probably formed a line of Anglo-Saxon archbishops, saints, and confessors. The figures may even have included John of Beverley, Winwald, Berethun, and the Virgin herself. But the exact identification of saints and persons here is less important than their overall effect. At just over life-size, they were presented to pilgrims for direct contemplation and close inspection. They were the only figures in the Minster with which the lay spectator could interact at ground level. They marked the transition between the greater space of the church as a whole

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39 GOUGH (1786-1796), 312 recorded the remains of figures on the Huggate tomb in 1789. There is now no trace of them left.
and the intensely intimate space below John’s shrine. They were the final witnesses to the inviolability and power of the relics above. The reredos’s inner “chapel” enveloped pilgrims in a sacred space whose boundaries were mediated by the saints and angels on its very walls. Anyone who entered the screen’s interior was immediately cast as a member of their sacred company, thereby becoming an active participant in St. John’s heavenly dominion.

The reredos as a shrine base

Until now, I have stated as fact that the reredos served as the base for the shrine of John of Beverley. It is now time to justify this assertion. The original location of John’s shrine has sparked much debate. There is no consensus of opinion. In typical medieval fashion, the primary sources are infuriatingly vague as to the shrine’s position. The Chapter Act book and surviving wills and testaments use the words “feretrum,” “capsula,” and “tumba” so interchangeably that they are of little help. In 1903, Arthur Leach was the first to note that the reredos was the platform on which St. John’s shrine rested.\footnote{Coldstream (1976), 21.} John Bilson – extraordinarily sensitive, as always -- agreed with him in an unpublished letter two years later.\footnote{Coldstream (1976), 21-2.}
mentioned in the shrine contract, and that the dimensions of the feretrum would have easily fit on top of it. More recently, Ben Nilson has been highly critical of these views.\textsuperscript{42} He noted, correctly, that the shrine and its base would not have been commissioned in the same document, and he deftly countered theories by Coldstream and Stocker that York and Lincoln both featured shrines on top of their reredoses.\textsuperscript{43} Nilson concluded that the placement of St. John’s shrine on top of the Beverley screen would have made it unique in all of England – so unique as to make it very unlikely, although he did concede that it was physically possible.\textsuperscript{44} Others have tentatively agreed with Leach and Bilson: Coldstream called their hypothesis “admirable” and Horrox offered it as “the most likely solution.”\textsuperscript{45} Still, the general attitude to the shrine’s placement on top of the reredos has been one of extreme caution and intense debate.

I see no reason to be tentative. The evidence for the reredos as a shrine base is, in my opinion, overwhelming enough as to remove all doubt. The proof is as follows:

1) **Spatial constraints.** The claustrophobia of the east end has been a perennial theme of this dissertation, but cannot be overemphasized. It is true

\textsuperscript{42} Nilson (1998), 58, 84.
\textsuperscript{43} Nilson (1998), 58-60.
\textsuperscript{44} Nilson (1998), 58.
\textsuperscript{45} Coldstream (1976), 22; Horrox (2000), 40.
that the solution at Beverley was unorthodox, but there was no way around it. A unique ground plan required a unique solution. Too many pronouncements about buildings are divorced from the practicalities of 1) ground plan, 2) the size and arrangement of bays, and 3) everyday use and function. Abstract theories, while they may be fascinating, must be grounded in the exigencies of site, circulation, and daily activity.

Anyone who has spent time in the retro-choir of Beverley knows what a very insufficient space it was for the functions that were thrust upon it. A Lady Chapel, shrine, feretory, and multiple tombs could never have fit on the ground floor; there was simply not enough square footage to accommodate them. The architect had only two bays at his disposal. The easternmost (projecting) bay would have been completely taken up by the Lady Chapel and its appurtenances, including the altar attached to the east wall, the statue of the Virgin Mary, the Red Chest, stalls, and other liturgical furnishings. If the shrine were not located on top of the reredos, it would have to have been situated in the second bay – i.e., the continuation of the east transept aisles. Practical considerations make this very unlikely. There had to be sufficient room for not only the shrine itself, but a substantial base -- at least several feet wider on three sides – and an even broader platform with steps and kneelers to accommodate
pilgrims. It would have also featured a shrine altar on the western face and, more importantly, a network of metal enclosures, fences, or grills to protect the feretrum from theft and damage. Proper provision for a shrine on the ground floor of the Minster would therefore have taken up almost the entire second bay of the retro-choir.

If this were the bay’s only function, there would have been little difficulty. But this space was the main -- in fact, the only -- navigable circulation route around the canons’ choir. Its primary function was to serve as the ambulatory behind the high altar. Massive processions would have been frequent here, as would multitudes of traffic from pilgrims, priests, vicars, chantry priests, parishioners, and guild members attending masses in the Lady Chapel. As wills and testaments make clear, this area was also stuffed with tombs and memorials. The impression from the surviving documents is that every inch of the retro-choir was taken up with monuments and slabs, none of which would have been possible if the shrine were located here.

2) Security. A relatively secluded position on an upper platform was a strong natural deterrent to crime. The theft of St. Hugh’s head from his shrine in the Angel Choir in 1364 proves that burglary was a continual threat. The prestige of a saint’s cult and shrine rose in direct proportion to their danger of
being robbed. The danger at Beverley was intense; but quarantined on top of the screen, the shrine could have been stolen only by knocking down the door of the reredos staircase or by scaling an eleven-foot wall.

The screen also eliminated the need for the cumbersome system of grills and enclosures just mentioned, or the kind of watching chambers that still survive at St. Albans and Canterbury. At Beverley, it is likely that one (or more) of the feretrar’s watchmen would have been stationed on top of the platform next to the shrine itself. They may even have slept there at night, but their job was made much easier by an arrangement which already rendered theft nearly impossible.

3) The platform itself. If the reredos platform was not the setting for the shrine, what was its purpose? It is remarkably spacious and the canons spent an enormous amount of money creating it. Its access staircase proves that it had a vital function, and yet there is no surface like it on any other English reredos. The upper story of the pulpitum already served the usual liturgical functions, as it did in every other great church. Why was an even wider platform needed just to the east of it, if not for a saint?

\[\text{RAINE (1837), 121.}\]
4) **Rededication of the high altar.** One of Ben Nilson’s main objections is that placing John’s shrine on top of the reredos would not have allowed room for the shrine altar attached to its western side.\(^47\) This is certainly true. But the fact that the high altar was rededicated *and* the shrine completed in exactly the same year, 1308, is too remarkable to be a coincidence.\(^48\) When the shrine was placed on top of the reredos, the high altar itself was in the correct position to serve as a shrine altar, albeit at a lower level.\(^49\) Its rededication became necessary only because the high altar and the shrine altar were now one and the same. The arrangement does appear to be unusual, although given the dearth of evidence for shrine altars and their configuration in the Middle Ages, I think it may not have been as uncommon as Nilson thinks. The Reformation has left us with dangerously little information to go on, and our theories and suppositions may have little basis in actual fact.

Those who argue that St. John’s shrine sat on the ground floor are essentially arguing that *two* altars – the Minster’s high altar and another altar attached to the shrine – were both dedicated to John of Beverley in the same year, and that they were located within eight feet of one another, separated by a

\(^{47}\) Nilson (1998), 58.

\(^{48}\) Leach (1898), 212-3., 212-3.

\(^{49}\) Horrox (2000), 40.
mammoth and expensive platform that served no evident function except to take up valuable space.

5) **Ornament.** I have already argued that the row of quatrefoils on the western plinth of the reredos is an original feature (see above). In addition to their historicism, these quatrefoils would have been recognizable as a perennial feature of English shrine bases in the Decorated period.\(^{50}\) They survive on the bases of St. Frideswide, Oxford and St. Alban (Figs. 160-161), and appear to have been a very common fixture on the metalwork of shrines themselves.\(^{51}\) Roger of Faringdon’s shrine likely featured long strings of quatrefoils, and the base that it rested on would have done so as well. Quatrefoils were so commonplace on shrine bases that they would have been familiar signifiers of relics and saintly space. Their presence on the Beverley reredos was probably a direct allusion to the shrine which was placed on top of it.

7) **Other examples.** The Beverley arrangement is not as unique as it appears. At Amiens in the fifteenth century, a screen behind the high altar featured a stair at each end, with nine shrines (including that of St. Firmin) located on top of it.\(^{52}\) I have also discovered that in England, contrary to Nilson, 

\(^{50}\) Coldstream (1976), 20-4.
\(^{51}\) Coldstream (1976), 23-7.
\(^{52}\) Coldstream (1976), 22.
it was repeated a mere twenty miles from Beverley at the Augustinian priory of Bridlington. A description of Bridlington Priory at the Suppression describes the western side of its reredos, which was sculpted with Christ, the Apostles, and the Assumption of the Virgin.\textsuperscript{53} The Commissioners’ report also contains the following description:

Betwene the same [the reredos] and the Est Wyndow ys Saynt John of Brydlyngton Shryne, in a fayre Chappel on hyghe, having on ayther syde a stayre of Stone for to goo and cume by.

It’m under nethe the sayd Shryne be fyve Chappells w’t fyve alters and small Tables of Allebaster and Imag’s.\textsuperscript{54}

On the brink of the Reformation, therefore, Bridlington Priory had almost the exact same arrangement of shrine and reredos as Beverley. It featured a screen with rich sculpture and a spacious rear platform with “chapels” underneath for pilgrims to assemble and venerate cultic imagery. The upper story contained the shrine of John of Bridlington in a “chapel on high” – a lovely and poetic phrase, and exactly what the canons of Beverley must have originally have intended. The only difference was that Bridlington’s feretrum seems to have been accessible to the public, who could enter and exit via staircases on each side. John of Bridlington was the last saint to be canonized in medieval

\textsuperscript{53} Caley (1821), 272.
\textsuperscript{54} Caley (1821), 272.
England, and it seems clear that the Prior and his canons modeled their layout on the illustrious and local cult at Beverley. Bridlington’s proximity to the Minster would have meant that its layout was extremely familiar.\footnote{By making their shrine more accessible than Beverley’s, the Bridlington canons may have been tacitly acknowledging that the Minster’s shrine was seen as too isolated on top of its platform. Beverley’s “chapel on high” may, in the end, have been felt to be too remote. But then again, Bridlington Priory, with its double-choir arrangement and very extended east end, did not have Beverley’s spatial constraints.}

I have been unable to locate similar arrangements at any other churches, but it is likely that they were more common than is currently realized.

8) **Historicism and continuity.** Finally, the placement of the shrine on top of the reredos was another manifestation of the canons’ beloved historicism. Suspended eleven feet in the air on its arcades, the placement of the Decorated shrine was a recension of its disposition in the pre-Gothic Minster. Prior to the mid-thirteenth century, shrine bases were either of the foramina type (a chest pierced with large holes) or else a stone slab lifted on tall pillars.\footnote{CROOK (1990), 49.} It is documented that Beverley featured the latter kind of “table-top” platform at the end of the eleventh century or the beginning of the twelfth. An account in the *Miracula Sancti Johannis*, attributed to William Kettell, tells the story of an apoplectic Irishman who stands at the entrance of the Minster choir, hoping for a miraculous cure. The sick man then orders himself “to be carried on his litter
under the shrine [italics mine]...When the shadow of the shrine in which the holy body rested darkened him, he began to get better and better.”

The Romanesque shrine at Beverley was raised on a platform lofty enough for a man to be carried underneath and processed back and forth several times.

With its tall balcony suspended twelve feet in the air, the Decorated reredos echoed the post-Conquest arrangement, but on a deluxe and monumental scale. As in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Roger of Faringdon’s new shrine was elevated high enough for people to move freely beneath it. The fourteenth-century screen thus had a kind of atavistic resonance with the shrine’s placement in every prior phase of the building’s construction.

It provided direct visual continuity through the Saxon, Romanesque, and Early English periods, going all the way back to St. John’s canonization in 1037.

The reredos would also have appeared as a much grander version of John of Beverley’s tomb in the nave. From the thirteenth century, this monument consisted of a freestanding casket resting on a platform supported by marble columns. Once again, pilgrims could move underneath (although not as freely as under the feretrum) through a series of openings or arcades. A general


fidelity between shrine and tomb cemented their axial relationship and encouraged the laity to view the Minster’s two principal sites of devotion as a unified ensemble. Both relic locations at Beverley were expressed in a similar kind of visual language, although the lavish treatment of the screen left no doubt that the shrine was far more important.

**Occupation and visibility**

Ben Nilson has rightly questioned the importance of shrine visibility in the churches of medieval England, particularly after the fourteenth century. It is often erroneously assumed that shrines were the focal point of every church that had major relics, and that their shrines were on permanent display. As Nilson has shown, English shrines were often entirely hidden from the main body of the church and could only be seen in relatively small feretories by small amounts of people. The construction of the very tall “wall” reredoses such as those at Ottery St. Mary, Winchester (Fig. 162), St. Albans, Christchurch Priory, Milton Abbey, Southwark, and Canterbury rendered these institutions’ shrines invisible from ninety per cent of the building. From the year 1462, the shrine of William of York was accessed by two doors in the altar screen, which completely hid it from

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<thead>
<tr>
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view.\textsuperscript{61} Certainly by the later Middle Ages, shrines were becoming increasingly marginalized, a symptom of growing disinterest in saints and one of the most visible confirmations of the approaching Reformation.

At Beverley, however, the shrine of St. John was always of paramount importance. I contend that it was fully visible from the nave in all of its incarnations, and that this visibility was a major factor in the design and structure of the Gothic building. The scars of the original medieval pulpitum – whether the original thirteenth-century screen or a Decorated remodeling – are visible beneath George Gilbert Scott’s current choir screen (Fig. 163). They show clearly that the height of the pulpitum was several feet lower in the Middle Ages than at present, reaching only eight inches higher than the reredos’s balustrade. The shrine would not have been placed directly on the upper platform, but supported on some kind of secondary base that gave it an additional two or three feet in height.

The implications are clear. In its original position, the shrine would have cleared the height of the medieval choir screen by at least three feet. As there was no rood screen in English collegiate churches, the pulpitum was the Minster’s only major obstruction between the nave and choir. Even accounting

\textsuperscript{61} Wilson (1977), 20-1.
for perspective, the shrine could have been seen over the pulpitum from most points in the nave beyond the western crossing. A view from the aisles would have been very difficult, but to anyone standing in the central vessel – from the first bay all the way to the central door of the west façade – the feretrum would have appeared to levitate in the far reaches of the choir, shimmering and sparkling in bejeweled magnificence. The shrine stood at the apex of every eastward-facing view in the building -- a continual reminder of the Minster’s *raison d’être*. Burgesses, parishioners, guildsmen, and laity were hardly ever permitted access to the eastern arm of the building, but the shrine would nevertheless have dominated their view of the Minster. It was the inevitable focal point of “their” church, sandwiched between the top of the pulpitum and the rood beam which surmounted it. Significantly, the shrine would also have been visible to the throngs of pilgrims stationed at John’s tomb in the first bay of the nave – reinforcing, again, the axial disposition of the saint’s relics and providing a seductive, far-off glimpse of their ultimate destination.

If the placement of the shrine of John of Beverley was unique in England, so was its provision for pilgrims and miracle-seekers. Every other shrine base in the Decorated period was under eight feet long and six feet in height.\(^6^2\) The

\(^{62}\) Coldstream (1976).
Beverley reredos is an exercise in gigantism -- a conventional shrine base exploded in scale and taken to the limits of its conceptual integrity. The surviving pedestal in the feretory at St. Albans (Figs. 160-161) is the paradigmatic example of a fourteenth-century English shrine base. Even a cursory comparison with the Beverley reredos shows that everything here has been magnified and exaggerated. The niches surrounding the lower level at St. Albans are shallow and could never have fit more than a diseased limb or a contact relic. At Beverley, these same niches have become entire Gothic bays nearly six feet deep. The encircling arches below the gables at St. Albans have been attenuated into massive arcades, nearly twice the height of a person. The tracery on the rear of the St. Albans niches – featuring some of the earliest reticulated tracery in England, and originally brightly colored63 – has at Beverley been magnified fifteen times into over-life-size figures. At the Minster, the surface area on which Alban’s feretrum rested has been increased by a factor of ten.

I have repeatedly called the interior of the Beverley reredos a miniature chapel. But it is far more than that. It is really a colossal shrine base that has been turned inside-out, gutted, vaulted, and opened up on one side. It is this final aspect that was the designer’s stroke of genius. In enlarging and voiding

63 MICKLETHWAITE (1872).
out the niches of a typical shrine base, the artist created the only English shrine base on a colossal, superhuman scale. It is as if the fenestellae of a normal shrine base had grown taller than the height of a person, for the express purpose of being bodily penetrated. Much has been written about the practice of inhumation in proximity to relics, but Beverley must have been one of the only places in Gothic Europe – certainly the only one in medieval England -- where inhumation was possible inside the very structure of the shrine itself. It was a place where the basement of the saint’s “house” could be literally inhabited.

At Beverley, the shrine base was not an inconvenient vehicle for saintly contact, but a living space which could be seized, breached, settled, and promenaded through. Its spaciousness would have been remarkable to pilgrims who had visited rival institutions, as it could easily accommodate up to twenty-five people at a single time. At the Minster, visitors did not kneel on the periphery or struggle to insert cloth, limbs, and oil. They were plunged into, and enveloped by, the holiest space that most would experience in their entire lives.

The tall Purbeck arcading that greeted pilgrims as they entered the retro-choir at Beverley was an invitation to saintly occupation. Like the thirteenth-century screen façade at Peterborough (Fig. 164), the reredos was a triumphal arch to sanctity.
CHAPTER 6: THE SEDILIA

Description

The sedilia at Beverley (Figs. 165, 168) are some of the most extraordinary liturgical furnishings to be found in any English church. They are a remarkable survival but suffer from the same scholarly neglect as the rest of the Minster. Fewer than two hundred words have ever been published about them,¹ and even here we are given the usual effusive praise (“magnificent,” “unrivalled,” “amazing”) and little else.² Most visitors fail to give the sedilia even a passing glance, and they are lost amidst the general splendor of the Percy tomb, reredos, and great east window. It is a testament to the Minster’s quality that a monument of national importance can so easily fade into the background.

The sedilia are located to the south of the high altar between the piers of the eastern crossing, directly opposite the Percy tomb. They are a freestanding, four-bay structure carved in oak, consisting of a flat bench surmounted by lacy canopies resting on buttresses with triple set-offs. On the front side (facing

¹ HOWARD and CROSSLEY (1933), 139-40; BOND (1916), 179, 195, 198; STEPHENSON (1890), 10; PEVSNER (1972), 176; PEVSNER and NEAVE (1995), 291; CROSSLEY (1947), 55; JOHNSON (1843), 30, 61, 92, 106; BILSON (1895), Iviii; DAWTON (1983), 123 n. 8; PETCH (1986), 44, 46; NEAVE (2000), 82. Treatment of sedilia has been very sparse in general discussions of church furniture, but see BOND (1916), 176-203; COX and HARVEY (1908), 67-74; PRIOR (1900), 391-2.
² HOWARD and CROSSLEY (1933), 139; JOHNSON (1843), 30; CROSSLEY (1947), 55.
north), the plinth is decorated with a row of quatrefoils and tight ball-flower. The wall behind the seats is plain and topped by square rosettes, a wavy-trefoiled parapet, and double-stepped crenellations (Fig. 166).\(^3\) The superstructure of the sedilia is carved in two tiers: a row of slightly nodding ogee arches, trefoiled and sub-cusped, with crocketted gables and pinnacles above (Fig. 167). The spandrels of the upper gables are voided, creating hollow triangular frames with no system of micro-architectural “roofs” to connect them.\(^4\) The result is a typically Decorated feat of semi-transparency, offering flickering views of the building beyond through a forest of truncated foliage and shafts. It is the same aesthetic of subtraction that prompted the flying ribs of the Easter Sepulcher at Lincoln (c. 1300), the pulpitum at Southwell (c. 1335-40), and the Berkeley ante-chapel at St. Augustine’s, Bristol (c. 1305).\(^5\)

The rear of the sedilia is carved with the same parapet, buttresses, and canopies as the front (Fig. 168). The entire unit was therefore meant to be partially circumnavigated and it catered to audiences outside the privileged

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\(^3\) The same crenellations are found on the fragments of the so-called Easter Sepulcher now in the upper “Priest’s Room” at St. Mary’s, Beverley. PETCH (1986), 37-40, 46.
\(^4\) On the eastern and western gables, which were not meant to be seen straight on, there are wooden cross-braces.
\(^5\) ALEXANDER (2004), 114-5, 124, has argued that the choir aisles at Carlisle were originally meant to be vaulted with skeletal ribs after the fire of 1291, but the evidence of the abandoned springers in the easternmost bays does not strike me as conclusive. For flying ribs in English Gothic, see CROSSLEY (1981), 91-2; FRANKL (2000), 347 n. 56d; WILSON (1990), 224-7; BOCK (1961), 207-10.
seclusion of the canons’ choir. It was only from the southeast transept, in fact, that medieval viewers could admire the sedilia’s most public display of decoration. Here, the returns of the seats are covered with sumptuous blind tracery (Fig. 169) -- three cinquefoiled lights carried on semicircular mullions with thick annulets.\(^6\) Rectangular panels are a common enough feature in medieval wooden furnishings (choir stalls, bench ends, chests, and screens), but the high popularity of straight-headed windows in early-fourteenth-century Yorkshire must have given these panels additional luxury and prestige value.\(^7\) The central motif of the design is the cusped quatrefoil inside an ogeed vesica below convergent mouchettes -- the same design featured in the tracery of the nave aisles. Beneath the panels is a parapet of diagonal quadrilobes and quatrefoils with stud ornament in the center.\(^8\)

The primary cusps and buttress gablets are carved with headstops of kings, bishops, monsters, and townspeople; the rear buttresses rest on corbels of

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\(^6\) These are, strangely enough, the only occurrence of shaft rings in the entire Minster.

\(^7\) There are too many examples to name, but among the most important are the parish church of Skipwith (West Riding); the second south choir aisle at Holy Trinity, Hull; the porch of St. Mary Lowgate, Hull (demolished, but see the fragments in the nave); the rear of the gatehouse at Kirkham Priory; the upper-level Lady Chapel on the choir annex at Ripon; and the upper floor of the south porch at Howden.

\(^8\) Petch (1986), 40-6, uses the stud ornament to attribute various works in Bainton, Beverley, York, and Lincoln to the son of master mason Ivo de Raughton (fl. 1317–c. 1339); but his flawed methodology leads to a jumble of untenable conclusions. See also Collins (1897), 17; Harvey (1977), 157-8; Harvey (1984), 238-9; Coldstream (1973), 86-90; Wilson (1979), 220 n. 87; Coldstream (1989), 75.
musicians playing instruments. The interior features a tierceron vault whose shafts rest on bases resembling spinning tops or swirling, half-molten vases (Fig. 170). They are delightfully impractical bits of micro-architecture -- the Decorated style at its most surreal and anti-functional. The thirty-four vault bosses were carved by two different sculptors and are mostly foliate: the transverse group in blockish, low relief and the main bosses with knobbly, deeply undercut leaves (Fig. 171). Five of the bosses depict figures, including three hooded men and a monster sticking out his tongue (Fig. 172).

A head of Christ presides over the easternmost vault (Fig. 173), surrounded by a Cross-shaped nimbus and rosettes. He marks the exalted status of the seat closest to the high altar, the liturgical epicenter of the Minster. In the Middle Ages, this seat was occupied by the most senior celebrant in attendance: the Archbishop of York when he was resident at his Palace, the provost when he was not absentee (he must have guarded the seat zealously as he had no stall of his own in the choir), and so on in descending order of importance. This hierarchy -- both spatial and institutional -- was subtly enforced by a progressive

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9 These were not included in the two surveys of the Minster’s musicians by McPEEK AND McPEEK (1973) and MONTAGU AND MONTAGU (1978).
narrowing of the sedilia’s bays. Although the seats appear uniform in size, the first is fourteen inches wider than the fourth.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Location, restoration, and original appearance}

The sedilia have had a difficult life. Between 1822 and 1867, they were removed from their original position and relocated one bay east in the southern entrance to the retro-choir. During this period, the choir replaced the nave as the main venue for services and the aisles were fitted up as seating for the congregation. Providing an unobstructed view of the liturgy (something which of course the Middle Ages never troubled itself with) became vital. The sedilia were placed directly in the “line of fire,” as it were, as they blocked a view of the high altar to anyone seated in the southeast transept. All of the wooden paneling on the back of the choir stalls was removed at the same time to allow visibility. A photograph from c. 1870 (Fig. 174) shows the reconfigured south choir aisle, cluttered with pews and benches and with an empty space where the sedilia had sat undisturbed for nearly four centuries.

\textsuperscript{10} This explains why the tracery on the rear panels differs and is misaligned on either side of the buttresses. \textit{As so often in the Decorated style, varietas was a goal in itself and trumped the need for a continuous design}. The panels are a lighter color than the rest of the sedilia, indicating that they were carved independently and inserted during final assembly. The wood still features many incised arcs and curves from the compasses used to trace out the original design.
Thankfully, they were not destroyed. The only visual record of their new position is an unpublished watercolor by Bartlett, dated 1829, now in the choir vestry (Fig. 175). This view, taken from the Lady Chapel looking southwest, shows the sedilia taking up the full width of the arch, but rotated 180 degrees so that the tracery panels (see the mullions and shaft-rings) faced north while the seats abutted St. Katherine’s Chapel. This had the unfortunate side-effect of preventing circulation through the most important thoroughfare of the east end. Bartlett shows the ruthlessly pragmatic solution that was adopted: a passageway was cut through the first seat (formerly on the east) by gutting its plinth, bench, and wainscoting. The sedilia had, in effect, become a screen whose narrow entrance arch was now presided over by the boss of Christ. This was an uncanny, albeit unconscious, throwback to medieval practice, as a substantial barrier undoubtedly stood here in the Middle Ages to safeguard the feretory, its relics, and the ever-swelling Red Chest.

The sedilia were returned to their original position in 1876-77. Copies of the scrapped woodwork were inserted and the first seat was once again made

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11 The tracery is only penciled in for the two middle panels and parts of the reredos are unfinished as well. But Bartlett’s accuracy cannot be in doubt, cf. the detail of the arcade moldings, the Purbeck base of the reredos, the cut-back hood-mold of the southeast crossing pier, and even the checkered lead lines in the clerestory.

12 From the minimal scarring on the east respond, this medieval screen was very tall, reaching almost to the height of the capitals, and was either wooden or, more probably, a metal grill.
The new work was surprisingly faithful to the original and few people now realize that only the superstructure and three western bays of the sedilia are genuine medieval work. The modern infill can be spotted by its machine-like finish, the crude attachment joints on the interior, and the large seam where the original bench was sawn out in 1822 (Figs. 176-177).\footnote{The graffiti on the four panels also prove their date. The years scratched on the three medieval panels are Tudor and Georgian, while everything on the restored panel postdates the nineteenth century.}

Unfortunately, “restoration” did not stop there. In 1876, James Elwell submerged the sedilia in a massive tank of diluted acid (!) so that its original paint could be scrubbed off with wire brushes.\footnote{\textsc{dawton} (1983), 146 n.8.} Elwell’s work was disastrously thorough. The abrasions from his scouring are visible everywhere, and even with a magnifying glass I have not been able to locate any vestiges of paint. The damage on the four canopies is extreme – and this is grim confirmation, just as we would expect, that the gables and pinnacles were once a riot of color. Massive effort was required to eradicate it. No description of the medieval palette survives, but the polychromy of contemporary English furnishings gives an idea of its original splendor. Prior Eastry’s choir enclosures at Canterbury (c. 1304-5) were originally painted green, red, blue, and white, along with rosettes, diaper, flowers, heraldry, and fictive bar tracery; the altar screen of the eastern
Lady Chapel at Bristol (c. 1320) was blue with red and gold flowers; and the dado of the Lady Chapel at Ely (c. 1335-45) -- whose canopies (Fig. 178) strongly resemble a petrified version of the Beverley sedilia -- were once covered in green, vermillion, and bright blue.\textsuperscript{15} The sedilias at Rochester and Exeter were also brightly painted, and five kinds of trailing foliage were painted on the Coronation Chair at Westminster between 1300 and 1301.\textsuperscript{16} Beverley’s sedilia undoutedly featured a similar explosion of color and ornament. When the upper foliage -- already remarkably naturalistic in its damaged state – was painted in various shades of green, it must have been a tour-de-force of realism, conveying a real sense of the vigor and growth of the natural world.

The sedilia also featured a prodigious amount of gold leaf, and for this I have uncovered tantalizing evidence. None of it is now visible with the naked eye, but under a bright flashlight the sedilia’s vault glistens with flecks of its original gold patina. The residue is only found in tiny crevices of the wood, presumably because Elwell’s acid bath could not reach them. Fragments of gold still shimmer on the ribs, the foliage of the transverse bosses, and the junctions between the tiercerons and vault webs. Appropriately enough, the head of

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Scott} (1875); \textit{Tristram} (1955), 143, 147-8, 168.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Tristram} (1955), 169, 195-6, 240; \textit{Morris} (1943), 132-4.
Christ was once the most luminous of all, and most of the remaining gold is concentrated in the semicircles of his halo, rosettes, and even his beard and lips.

When lit by candles or the raking light of the southeast transept facade, the sedilia must have shimmered with an otherworldly splendor. The superstructure in particular must have been radiant with gold, broadcasting the heavenly authority of the canons who sat below. But the decoration was not confined to gold and patches of color. On the contemporary sedilia at Exeter and Westminster Abbey, fictive curtains were painted on the insides of the back of the seats; and at St. Stephen’s, Westminster, painted angels in the Sienese tradition held up sumptuous brocades as a heavenly backdrop for the canons in front of them.

Despite the lamentable survival rates of English church furniture, it appears that painted fabric or hanging cloths were once standard on sedilia at institutions of any pretension. At Beverley, it is very likely that the flat wainscoting (now completely plain) was painted with some kind of luxurious, illusionistic display -- if not curtains, then perhaps diaper or heraldic shields.

Amazingly, the sedilia also show evidence of real, not painted, curtains. It has not previously been noticed that there are eight drilled holes above the springing of the vault, symmetrically arranged in a straight line across the top of

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17 Morris (1943), 135.
the ogee arches. It is not possible to prove when these holes were made, but their uniformity suggests that they are medieval and were part of the original decorative program. Their most logical function would have been to anchor hooks, from which cloths or miniature tapestries would have been suspended in the empty space between the bench and canopies. At Beverley, the faux curtains of Exeter and Westminster were apparently augmented by the real thing. Although it is never mentioned in the literature, this was probably a widespread practice in the Middle Ages. Ceremonial hangings could be rotated according to feast days and the ebb and flow of the liturgical year. As the Beverley sedilia were never mounted against a screen, these curtains would also have given the canons much-needed privacy from the prying eyes of anyone in the south choir aisle. The current sweeping view through the sedilia – past the Percy tomb, all the way into the northeast transept -- is the usual modern anachronism. No medieval user would have expected it, and the sedilia’s arches were probably blocked to outsiders for the entire Middle Ages.

Finally, it also seems likely that the sedilia were originally studded with glass. The sedilias at Westminster (both Abbey and St. Stephen’s) and Dorchester were all inlaid with glass attached with mastic,\textsuperscript{19} and there are

\textsuperscript{19} Binski (1995), 124; Bishop and Prideaux (1922), 58; Hope (1917), 191, 198-9.
remains of glass mosaic on the Prior’s seat in the chapter house at Canterbury (c. 1304) and the Coronation Chair at Westminster. The deployment of glass -- descended from its use at the Sainte-Chapelle and transmitted to England via the Westminster retable -- seems to have been widespread on Decorated furnishings. It receives virtually no mention in the literature. Given the strong connections between all of Beverley’s furnishings and those at Westminster, it is very likely that the sedilia (and probably the Percy tomb and reredos as well) featured glass inlay of some kind. Their gleam and sparkle would have echoed the brilliant jewels and precious stones of Roger of Faringdon’s feretrum. All of the objects surrounding the high altar would have possessed the same gem-like splendor, and in many cases it would have been impossible to tell the real from the fictive. This slippage of materiality and texture was, once again, a hallmark of the Decorated style. It is a pity that hard evidence is now very difficult to come by. Any glass on the exterior of the sedilia would have had to survive 400 years of wear and tear before Elwell’s restoration finished it off for good.

20 TRISTRAM (1955), 39.
21 BINSKI and MASSING (2009), 115-9.
Attribution and stylistic context

Even a brief comparison of the sedilia and the Percy tomb shows that they can only be the work of the same designer. The two monuments are so closely linked in style that, for once, attribution requires refreshingly little justification. The central motif for both is the nodding ogee arch with the same idiosyncratic pattern of cusps. Both works have the same disposition of pinnacles, headstops, and traceried buttresses. Some of the foliage on the sedilia (Fig. 179) is an exact copy (albeit smaller in scale) of the luscious greenery and fruit from the tomb’s canopy (Fig. 180). Some of the crockets are also identical and must have been carved from the same template -- perhaps a stone or clay master model set on permanent display in the studio. None of these similarities can be explained away as standard conventions of the Decorated style, as the frieze of rosette studs – the curious “autograph” of the Percy workshop -- also appears on the soffits of the sedilia gables (Fig. 181).

This should come as no surprise. The Percy team was made up of some of the most gifted sculptors working in England in the fourteenth century, and for nearly two decades they were headquartered in Beverley, simultaneously at

22 A point so far noted only by Pevser (1972), 176, with his usual terseness: “Designed by the same hand no doubt.”
work on the Percy tomb, reredos, north nave aisle, nave capitals, and the north chancel aisle of St. Mary’s. Given their virtual monopoly over the rest of the Minster in the first half of the fourteenth century, it would have been very unusual for an outside group of sculptors to carve the sedilia. The canons surely realized the talent at their disposal and would have wanted to capitalize on it -- not just for the sake of their beloved historicism, but also for institutional “bragging rights” over the artists that they employed. Every work that the Chapter commissioned from the Percy masons ensured that Beverley was competing not just at the national, but international, level of sculptural decoration. The Minster may have even forbidden them from taking on other commissions, just as they did for Roger of Faringdon.

Despite their immense importance to English art of the fourteenth century, the sedilia have never been situated in the larger context of medieval sculpture. Doing so is not an easy task. A full treatment of church furniture in northern England, let alone the entire country, remains to be written. The surviving evidence indicates that Yorkshire had no established tradition of furnishings to guide the canons. In the East Riding, the finest example of an earlier sedilia is at St. Oswald’s, Filey (c. 1220-30) – elegantly trefoiled and a model of cool, Early English perfection. In the Decorated period, Yorkshire never had anything
comparable to the famous school of Lincolnshire-Nottinghamshire furnishings, which produced some of the most dazzling objects of the fourteenth century. The famous sedilias at, for example, Hawton (Fig. 182) and Heckington (Fig. 183), are paradigmatic examples of the Decorated style. Ultimately derived from the pulpitum at Lincoln, they are a horror vacui of ornament and texture, every square inch encrusted with foliage and jammed with figures. Given their wild popularity in the East Midlands, they would seem to have been the ideal model for Yorkshire to emulate, especially as so many new churches and construction projects there (Beverley, York, Selby, Howden, and Holy Trinity, Hull) required new furnishings.

But the Hawton-Heckington model never caught on in the North. Its only appearance in Yorkshire is on the sedilia (Fig. 184) and Easter Sepulcher at Patrington, but even here they are a surprisingly lackluster performance, as if the crackling electricity of the originals had somehow evaporated in the journey across the Humber. This could not have been due to aesthetic or even financial conservatism, as the small Lady Chapel in the south transept of Patrington (Fig. 185) is highly innovative and unrestrained in its Decorated exuberance: the spatial elasticity of its canted walls, the central pendant boss of the Virgin.

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Annunciate, and some of the earliest reticulated tracery in England.\textsuperscript{24} That the patrons of Patrington lavished so much more money on a chapel than their sedilia implies that when it came to furnishings, Yorkshire masons had little desire to rival their competitors to the south.

The sedilia at Beverley represented a decisive break with these traditions. Given the rest of this chapter, it will come as little surprise that inspiration came from Westminster instead. The parallels are uncanny, as the only other major wooden sedilia in England are found on the south side of the Abbey’s sanctuary, built over the tomb of King Sebert (d. c. 616) (Figs. 186-187).\textsuperscript{25} They date from roughly twenty years before Beverley (c. 1307), but the similarities are very strong: both sedilia are carved in oak, have four seats, lack graduated steps, feature both front and rear views, and were crowned by prominent canopies supported on free-standing buttresses.\textsuperscript{26} The most important link between the two was the spiky upper profile and its serrated concatenation of gables. At Hawton and Heckington, thick upper cornices encased each monument in a rectangular grid, as if the bursting foliage inside had to be restrained in a kind of lithic straitjacket. The eradication of this upper barrier at Beverley gives the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{24} Maddison (1989), 140.
\bibitem{25} Binski (1995), 123-6.
\bibitem{26} The buttresses on the Westminster sedilia were removed sometime between 1789 and 1825. Binski (1995), 124, 214 n. 38.
\end{thebibliography}
sedilia the jagged contour that characterizes all of the Westminster’s monuments in the choir (Fig. 188): the tombs of Aveline de Forz (d. 1273), Aymer de Valence (d. 1296), and Edmund Crouchback (d. 1296).

When looking at the east end of Westminster, one’s overwhelming impression is of a nearly continuous string of detached gables. The appearance of the choir at Beverley in the fourteenth century would have been strikingly similar. The Percy tomb and sedilia bracketed the high altar like a pair of parentheses capped by tightly peaked roofs; and the shrine that they straddled almost certainly featured the same rhythm of gables, given its fabrication in Westminster at the same time. Just like the royal Abbey, Beverley’s altar furnishings were unified by an antiphonal, give-and-take relationship of shared aesthetic vocabulary. Their closeness is yet more proof of how high the Beverley Chapter had set its sights. By imitating Westminster, the canons broadcast their desire to become the premiere devotional space in northern England.

Materiality and hierarchies of style

The wooden construction of the Westminster sedilia has always puzzled scholars. The same could be said for Beverley. Why are these objects made out of wood, so close to the high altar and at institutions that otherwise spared no
expense? Functional requirements may have been partly responsible, and wood could have allowed for the sedilia to be removed if necessary – e.g. for coronation ceremonies at Westminster or for the Rogation processions at Beverley. But the perceived “strangeness” of their wooden construction is probably nothing of the kind. The problem lies instead in the skewed modern view of the materiality of Gothic churches: wooden furnishings seem exotic now, but they were once utterly commonplace and unremarkable. It is a truism that the perishability of wood has given us a distorted view of medieval artistic output. But we must continually remind ourselves that Gothic churches were once overflowing with wood, and the sedilia would have been only a tiny percentage of the wooden objects in the Minster.

Upon entering the presbytery of any Gothic church, one’s overwhelming impression (next to stone and glass) would have been of wood, textiles, and wax. Wooden choir stalls were the dominant feature of every east end. Wood was ubiquitous, and on every scale: crucifixes, aumbries, pillar piscinas, donation boxes, reliquary chests, and beams for candles and votives, as well as innumerable parclose screens, gates, doors, partitions, posterns, cabinets, presses, tomb enclosures, chests, cope chests, staircases to galleries or upper chapels, and watching chambers like the two-story model that survives at St. Albans. None of
this was limited to the eastern arms of churches. In 1947, Aymer Vallance observed that the very low survival rate of English monastic rood screens -- and the fact that all of those now in situ are made out of stone – indicates that nearly every English rood screen must have been constructed out of wood.\textsuperscript{27} In most great churches, the climactic feature of the entire building -- the defining view of the church for easily ninety per cent of the buildings’ users -- would have been a wooden rood screen and the wooden rood beam suspended above it. Wooden pulpita are nearly as rare in England and may also have perished in great numbers, although before the fifteenth century wood may have been considered an inappropriate medium for ceremonial entrances to choirs.\textsuperscript{28}

The sedilia at Beverley and Westminster are a reminder of how completely the Reformation, Puritans, and Victorians transformed Gothic’s material landscape. They are a cautionary tale about how little we know of the actual appearance of medieval churches. Any medievalist who has seen the Islip Roll (c. 1480s) of Westminster Abbey (Fig. 189) -- in which the choir is so crammed with unrecognizable furnishings as to make the architecture practically

\textsuperscript{27} Stone rood screens survive at St. Albans, Crowland, Tynemouth, Boxgrove, Waltham, Dunstable, and Wymondham. \textsc{Vallance} (1947), 13; \textsc{Hope} (1917), 74-6, 82-5; \textsc{Bond} (1916), 84-5.

\textsuperscript{28} Besides Beverley itself, there are wooden choir screens at Carlisle, Hexham, and Manchester. The original pulpitum at Rochester (c. 1230) was also wooden (see the original arcading on the east face and south door jamb), but was remodeled in the fourteenth century and then defaced by Pearson and Scott. \textsc{Vallance} (1947), 13, 47-9; \textsc{Hope} (1917), 80-3; \textsc{Newman} (1980), 483; \textsc{Mcaleer} (1999), 263-4 n. 152.
invisible – has had the disturbing realization that our “understanding” of medieval architecture will always be partly illusory.\textsuperscript{29} On the most fundamental level, Gothic cathedrals were scaffolds for objects whose appearance and form will always be utterly unknowable. Architectural historians rightly spend a great deal of effort recreating the \textit{sacred} topography of Gothic architecture (altars, chapels, and sites of devotion), but few ever think about recreating its \textit{material} topography as well. The wooden sedilia at Beverley are an invitation to do just that.

They would never have appeared as wood in the Middle Ages, of course: that was precisely the point. When they were fully gilded and polychromed, few people would have guessed their underlying material. The battered wood we see now is no match for the glittering masonry of the Percy tomb; but in their original state, the sedilia would also have appeared as “stonemason’s work,” just like the “\textit{opere cementario}” of Roger of Faringdon’s shrine. Paint, gold, glass, and fabric would have been a triumph of illusionism. The sedilia’s rectangular shape and large gables consciously echoed the shrine above, resembling a massive reliquary chasse, and the Percy tomb across the choir did as well. The concentration of three very similar forms – shrine, sedilia, and tomb -- made the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{29} PERKINS (1938), 47-50., 47-50.}
east end of Beverley a nexus of Decorated grandeur with few rivals in England. The fourteenth-century love of multiplication is nearly faultless here: the shrine and its two shrine-like satellites -- all differently-sized versions of one another – are piled up like Russian dolls or Chinese boxes inside a building that itself resembled a colossal reliquary turned inside-out. The Decorated love of theatricality is here enacted on an epic scale, and this, above all, is why Beverley needs to be part of the narrative of fourteenth-century English art.

The manipulation of proportion in the east end of Beverley is both dramatic and profoundly simple. The shrine was the smallest object in the refurbished choir, but it was undoubtedly the most resplendent. It was flanked by the Percy tomb, which was the basic “building block” for each of the sedilia’s four bays. Their common authorship was based on modular repetition. Even a cursory comparison of the two works shows that the sedilia were essentially a chain of four Percy tombs laid side by side, each miniaturized and lowered in height. While Dawton and others have gone to great lengths to trace the later work of the Percy sculptors in Yorkshire,30 they neglected to look directly across the chancel of the Minster. It is the sedilia, not the tombs of Welwick and Holy Trinity, that are the Percy tomb’s most obvious and important progeny.

Or were they? It is automatically assumed that the Percy tomb was designed first and the sedilia second, although there is really no strict reason to do so. Neither work can be precisely dated, although they must have been finished within a decade of one another. Most art historians would assign priority to the tomb without a second thought: connoisseurship and centrist models of “trickle-down” artistic diffusion are deeply ingrained. Despite serious counter-arguments over the past three decades, advancements in the Gothic period are still understood to be intrinsically Darwinian and uni-directional, proceeding from “greater” monuments to “lesser,” larger to smaller, sacred to vernacular, and expensive to cheap, as for Branner and Bony change flowed from cathedral to parish church, Court to province, capital to county, and city to village.

But the sedilia at Beverley could just as easily have been designed before the Percy monument and been the inspiration for the tomb’s development. Even from a logistical standpoint, the prototype of the “great work” – universally heralded after springing, fully formed, like Athena from the head of Zeus -- makes little sense. The more bold or ground-breaking an innovation, the more likely it was to be tested first on a small scale. “Dress rehearsals” of this kind allowed designers and architects to spot mistakes and predict future problems.
without wasting time and expense. They also allowed artists and patrons to assess an object’s viability, structural integrity, and aesthetic success.

When the Percies were in the process of commissioning a tomb, the designer could have suggested the sedilia as a promising new design for a large-scale monument. The Percies themselves could have chosen the sedilia as a model after admiring it in the Minster or seeing it “on spec” in drawings. It is useless to belabor the point in the absence of evidence, but given the overwhelming lack of documentation about sculptural practice in the Middle Ages, it must be borne in mind that creativity and artistic development would have frequently contradicted modern art historical expectation – and, even worse, our instincts.

Notions of artistic quality are also deeply ingrained. Few people would now consider the sedilia a superior monument to the Percy tomb, but in many ways they are. The slender buttresses on the sedilia – and the illusion of a weightless upper story that they create – could never have been attempted in stone. Likewise, the sedilia’s hollow gables are a far more daring spatial conceit than the tomb’s thoroughly conventional canopy. Their permeability and spatial perforation could never have been attempted in masonry, nor on the tomb’s massive scale. Some of the foliage on the sedilia is also more virtuosic than on
the Percy monument. While the tomb’s vegetation is more complex and intricate, only the gables of the sedilia can boast quadruple-looping seaweed borders or crocket fringes cut so thin that they appear to be made out of crumpled tissue paper (Fig. 190). Only wood made them possible. Every survey text tells us that the Percy tomb features some of the finest foliage ever carved in Gothic England. It is famous as “the garden of Eden made manifest” and “unquestionably the finest funerary monument of the fourteenth century.” But the same sculptors’ work on the sedilia occasionally eclipsed what is supposed to be their unrivalled masterpiece. The point deserves great emphasis: in “improving” upon some of the Percy tomb’s features, the little-known sedilia at Beverley can assume their rightful place as one of the most important pieces of sculpture to have survived from Gothic England.

Iconography, scenography, and “big brother”

In addition to their liturgical functions, the sedilia played a vital role in the processional route that pilgrims followed to the shrine. Visitors entered the Minster through the northwest transept, visiting John of Beverley’s tomb in the first bay of the nave and then his standard in the southwest transept. They then proceeded to the retro-choir via the south choir aisle. As they approached their

31 Evans (1949), 127-9.
final destination, their first intimate view of the shrine, the ultimate destination of their pilgrimage, would have occurred just as they cleared the choir stalls and entered the eastern transept. It was at exactly this point that the shrine would have become visible, appearing to levitate above the sedilia’s rippling and transparent canopies. All of this was calculated with precision, as was the rest of Beverley’s cultic experience. As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, nothing was left to chance. When the shrine first burst upon the pilgrims, it was dramatically framed on both sides: above, by the thirteenth-century rose window; and below, by the corrugation of the sedilia’s upper story. Those four translucent gables were, in the end, not just sculptural braggadocio: they were the ultimate in spatial exposition, the perfect accent to the feretrum which appeared to float above them.

Like the interior of the reredos, the tracery on the back of the sedilia would have been painted with figures. These also played a vital role in the cult of John of Beverley, preparing pilgrims for their final interaction with the shrine just around the corner. Again, their iconography is a matter of speculation. The most logical arrangement to fill its lights (twelve in all) would be the Apostles, legitimizing the canons and celebrants on the other side as the worthy successors to Christ’s disciples. More probably, however, they would have been painted
with Anglo-Saxon figures related to the foundation of the Minster and St. John’s cult. Elsewhere, the sedilias featured “founder” imagery: at Exeter, the openwork pinnacles originally featured statues of Edward the Confessor, Leofric, and Queen Edgytha,\textsuperscript{32} and at Westminster, the south (back) side of the sedilia was painted with kings whose exact identities (except that of Edward) are impossible to determine due to their condition.\textsuperscript{33} Like the choir stalls underneath the Octagon at Ely,\textsuperscript{34} the back of Beverley’s sedilia probably glorified its Anglo-Saxon benefactors and patrons. As on the reredos, imagery was the cornerstone of institutional memory.

The four seats at Beverley are yet more evidence of the canons’ “gigantism” and cathedral-sized ambitions. At Durham, Gloucester, and Westminster, similar four-seat sedilias catered to much larger institutions. At Beverley, their size can only be explained as an assertion of corporate pride and self-assurance. It may also have been a vehicle for archdiocesan promotion. It initially seems very strange that Southwell Minster – a foundation with half the number of Beverley’s canons and a quarter of its annual income – has a sedilia have no fewer than five seats (Fig. 191). What could have been their function?

\textsuperscript{32} BISHOP and PRIDEAUX (1922), 58
\textsuperscript{33} BINSKI (1995), 125-6.
\textsuperscript{34} BENTHAM (1773).
The answer is simple: Southwell was one of the favorite outposts of the Archbishop of York, probably due to its strategic location near the southern border of his territory. The sedilia at Southwell were designed to accommodate the canons and the archbishop, who was frequently on the premises and present for services. It can be imagined that the canons often deeply resented his presence, but the sedilia enforced a public (and illusory) image of solidarity.

The fourth seat at Beverley would have served the same function, establishing a notional vision of harmony while asserting the archbishop’s control over the Minster. His palace stood outside the west façade and was the unmistakable assertion of his control over the Chapter, directly outside the front doors of the building. The archbishop’s seat on the sedilia was the physical corollary of his palace on the interior of the church. The oversized sedilias at Southwell and Beverley are proof not just of the archbishop’s presence in his buildings, but of his power and jurisdiction over them. They announced the canons’ high institutional ambitions, but they were also an inescapable totem of the archbishop’s control -- a continual reminder, even during his frequent absences, that his authority was ever-present. The “extra” seat on the Beverley sedilia was a kind of surrogate archbishop’s throne, the proxy to his official cathedra in the choir of York Minster. Here, at the very intersection of shrine,
liturgy, and the high altar, cult and power were once again deeply enmeshed and impossible to disentangle. The sedilia at Beverley framed the relics of the Minster’s patron saint, but they were also a physical insertion of the archbishop’s authority into the heart of the canons’ space.
Conclusion

Beverley Minster has no place in any of the general narratives of English Gothic architecture. It has been especially ignored in scholarly discussions of the Decorated style. The Percy tomb is justly famous as one of the most splendid monuments in Britain, but it has eclipsed everything else in the Minster. If one is to judge from the literature, the Percy monument is the only worthwhile object produced at Beverley in the fourteenth century.

This dissertation has repeatedly proven exactly the opposite. Throughout the 1300s, building operations at Beverley took place on a massive scale, transforming the Minster into one of the most homogeneous and complete Decorated buildings in England. This thesis has taken a multivalent, holistic approach to architecture, interrogating the built environment via its physical fabric, processes of construction, literary sources, legal contracts and wills, hagiography, and the exigencies of finance and history. Beverley has been evaluated not simply as a static monument, but as the nexus in which shrine, documents, money, and architecture intersected. The Minster was far more than just a building on a cathedral-like scale: it was the vehicle by which the cult of John of Beverley was concretized into physical reality.
This thesis has departed from standard scholarly convention by analyzing the entire Minster as a unified ensemble. Contrary to usual practice, architecture and furnishings have been treated jointly as interdependent halves of a vibrant whole. Liturgical furniture is almost always ignored in English Gothic historiography, leading to a fundamentally skewed view of medieval creative output. This dissertation has repeatedly shown the centrality of furnishings to ecclesiastical architecture -- especially in the fourteenth century, when smaller-scale monuments were ideally suited to the prolixity of the Decorated style.

The aim of this dissertation has been to understand Beverley in the fourteenth century -- an impossible goal if the furnishings of the east end are excluded. It was here that John of Beverley’s immensely precious shrine stood in all its heavenly and earthly splendor. While it has become axiomatic to dismiss furnishings as little more than micro-architecture, the Minster proves that they are often the undiscovered key to grasping an entire building. In fact, the current scholarly hierarchy may have everything in precisely the wrong order: in the Decorated style, it may often be more appropriate to think of architecture as a series of brilliantly contrived “macro-furnishings,” and not vice versa.

This dissertation has rested on the bedrock of John of Beverley and his bejeweled, glowing shrine. The cult of St. John was the “prime mover” in every
phase of the Minster’s construction. Whatever commentary can be made about the canons, guildsmen, townspeople, and pilgrims who came to Beverley, it is St. John’s relics -- and not people -- that were the driving force behind the previous six chapters. John of Beverley himself is the real subject of this dissertation; the Minster was nothing but a vehicle to contain him.

The current church at Beverley replaces a series of structures that were centered around John’s tomb after the year 721. The first church on the site was built by the future saint after his retirement as bishop of York. John was buried in the so-called “porticus” of St. Peter, most likely in a cenotaph on the south side of the high altar. This church was probably a large rectangular structure built out of wood, and pilgrims flocked to it immediately after John of Beverley’s death. The original building was possibly destroyed by the Danes in the ninth century and rebuilt in the tenth, this time out of stone and with glazed “aisle” windows. Its exterior envelope was a popular site for mid-Saxon burials.

Major building works took place at Beverley just before the Norman Conquest. Archbishop Cynesige built a new central tower, and Archbishop Ealdred constructed a new presbytery with a splendid painted ceiling and deluxe furnishings. One hundred years later, the tenth-century Saxon nave was rebuilt in the Romanesque style, and some of its stone was reused as building
material in the current Gothic structure. The mid-twelveth-century nave at Beverley resembled the surviving Romanesque naves at Ely, Peterborough, and Norwich.

After a fire in 1188, the east end of the Minster was reconstructed in the Gothic style. It featured a tall central tower with long Purbeck shafting, but structural inadequacies caused it to collapse around the year 1213 or 1215. Around five years later, the current choir and transepts were built in the Early English style, along with the destroyed chapter house. The new east end was consecrated in 1260, and construction did not resume for half a century.

The Gothic nave of the Minster was built in six campaigns between c. 1308 and c. 1370. The design was driven by the desire for harmony and concordance. The new building was a subtly modernized version of the choir and transepts that came before it, and the details of their modification have been discussed at length. The architect shunned the latest innovations of the Decorated style, and every aspect of the building -- even down to plinth moldings and masonry courses – was predicated on historicism and continuity. Bar tracery, lavish sculpture, and ogee curves were included as concessions to recent fashion, but the governing principles of the architect’s design were not structurally or stylistically based: they were attitudes of concordance and nostalgia. This
continual process of self-referentiality – of the Minster’s profound indebtedness to its own architectural past – makes Beverley unique in the history of English Gothic buildings.

But it has also rendered the church invisible to scholars. Early fourteenth-century England is composed of spectacular feats of architecture, and the trademarks of the Decorated style are “supposed” to be relentless showmanship and wild originality. The nave at Beverley cannot offer the spatial pyrotechnics of the retro-choir at Wells or the Octagon at Ely, nor the gymnastic feats of imagination of St. Stephen’s, Westminster or the choir at Bristol. Next to them, Beverley inevitably comes off as something of a shrinking violet. What the Minster does offer instead is stability, suavity, restraint, and harmony. It is a study in architectural sophistication, applied on every conceivable level. Contrary to being a “copy” of the east end, it is the work of an extremely skilled designer.

Concordance is far more difficult to achieve than it looks. Taken on its own terms, the nave at Beverley is every bit as impressive as the Eleanor Crosses, Exeter Cathedral, or the nave at York. Understatement and refinement tend to be undervalued when they are measured against bombastic displays of invention. The difference between the Minster’s nave and the long series of English
Decorated “blockbusters” is one of intention, not quality. We will never know the exact reasons why the nave was built in such a historicist style, but there is no doubt that it was a conscious decision with strong ideological and symbolic implications. As I have shown, money was no object, and the Chapter could have built any building it wanted when construction resumed around 1308. If the canons had wanted to dazzle the rest of England with an absolutely modern showpiece, they would have done it. The canons understood that the nave was the greatest vehicle for self-representation that they would witness in their lifetimes. The final selection of their own building as the ultimate source of the new design is the most decisive statement we have of what drove the Chapter during the late Middle Ages. Besides its strong aesthetic and even spiritual appeal, the Minster’s continuity must have been a reflection of the canons’ supreme confidence in their own architecture – and, by extension, of their institution as a whole.

The uniformity of the Minster was the physical expression of a foundation that could trace its roots to the dimmest recesses of collective memory. As one of the most ancient religious houses in the North, the Minster’s self-identification was predicated on a long and magnificent past. The architecture of the nave was the visual exemplar of this antiquity, announcing to one and all that Beverley
looked serenely to itself while others had to scramble into the future. The self-consciously retrospective architecture of the nave was a public declaration of the Chapter’s illustrious lineage and prestige. Its permanence and imperturbability of the Minster’s appearance reflected those identical qualities as a corporate body and religious institution. As the owners of the second-most important relics in northern England, Beverley did not need to build a nave whose novelty would cause its competitors to gape in astonishment. Other establishments could join the “arms race” of Decorated architecture, but the Minster needed only to look back to its own glorious past. The nave was a demonstration of immense self-possession and self-sufficiency. Beverley needed only itself and nothing more.

But architecture is only half of the story at Beverley. If the nave is the epitome of conservatism, the sculpture and furnishings of the east end are precisely the opposite. Around the year 1320, the area surrounding the high altar was refurbished on a majestic scale, and Beverley could boast one of the most splendid east ends in all of England. Unlike the nave, the Minster’s new furnishings were showpieces of the Decorated style at its most contemporary and experimental. Here again, the new work has been overshadowed by the Percy tomb, which continues to be studied in isolation, and not as part of a unified ensemble as its builders intended. Little attention has been paid to the
extraordinary reredos and sedilia that were meant to complement the tomb. Even more importantly, no one ever mentions the shrine that once towered above them all, and was the *raison d’être* for the entire building. The combined effect of the reredos and sedilia is ravishing even now; in their original state of polychromy and decoration, they would have been exponentially more so.

The shrine, reredos, and sedilia were expensive and luxurious monuments. They are critical works of the Decorated style, despite their absence from the literature. The reredos and sedilia broadcast the Chapter’s prestige, luxury, and extravagance, and served as visible expressions of its power and status. They were the ideal enhancement to the profuse ornamentation of the east end, which does not (as I have argued) embody the Cistercian attributes that are usually attributed to it. In the Middle Ages, the high altar at Beverley was surrounded by a constellation of deluxe furnishings that few institutions could have ever hoped to match. The “modernism” of these works formed an unambiguous contrast with the style of the nave. It was only here in the canons’ own space -- at the end of their own liturgical choir -- that the Chapter allowed itself to indulge in the same precocious style as the rest of the country.

The furnishings at Beverley prove unequivocally that the Minster could “do” the Decorated style just as well, or better, than anyone else. The architect’s
(and patrons’) decision to do exactly the opposite in the nave’s public spaces was therefore a deliberate choice. It would be fascinating to know who made the ultimate decision that Beverley’s architecture and furnishings should each embody a different mode of Decorated expression. Whatever the reasons for doing so, the Minster’s nave and high altar are antithetical to one another, sitting at opposite poles of the Decorated spectrum. Each one was located at the extremities of the building. The relics of John of Beverley were the fulcrum on which they rested.

Beverley Minster is one of the central monuments of the English Decorated style – but only through the mutual study of architecture and furnishings can its true value be appreciated. Only here, in a small market town in the East Riding, can two radically different modes of fourteenth-century expression -- historicist and contemporary, conservative and avant-garde -- be studied in a single place. Beverley’s unique combination of architecture and furnishings makes it an undiscovered museum of the Decorated style in all its complexity, subtlety, finesse, and swagger. No other building has more to teach us about how English architects and patrons perceived the built environment in the fourteenth century -- or their attitudes towards modernity, fashion, artistic creativity, and the constantly shifting associations between the “old” and the
“new,” and the present and the past. The tension between the Minster’s modernity and antiquity makes Beverley the ideal place in England to gain a true understanding of the Decorated style and its impact throughout the rest of the country.

English Gothic architecture needs new narratives. This dissertation has attempted to construct one.
# Appendix A: The Archbishops of York through the Reformation

## Bishops of York

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<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td>625-633</td>
<td>Paulinus</td>
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<tr>
<td>664</td>
<td>Wilfrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>664-669</td>
<td>Chad (Ceadda)</td>
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<tr>
<td>669-678</td>
<td>Wilfrid</td>
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<tr>
<td>678/9-686/7</td>
<td>Bosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>686/7-c. 691</td>
<td>Wilfrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 691-706</td>
<td>Bosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>706-c. 714</td>
<td>John of Beverley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 714-732</td>
<td>Wilfrid (II) (Wilfrid the Younger)</td>
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## Archbishops of York

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>735-766</td>
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<td>767-779/80</td>
<td>Aelberht</td>
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<tr>
<td>779/80-796</td>
<td>Eanbald (I)</td>
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<tr>
<td>796-c. 803</td>
<td>Eanbald (II) Wulfsige Wigmund</td>
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<tr>
<td>854-</td>
<td>Wulfhere</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aethelbald</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hrothweard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wulfstan (I) (d. 955/6)</td>
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<td>958/9-971</td>
<td>Oscytel</td>
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<tr>
<td>971</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>971/2-992</td>
<td>Oswald</td>
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<td>Ealdwulf</td>
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<tr>
<td>1002-1023</td>
<td>Wulfstan (II)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1023-1051</td>
<td>Aelfric (Puttoc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1051-1060</td>
<td>Cynesige</td>
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1 York was not made an archdiocese until 735, so Ecgberht was technically the first archbishop of York. Dates for the Saxon period are patchy, especially in the ninth century. This list is taken primarily from MATTHEW and HARRISON (2004), with supplements from LE NEVE (1999), 1-7; LE NEVE (1963), 3-5; FRYDE et al. (1986), 281-3; DIXON (1863), xxiv.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>1061-1069</td>
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<tr>
<td>1070/71-1100</td>
<td>Thomas (I) (“of Bayeux”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1100-1108</td>
<td>Gerard</td>
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<td>1109-1114</td>
<td>Thomas II</td>
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<td>Henry Murdac</td>
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<td>1153/4-1154</td>
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<td>1154-1181</td>
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<td>1256-1257</td>
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<td>1258-1265</td>
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<td>1279-1285</td>
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<tr>
<td>1465-1476</td>
<td>George Neville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1476-1480</td>
<td>Lawrence Booth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1480-1500</td>
<td>Thomas Rotherham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501-1507</td>
<td>Thomas Savage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1508-1514</td>
<td>Christopher Bainbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>1514-1530</td>
<td>Thomas Wolsey</td>
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<tr>
<td>1531-1544</td>
<td>Edward Lee</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix B: The Provosts of Beverley Minster

1092-1109 Thomas (the Younger)
By 1128 Thomas (Normannus/the Norman)
Poss. c. 1135 Robert
By 1142-c. 1152 Thurstan
By 1154-1162 Thomas Becket
By 1164-1177 Geoffrey
By 1181-1201 Robert
By 1202-1204 Simon of Wells
In 1205 Alan
By 1212-1217 Morgan
1217-18 William
By 1218 Peter de Sherburn
By 1226-c. 1239 Fulk Basset
1239-1247 William of York
1247-1265 John Mansel
1265-1274 John Chishull
c. 1274 Geoffrey de Sancto Marco
By 1278-c. 1295 Peter of Chester
1295-1304 Aymo de Carto
1304-1306 Robert de Abberwick
1306-1308 Walter Reynolds
1308-1317 William de Melton
1318-1338 Nicholas de Huggate
1338-1360 William de la Mare
1360-c. 1368 Richard de Ravenser
1368-1373 Adam de Lymbergh
1373-1381 John de Thoresby
1381-1419 Robert Manfield
1419-1422 William Kynwoldmerssh
1422-1427 Robert Neville
1427-1451 Robert Rolleston

\footnote{This list is a condensed version of McDermid (1993), 3-12. It contains minor corrections to the chronology set out in Leach (1903), cix-cxii, with extended commentary at vii-cix.}
<table>
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<tr>
<td>1451-1457</td>
<td>John Barningham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-Sept. 1457</td>
<td>Laurence Booth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1458-1465</td>
<td>John Booth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-Sept. 1465</td>
<td>Henry Webber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1465-1467</td>
<td>Peter Tastar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1467-1493</td>
<td>William Poteman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1493-1503</td>
<td>Hugh Trotter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1503-1526</td>
<td>Thomas Dalby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1526-1543</td>
<td>Thomas Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1543-1548</td>
<td>Reginald Lee</td>
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</table>
Appendix C: Documents Cited in the Text

1. The account of the tower collapse, c. 1213-15\(^3\)

*De ruina cujusdam turris ecclesiae Beverlacensis.*

Erat eodem oodem tempore, in medio cruces ipsius basilicae, praecelsa quaedam turris exstructa, admirabilis pulchritudinis et immensae, adeo ut in eo se jactitaret virtus et subtilitas artis caementariae. Processum erat eatenus in ipsius turris fabrica, ut completum esset opus lapideum; hoc solum totius superesset consummationi, ut superponeretur tectum lapidei operis, proportionatae celsitudinis. Artifices qui praerant opera, non tantum quantum oporteret circumspecti; non tam prudentes, quam in arte sua subtiles; magic invigilabant decori, quam fortitudini; magic delectation, quam commodo stabilitatis. Qui cum columnas quatuor erigerent cardinales, velut totius supercollocandae molis fulcimina; eas subtiliter, quamvis non firmiter, inserebant opera antique, eorum more qui pannum novum assuunt inveterato. Unde factum est, ut nec bases, nec stylos columnarum illius efficercer firmitudinibus, ut sustinere sufficerent molem immensam tam admirabilis et tante arduitatis; quarum debilitas, quamvis in processu operis satis posset adverteri per hiatus et rimas partium, per columnarum quarundam marmorearum fissuram in longa a base usque ad episylium; ab operis tamen mequaquam arbitrabantur continuatione desistendum, cum tamen certum sit, paratum esse ad ruinam illud aedificium, quod super debile collocatur fundamentum. Quanto igitur lapidum ampliorem superponebant cumulum, tanto magic accelerabant turris praecipitium: eo immensiores factae sunt stylorum et basium rimae, quo plus eos praesumpserunt onerare.

Tandem factum est, ut, metu imminentis ruinae, tam cleri quam plebis desisteret pars magna ab ingress ecclesiae. Sacerdotes nihilominus et Levitae, et alii qui ex injuncto sibi officio ad chorum frequentandum errant astricti, horis statutis et debitibus eo convenerunt, ut Divinis vacarent obsequius. Confisi sunt quod non permetteret eos obrui, vel morte subitanea aliquatenus praecoccupari, cui totis viribus, pura mente, interna devotione stagebant famulari. Non diffidebant de Confessoris sancti subsidio, cujus relliquiaae in eo, qui praesens

\(^3\) *Raine* (1879), 345-7.
erat, continebantur inclusae locello. Patefecit autem, qui sequebatur eventus, quod Ejus Confessoris est miserator Dominus. Nam cum circa mensis Octobris initium media nocte surgendum esset ad confitendum Domino, ac nocturnum officium de more celebrandum in choro; quidam sacerdotum, qui, Deo, ut reor, disponente jacens in lecto, partem noctis transactam praeter morem solitum duxerat insomnem; diuturnitate jacendi, et dormiendi etiam impotentia fastiditus, surgens, etiam adii marticuarios; quos reperit dormientes; a somno suscitavit, eoque ut pulsarent induxit, cum superesset quasi unius horae spatium, ut eis signum surgendi et pulsandi praebet horoscopium. Cum igitur, congregato ad ecclesiam clero, nocturna decantaretur synaxis, corruit non longe a decantantibus lapidum pars magna de turri; quorum audito fragore omnes nimium magno sunt timore percussi. Summa igitur festinantia se transferevant a stallis suis, et inceptum continuabant officium, stantes ad alterutrum latus altaris. Non multo post auditus est alius fragor priore major, lapidum plurimorum iterum de turri corrueuntium; ac si praemissa levi quadam et simplici admonitione ut recederent, sequeretur dictum peremptorium, cui constumaciter supersedentibus minitaretur supplicium.

Relicto igitur choro, locum tutiorem, magis a turri distantem, arbitranur aduendum, et transeuntes sub pendent ruina descenderunt in ecclesiae naviculam; ubi consistentes a latere fontium, ad finem usque coepturn perduxerunt officium. Vix complete officio ad domos suas, licet satis vicinas ecclesiae, pervenerant; et ecce! tota turris fundotenus collapsa, partes adjacentes secum trahens ad casum, vehementem dedit fragorem, in auribus humanis horrendum. Advertere licet in hoc eventu quam admiranda fuerit gratia Salvatoris, quantae fuerit efficaciae virtus sancti Confessoris. Disponente namque Domino, partes suas interponente Sancto, turri ruiturae provisum est illud tempus ruinae, quo turbae laicali laesio nula posset inferri. Cum ministris ecclesiae facta est admiranda dispensatio, cum et praeter morem consuetam horam surgendi praevenerit, et bipartitus lapidum casus, praeconatus vicem gerens, eis persuasisset ut alio se transferent. Indultum erat etiam ipsis, qui intra septa ecclesiae recubuerunt, matricularis, dum, ut amoverent thoralia sua, transferrent stratoria; eis nulla ingeretur laesio corporalis. Deventum erat igitur adhuc, ut orientale partem naviculae ipsius ecclesiae in chorum oportaret accomodari, altare vero supra tumbam erigi, feretrumque ultra medium tumbae directe collocari. Quod cum factum esset, satis efficacy conjectura deprehensum est, quod lumen ad tumbam dicendum est aperuisse, et eum portendisse qui futurus erat eventum; quod scilicet corpus sancti Confessoris, merita, decurso
praesentis vitae stadio, nobis annuatur bravium permansurum, ab Eo Qui vivit et regnat Deus per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.
2. The contract for the shrine of St. John of Beverley (18 October 1292)\textsuperscript{4}

Die Veneris proxima post festum Sancti Michaelis lectum recognitum et irrotulatum fuit sequens scriptum in hec verba.

Universis pateat ad quos pervenerit hec scriptura.

Inter Capitulum Beati Johannis de Beverle, ex parte una convenit, et Rogerum de Faringdon aurifabrum, servientem Willelmi de Farendon aurifabri, civis Lond[onianum] ex altera.

Quod idem Rogerus de argento et auro per capitulum predictum inveniendis, et per dictum Rogerum prout necesse fuerit depurandis, faciet prefato Capitulo unum feretrum novum longitudine quinque pedum et dimidie, et latitudine unius pedis et dimidie, et altitudinis proporcionate, pro Beato Johanne, patrono ecclesie de Beverle, pulcrum, aptum et ydoneum cum platis et columnnis de opere cementario et ymaginibus subtilis operis et decori, pluribus pro ejusdem capituli voluntate aut paucioribus, maioribus et minoribus, in qualibet parte feretri collocandis, et cum tabernaculis et pinnaculis partis anterioris et posterioris, et aliis subtilitatisibus feretro hujusmodi et ejus pulcritudini convenientibus, ad artificium tamen spectantibus aurifabri; ita videlicet quod idem Rogerus argentum vivum, carbones et omnia alia que tam pro consolitando quam operando, et aliis pro fabrica seu construccione feretri fuerint necessaria, suis sumptibus inveniet quocumque existant seu quocumque nomine vocentur, preter argentum ad materiam feretri ut predicitur faciendam et aurum ad feretrum deaurandum.

Et si contingat quod ymago aliqua, vel quodcumque aliud ad feretrum pertinens in opere vel in fabrica racionabiliter reprobetur, illud, quodcunque fuerit, conflabit et iterum convenienter faciet, nullam aliam mercedem exinde quam pro opere semel facto aliquiliter petiturus.

Et Capitulum predictum pro singulis platis, columnnis, ymaginacionibus et aliis circa feretrum operandis, tantum eidem Rogero nomine salarii vel mercedis in pecunia numerata vel in massa, ad equalitatem ponderis fideliter persolvret, quantum singula per ipsum Rogerum operata antequam deaurata fuerint ponderabunt: tenebitur tamen ex auro Capituli jam dicti ea postmodum deaurare, nichil amplius exacturus ab eodem Capitulo, jure convencionis, quam pondus, ut premittitur, operandorum. Promisit eciam idem Capitulum eidem Rogero, quod, si quod dampnum pro defectu solucionis vel argenti ad operandum incurrerit, sibi pro dampno hujusmodi satisfaciet competenter.

\textsuperscript{4} Leach (1903), 299-301.
Ad quam vero solucionem in pecunia numerata, vel satisfaczione in massa
eidem Rogero, ut predictum est, fideliter et absque scrupulo faciendo
memoratum Capitulum obligavit se et successores suos in ecclesia predicta.

Dictus autem Rogerus promisit juramento suo corporaliter prestito, quod
permissa omnia singula ipsum respiciencia fideliter pro parte sua observabit,
faciet et tenebit; quodque nullum aliud opus sine voluntate et consenu Capituli,
durante opere prefati feretri, in se accipiet et assumet.

Et si Capitulum memoratum dampnum aliquod incurrerit pro defectu
ipsius Rogeri promisit fideliter idem Rogerus dampnum hujusmodi dicto
Capitulo in omnibus plenarie resarcire.

Invenitque ad maiorem securitatem Willelmum de Farndon, aurifabrum
et civem Londiniarum, manucaptorem, qui manucepit pro dicto Rogero in
omnibus premissis, quatenus eum contingunt, qui eciam pro eo dicto Capitulo se
obligavit et heredos suos ac executores suos et omnia bona sua mobilia et
immobilia, ubicunque fuerint inventa.

In quorum omnium testimonium huic scripto cirografato dictum
Capitulum et predicti Rogerus et Willelmus sigilla sua apposuerunt.

Datis London xviij Octobris anno gracie m° cc° nonagesimo secundo.
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ILLUSTRATIONS
Figure 1. Map of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire
Figure 2. Geology and topography of Beverley and surrounding area
Figure 3. West facade from the Westwood Pastures
Figure 4. Exterior, view from the southwest
Figure 5. Thomas Gent, Beverley Minster with Hawksomor’s dome (1733)
Figure 6. North Bar, Beverley (1409-10)
Figure 7. Percy tomb, from the north
Figure 8. Stow Minster, eastern crossing arch (c. 1057)
Figure 9. South nave aisle, arch of reused chevron (bay 2)
Figure 10. Lincoln Cathedral, southeast crossing pier (c. 1195)
Figure 11. Choir, looking west
Figure 12. Choir, south elevation
Figure 13. Retro-choir, south side
Figure 14. John Bilson, ground plan of Minster (1893)
Figure 15. Chapter house, staircase
Figure 16. Southwest transept, from the west
Figure 17. Northeast transept and choir, from the southwest
Figure 18. East window, 1416-8
Figure 19. Southwest transept facade, exterior
Figure 20. Southwest transept façade, interior
Figure 21. Eastern crossing and retro-choir, looking northeast
Figure 22. Choir, north elevation
Figure 23. Blind arcading, west aisle of southwest transept
Figure 24. Triforium, north side of choir (bay 2)
Figure 25. Lincoln Cathedral, St. Hugh’s choir, blind arcading in aisle
Figure 26. Northeast transept, south side
Figure 27. Eastern crossing, remains of abandoned lantern tower
Figure 28. Eastern crossing, northeast and northwest piers
Figure 29. Junction, southwest transept and nave
Figure 30. Junction, southwest transept and nave
Figure 31. Nave, exterior of north side
Figure 32. Nave, exterior of south aisle
Figure 33. Nave, north aisle tracery (bay 3)
Figure 34. Nave, south aisle tracery (bay 5)
Figure 35. Nave, clerestory tracery (bay 3)
Figure 36. Nave, south side (exterior)
Figure 37. Nave, south aisle, parapet figure of the Creation of Eve
Figure 38. Nave, south aisle, parapet figure of Flight from Paradise
Figure 39. Selby Abbey, north side of choir
Figure 40. Selby Abbey, north side of choir, remains of parapet figure
Figure 41. Nave, south aisle, tabernacle (bay 3)
Figure 42. Nave, north aisle, niche (bay 3)
Figure 43. Nave, south aisle, buttress
Figure 44. Nave, south aisle, parapet level
Figure 45. Nave, looking east
Figure 46. Nave, north elevation (looking west)
Figure 47. Nave, looking east
Figure 48. Junction of southwest transept and nave
Figure 49. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-2)
Figure 50. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-4)
Figure 51. Nave, south elevation (bays 1-3)
Figure 52. Nave, north side, base of vaulting shaft (bay 3)
Figure 53. Nave, south arcades, label stops
Figure 54. Western face of central tower, abutment of Romanesque roof
Figure 55. Nave, north side (bays 1-2) and height of Romanesque elevation
Figure 56. Nave, north side (bays 1-2) and edge of Early English campaign
Figure 57. Nave, south side (bays 1-3) and edge of Early English campaign
Figure 58. St. Albans, nave, north side, junction of 12C and 13C work
Figure 59. York Minster, chapter house (c. 1275-85)
Figure 60. York Minster, chapter house vestibule (c. 1275-80)
Figure 61. York Minster, nave, looking east
Figure 62. South aisle, foliage capital (bay 3)
Figure 63. South aisle, looking east
Figure 64. South aisle (bays 1-4), with line indicating extent of 1st campaign
Figure 65. Nave, south aisle, showing extent of 1st campaign
Figure 66. Nave, south aisle (bay 1)
Figure 67. Nave, south aisle (bay 1)
Figure 68. Junction of southwest transept and nave
Figure 69. Nave, south aisle, coursing of masonry
Figure 70. Nave, south aisle (bay 3)
Figure 71. Nave, south aisle (bay 5)
Figure 72. Nave, south aisle, label stop (bay 1)
Figure 73. Nave, south aisle, label stop (bay 2)
Figure 74. Northwest transept, stiff-leaf capitals
Figure 75. Nave, south aisle, capital (bay 2)
Figure 76. Nave, south aisle, capital (bay 3)
Figure 77. Nave, south aisle, infill of blind arcading (bay 3)
Figure 78. Nave, south aisle, detail of infill (bay 3)
Figure 79. Nave, north aisle, bays 1-3
Figure 80. Nave, north aisle, looking west
Figure 81. Junction of northwest transept and north aisle of nave
Figure 82. Nave, north aisle (bay 1)
Figure 83. Nave, north aisle (bay 2)
Figure 84. Nave, north aisle (bay 4)
Figure 85. Nave, north aisle, capital (bay 2)
Figure 86. Nave, north aisle, capital (bay 4)
Figure 87. Nave, north aisle, label stop (bay 2)
Figure 88. Nave, north aisle, label stop (bay 4)
Figure 89. Nave, north aisle, blind arcading (bay 3)
Figure 90. Nave, north aisle (bays 1-2)
Figure 91. Nave, north aisle, vaulting shaft and plinth (bay 3)
Figure 92. Nave, south aisle (bays 1-2) and southwest transept
Figure 93. Nave, south elevation
Figure 94. Nave, north elevation
Figure 95. Nave, north elevation, label stop of musician (bays 2-3)
Figure 96. Nave, north elevation, label stop of musician (bays 3-4)
Figure 97. Nave, north side, label stop (bays 4-5)
Figure 98. Nave, south elevation (bays 4-7)
Figure 99. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-3)
Figure 100. Nave, north triforium (bays 1-2)
Figure 101. Nave, south triforium (bays 3-5)
Figure 102. Nave, south clerestory, masonry break (bay 7)
Figure 103. Nave, roof level, masonry break above vault (bay 7)
Figure 104. Nave, south aisle, junction of 13C and 14C moldings (bay 2)
Figure 105. Nave, vault of south aisle (bay 1), showing extension voussoir
Figure 106. Nave, clerestory tracery
Figure 107. Selby Abbey, east window
Figure 108. Carlisle Cathedral, east window
Figure 109. Hull, Holy Trinity, detail of east window
Figure 110. Nave, south side, showing aisle and clerestory tracery
Figure 112. Nave, north elevation (bays 1-4)
Figure 113. Nave, south elevation, bays 3-7
Figure 114. Choir, north elevation
Figure 115. Nave, north clerestory (bays 2-3)
Figure 116. Washington Cathedral, nave (c. 1975)
<table>
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<td>3</td>
<td>no number</td>
<td>possibly 19th century re-used timber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>out of sequence XII</td>
<td>eleven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>out of sequence II</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>very waney timber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>thirteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>XII or XV (obscured)</td>
<td>fourteen/fifteen?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>twelve</td>
<td>no wall-plate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>out of sequence X</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>V III</td>
<td>nine</td>
<td>no wall-plate, no notch for early wall-plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>eight</td>
<td>no wall-plate; no notch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>seven</td>
<td>no wall-plate; no notch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>six</td>
<td>no wall-plate; no notch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T2</strong></td>
<td>out of sequence XVIII</td>
<td>eighteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>V?</td>
<td>five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>four</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Section:</strong> CHANGE IN STYLE, POSITION AND SEQUENCE OF NUMBERING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much reused timber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T3</strong></td>
<td>out of sequence XIII</td>
<td>fourteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>eighteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>sixteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>XV</td>
<td>fifteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>fourteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>thirteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T4</strong></td>
<td>out of sequence III</td>
<td>three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>twelve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>eleven</td>
<td>II on older, re-used piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td>V on re-used fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>nine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>eight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T5</strong></td>
<td>out of sequence I</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>half a log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>seven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>six</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>four</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T6</strong></td>
<td>out of sequence II</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>half a log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>out of sequence XVIII</td>
<td>eighteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T7</strong></td>
<td>out of sequence I</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>(much renewed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West section: CHANGE OF NUMBERING SEQUENCE AT JOINT IN STONE WALLS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers change from E face of timber to W face; rafter couples are now in sequence with rafter couples; no re-used timbers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T9</strong></td>
<td>XII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>XV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>XVI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>XVII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 117.</strong> Armstrong and Cant, summary of findings in the nave roof</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 118. Nave, vault, looking east
Figure 119. Nave, vault (bays 2-4)
Figure 120. Junction of vault, nave and central tower
Figure 121. Northeast transept, looking northeast
Figure 122. Nave, south aisle, vault
Figure 123. Vault webs and patterns in the Decorated period (Frankl)
172 Diagrammatic plans of Central European and English Gothic vaults (not to scale; open circles indicate pendants, black circles indicate piers): (a) English chapter house of Westminster Abbey type [cf. 134]; (b) chapter house scheme from the ‘sketchbook’ of Villard de Honnecourt; (c) Eberbach, chapter house; (d) Burgos Cathedral, chapter house; (e) Strasbourg Cathedral, one bay of St Catherine’s chapel; (f) Prague Cathedral, sacristy [cf. 170]; (g) two triradials; (h) Lübeck, St Mary, Briefkapelle; (i) Maulbronn, chapter house; (j) Prague Cathedral, south transept porch vault [cf. 171]; (k) Zvíkov Castle, cloister; (l) Vyšší Brod, chapter house; (m) Koutný, St Stephen, crypt; (n) Lincoln Cathedral, north nave chapel; (o) Lincoln Cathedral, south nave chapel; (p) Lincoln Cathedral, choir, main vessel [cf. 123]; (q) Lincoln Cathedral, nave, main vessel [cf. 124]; (r) St Stephen’s Chapel, Westminster Palace, lower chapel; (s) Prague Cathedral, choir, main vessel [cf. 167]; (t) Prague Cathedral, choir, main vessel, showing intersecting triradials; (u) Prague, Charles Bridge, Old Town Tower, entrance hall, showing small triradials; (v) Prague, Charles Bridge, Old Town Tower, entrance hall, showing intersecting triradials; (w) Prague Cathedral, choir, apse, showing intersecting triradials [cf. 167]; (x) Kolín, part of the ambulatory; (y) Kutná Hora, south-east ambulatory bay; (z) ’s-Hertogenbosch, one bay of the south transept porch.

Figure 124. Vault webs and patterns in the Decorated period (Wilson)
Figure 125. Wells Cathedral, Lady Chapel, vault
Figure 126. Ottery St. Mary, vault of east end, crossing, and nave
Figure 127. Lincoln Cathedral, nave
Figure 128. Junction of southwest transept and nave, with setting-off buttress
Figure 129. Nave, vault (bays 1-5)
Figure 130. Southwest transept, bracket for John of Beverley’s standard
Figure 131. Reredos, east face, niche with capital of guildsmen
Figure 132. Reredos, western face from choir
Figure 133. Reredos, eastern face (looking west)
Figure 134. Reredos, upper platform
Figure 135. Junction of Percy tomb and reredos staircase
Figure 136. Reredos, western side (detail)
Figure 137. Reredos, western face, main niches and gables
Figure 138. John Carter, Percy tomb, with Hawksmoor's altar screen (1791)
Figure 139. Richard Lewis Wright, western side of reredos, 1829
Figure 140. Reredos, original fragment of west face
Figure 141. Nave, north triforium (bays 3-4)
Figure 142. Reredos, east face and platform
Figure 143. Reredos, east face, base of Purbeck pier
Figure 144. Reredos, east face, capital of Legend of Theophilus
Figure 145. Reredos, east face, canopy of niche
Figure 146. Reredos, east face, blind tracery
Figure 147. Reredos, east face, detail of tracery
Figure 148. Reredos, eastern face, vault of interior
Identification of subjects:

1. Figure wearing a dome-shaped hat
2. Coronation of the Virgin
3. Foliage
4. Foliage
5. Green Man biting vault rib
6. Gathering acorns
7. Foliage
8. Foliage
9. Green Man biting vault rib
10. Foliage
11. Foliage
12. Green Man
13. Foliage
14. Foliage
15. Tongue-poking head, wearing a cowl
16. Winged dragon
17. Tongue-poking head
18. Grotesque head
19. Foliage and rosettes
20. Bird, bat and cow
21. Foliage and flowers
22. Lion’s head
23. Angel with horn
24. Foliage
25. Foliage

Figure 149. Nicholas Dawton, identification of subjects of reredos vault
Figure 150. Reredos, eastern face, boss of the Coronation of the Virgin
Figure 151. Exeter Cathedral, pulpitum
Figure 152. Southwell Minster, pulpitum, from the west
Figure 153. Reredos, eastern face, crosses on buttress crenellations
Figure 154. Reredos, east face, base of vaulting shaft
Figure 155. Mackenzie, engraving of St. Stephen’s, Westminster (1844)
Figure 156. Reredos, eastern face, tracery on buttress
Figure 157. St-Urbain, Troyes, terminal wall of apse
Figure 158. Reredos, eastern face, mismatched diaper
Figure 159. Reredos, eastern face, mismatched diaper
Figure 160. St. Albans, shrine base
Figure 161. St. Albans, shrine base with plinth of quatrefoils
Figure 162. Winchester Cathedral, reredos
Figure 163. Northwest crossing pier, scars of original pulpitum
Figure 164. Peterborough Cathedral, west facade
Figure 165. Sedilia, front (north) side
Figure 166. Sedilia, cornice of wainscoting
Figure 167. Sedilia, ogee arch and gable
Figure 168. Sedilia, rear (south) side
Figure 169. Sedilia, rear side, blind tracery
Figure 170. Sedilia, interior, vault corbel
Figure 171. Sedilia, vault of interior
Figure 172. Sedilia, interior, vault of third bay
Figure 173. Sedilia, interior, boss of Christ
Figure 174. Photograph, south choir aisle (c. 1870)
Figure 175. Bartlett, water-color of retro-choir and southeast transept (1829)
Figure 176. Sedilia, interior, junction of medieval and restoration work
Figure 177. Sedilia, bench, junction of medieval and restoration work
Figure 178. Ely Cathedral, Lady Chapel, blind arcading
Figure 179. Sedilia, buttress and foliage
Figure 180. Percy tomb, caryatid and gable
Figure 181. Sedilia, soffits of gable
Figure 182. Hawton, sedilia
Figure 183. Heckington, sedilia
Figure 184. Patrington, sedilia
Figure 185. Patrington, Lady Chapel in the south transept
Figure 186. Westminster Abbey, sedilia, front (north) side
Figure 187. Westminster Abbey, sedilia, back (south) side
Figure 188. Westminster Abbey, tombs on north side of presbytery
Figure 189. Islip Roll, showing choir of Westminster Abbey (c. 1520)
Figure 190. Sedilia, foliage on canopies
Figure 191. Southwell Minster, sedilia
Biography

Matthew Woodworth was born on April 17, 1972. He received his B.A. in History of Art and Architecture from Brown University and his M.A. from the Courtauld Institute of Art (University of London).

In January 2012, he will take up a post at the University of Aberdeen as co-author of the volume on Moray and Aberdeenshire for the Buildings of Scotland series (Pevsner Architectural Guides).