ENGLISH EASTER SEPULCHRES:
The History of an Idea

Volume 1 of 2

Christopher Herbert
ENGLISH EASTER SEPULCHRES: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA

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ENGLISH EASTER SEPULCHRES: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA

Preface

Robin Margaret Jensen compares the complexity of understanding 'text' with the problems inherent in understanding an 'image':

A myriad of considerations and caveats must be laid out before a single interpreter dare say anything with confidence about meaning. Each viewer sees an object afresh, but also through the lens of a mediated tradition, memory, and the culture in which they stand. In the end, all interpreters reveal probably as much about themselves, their values or cultural formation, as they offer some objective statement about the meaning of a single image ... No one explanation exists for any image, and the best a self-conscious historian can do is to try to map out the territory, noting the major arteries and bridges, recognising that there are different routes to the same destination.

Jensen 2000, p.8
ENGLISH EASTER SEPULCHRES: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA

INTRODUCTION

At first sight it would appear to be relatively easy to define an Easter sepulchre. In pre-Reformation England it was frequently a structure made of wood and hung about with textiles, located close to an altar, erected temporarily for the Holy Week and Easter season and around which a variety of liturgical practices occurred, representing the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

However, even a definition as imprecise and capacious as this one begs a number of questions; for example, about origins, function and meaning. When it comes to permanent Easter sepulchres, the problems of definition become even more acute, simply because so many of the structures claimed to be Easter sepulchres may be open to other interpretations.

What I am hoping to achieve in this thesis is a reasonably clear definition of what might constitute a permanent architectural Easter sepulchre and to explore in detail the development, variety and distribution of such sepulchres throughout England, as well as their cultural, theological and spiritual meaning in medieval society. This will involve an examination of the origins of the Easter sepulchre in the tenth century and a description of the changing relationship between Easter sepulchres and the liturgies in common use during the centuries which followed.

Particular attention will be given to the influence of the thirteenth-century Sarum rite upon how Easter sepulchres were actually used. Focus will be placed on the physical elements required by the liturgies, especially upon the cross. It will be argued that shape, size and topography are important determining factors in deciding what may or may not constitute

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1 A major study of English Easter sepulchres was published by Pamela Sheingorn in 1987. My own research is deeply indebted to her ground-breaking work.

For details of temporary Easter sepulchres, see Sheingorn 1987, pp.34-35.

2 For an outline of some of the liturgical practices in pre-Reformation Europe related to the Easter sepulchres, see Heales 1868, pp.266-289.
a permanent Easter sepulchre, but that the most significant factor is liturgical 'fitness-for-purpose'.

These definitional tools will then be tested against specific examples of putative Easter sepulchres in the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire - lockers and tomb recesses will be examined in detail. The same definitional tools will also be brought to bear upon the 'classic' examples of Easter sepulchres on the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire borders.

In addition to this survey of what are claimed to be permanent Easter sepulchres, there will be an analytical exploration of documentary evidence related to Easter sepulchres in wills and inventories of the fifteenth century. This will be used to assess the significance of Easter sepulchres in medieval religious life.

The ways in which the concept of Easter sepulchres has developed over the centuries will run through this entire thesis as an underlying theme. The introduction to this theme will be found in chapter one, where a bibliographical survey will look at scholarly classification of Easter sepulchres. Particular attention will be paid to Veronica Sekules' work on Easter sepulchres in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and her important questioning of traditional classification criteria. Later in the thesis it will be shown that the prominence that has been given to Easter sepulchres by twentieth- and twenty-first-century historians, in their attempt to understand medieval religious and cultural life, is not securely based upon available evidence and that they may have been seriously misled by their dependence upon the work of eighteenth-century antiquarians and nineteenth-century ecclesiologists. It will be argued that the ideological convictions of those antiquarians and ecclesiologists in shaping ideas about Easter sepulchres have been insufficiently taken into account by later scholars.

It will be shown that permanent Easter sepulchres are in fact much rarer than has hitherto been thought and that their significance as markers of medieval religious belief and practice now requires careful re-evaluation.

It is no easy matter to trace the history of an idea back from its current usage to its original source. In the case of Easter sepulchres, however, the chain linking our present understanding of them to the conceptual exploration of sepulchres in the past is fairly straightforward.

One of the most recent scholarly references to Easter sepulchres occurs in *The Stripping of the Altars*\(^1\). In this book Eamon Duffy writes thus

> ... the most imaginatively compelling of the Good Friday ceremonies, though associated with the cross, came after the solemn liturgy had ended. This was the custom of the 'burial' of Christ in the Easter sepulchre, an observance which left a deep mark not only in the minds of medieval English men and women but in the very structure of many parish churches\(^2\).

It is interesting to note Duffy's use of the word *many* in relation to parish churches; no evidence is provided to substantiate this quantitative claim. I shall hope to show later in this thesis that the number of permanent Easter sepulchres in English churches may well be far smaller than has hitherto been thought. However, the claim made by Duffy is part of his powerful hypothesis which is predicated upon the centrality of liturgy:

> Any study of late medieval religion must begin with the liturgy, for within that great seasonal cycle of fast and festival, of ritual observance and symbolic gesture, lay Christians found the paradigms and the stories which shaped their perception of the world and their place in it\(^3\).

With that as his foundational statement, it is perhaps not surprising that he then awards very high status to Easter sepulchres:

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\(^1\) Duffy 1992.

\(^2\) Ibid, p.29.

\(^3\) Ibid, p.11.
The Easter sepulchre and its accompanying ceremonial constitute something of an interpretative crux for any proper understanding of late medieval English religion.

And he continues:

The sepulchre was emphatically a central part of the official liturgy of Holy Week, designed to inculcate and give dramatic expression to orthodox teaching, not merely on the saving power of Christ's cross and Passion but on the doctrine of the Eucharist.

In other words, Duffy offers an interpretative analysis of Easter sepulchres which regards them as examples, maybe even the supreme example, of the centrality of the theology of the Mass in the late medieval period.

Duffy himself acknowledges his sources for his writing about Easter sepulchres. He refers to H. J. Feasey, E. K. Chambers, A. Heales, V. Sekules and P. Sheingorn. Some of these names provide the links which form the conceptual chain which it is my purpose to trace. Duffy's work was published in 1992; just five years previously, in 1987, Pamela Sheingorn's major study of Easter sepulchres was published.

Whereas Duffy's work centred on the liturgy and on the importance of the Mass, Sheingorn in the introduction to her study paints on a broader canvas:

The English Easter Sepulchre stands at the intersection of several important aspects of medieval culture: its study impinges upon the fields of drama, liturgy, art history, and social history.
She argues that the re-enactment of the events surrounding the death, burial and resurrection of Christ provided a prototype for the 'theatre's stage', and also suggests that Easter sepulchres bring into focus

... a significant aspect of medieval religion as understood and experienced by ordinary people.  

Her interest in Easter sepulchres and their relationship with the origins of drama are made clear in part of her Introduction:

_The Easter Sepulchre, which had great symbolic significance for the English Christian community from the tenth century well into the sixteenth, served not only as a reminder of mortality but also as a promise of resurrection after the example of Christ's own Resurrection which was re-enacted—i.e., which re-occurred in this very place every year. The Easter Sepulchre is thus the appropriate locus for the rebirth of Western drama, since the rites associated with it celebrate that most dramatic of events, the return from death to life, the Resurrection of Christ._

Sheingorn draws together a number of themes: the representation of the Holy Sepulchre in art, the development of the liturgy, and the form and iconography of the Easter sepulchre. She traces the roots of English Easter sepulchres to the Anastasis and its rotunda in Jerusalem and provides examples of architectural imitations of the Anastasis/Rotunda across Europe, including St Michael's, Fulda (c. 822), the chapel of St Maurice at Constance (c. 960), Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre, Paderborn and

...in addition ...(the) buildings at the Krukenburg, St Hubert, Lanleff (near Caen), St Gall, and Mittelzell at Reichenau.

Whilst these replicas may have had some significance for the populations living near them, the rarity of such replica sepulchres calls for an explanation. Sheingorn does not
provide this but instead argues that new forms of the sepulchre came into being in order to express

... in varying ways the later medieval emphasis on Christ's humanity and consequently on the relationship between Christ's death and Resurrection as well as the death and resurrection to eternal life of his followers.¹³

Having acknowledged the very different ways in which the death-resurrection theme was expressed in architectural or sculptural form in Germany (the 'heiliges Grab' tradition), she turns her attention to the English form:

The 'sepulchrum Domini' described in the 'Regularis Concordia' is of a makeshift nature - one is to find space on an altar and hang a curtain around it.¹⁴

She asks

Was such a practice indicative ... of the inability of the monks from Fleury and Ghent who attended the synod at Winchester to impress upon their English colleagues the need for a more impressive monument?¹⁵

Having raised the question, she answers it by saying that a more likely hypothesis is that many continental churches which did not possess holy sepulchres

... performed the rites at altars, drawing both on the equation altar = 'sepulchrum' and on the fact that there was an altar in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.¹⁶

Her exploration of the Easter sepulchre in England and its development then turns to topography:

¹³ Sheingorn 1987, p.33.
¹⁴ Ibid, p.33. For details of the origins and the content of the tenth-century document known as the Regularis Concordia, see Chapter 2, pp.19-47, of this thesis.
¹⁵ Sheingorn 1987, p.33.
¹⁶ Ibid, p.33.
Virtually all texts and monuments agree that by the time the Easter Sepulchre unambiguously surfaced as a physical monument (a physical monument, note - and therefore a permanent Easter sepulchre) in the fourteenth century, it had already found a consistent location not at but near an altar - on the north wall of the chancel, usually just a few feet from the high altar of the church. In such proximity to the high altar, the Easter Sepulchre enjoyed much more prominence than continental 'sepulchra Domini', but its possibilities for development were correspondingly restricted. \footnote{17}

Her work continues by acknowledging that

*By far the largest number of Easter Sepulchres in England were temporary structures.* \footnote{18}

But she is clear that what she calls a 'physical monument' was, indeed, a permanent architectural feature. She attempts to classify permanent Easter sepulchres by subdividing them into seven categories, namely:

1. *A simple small recess in the north chancel wall, possibly entirely plain, with or without a door.*
2. *A large arched recess in the north chancel wall that could have contained an effigy.*
3. *An elaborate structure set in the north wall with figural sculpture, usually with a small niche, possibly associated with a tomb.*
4. *A table or chest tomb, with or without a canopy, standing against or near the north wall of the chancel.*
5. *A stone chest of the same form as the temporary chests.*
7. *A crypt beneath the chancel of the church.* \footnote{19}

\footnote{17} Sheingorn 1987, p.34. 
\footnote{18} Ibid, p.34. 
\footnote{19} Ibid, pp.35-36.
Even a cursory reading of this sevenfold classification will reveal that the 'north wall' is used as a defining and significant feature. This will be examined later in this thesis, where it will be shown that this may be a misleading categorisation.

The greater part of Sheingorn's research does not consist of an exploration in detail of these seven subgroups but is, rather, a catalogue of objects which, based upon her sevenfold categorisation, she suggests might well be Easter sepulchres. The addition of documentary references to Easter sepulchres in her work makes it a unique and invaluable resource.

It was in 1982, just five years prior to Sheingorn's published research, that Veronica Sekules read her paper, entitled *The Tomb of Christ at Lincoln and the Development of the Sacramental Shrine: Easter Sepulchres Reconsidered*, to a conference of the British Archaeological Association. Unlike Sheingorn, Sekules' work is tightly focussed and is concerned particularly with...

...two adjacent tomb-like moments [sic] built against the inside of the screen enclosing the choir.

...at Lincoln Cathedral. The easternmost of those monuments has been identified as an Easter sepulchre because...

...against the tomb-chest are carved representations of the three sleeping soldiers who guarded the tomb of Christ.

The tomb-monuments have been dated on stylistic grounds to the last decade of the thirteenth century. It is the purpose of Sekules' paper to try to re-examine the function of the Lincoln Cathedral monument and those other monuments in that area, at Heckington and Navenby (Lincolnshire), Sibthorpe and Hawton (Nottinghamshire) and Patrington (Yorkshire) which have also been identified as Easter sepulchres. She concentrates her

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21 Sekules 1986. (The conference transactions were not published by the British Archaeological Association until 1986).
22 Ibid, p.118.
23 Ibid, p.118.
attention on these five but also notes three more. One of their defining characteristics is that they are all set in the north wall of the chancel. Sekules structures her argument with real elegance; having identified replica tombs of Christ in continental Europe (Fulda, Constance, Bologna, Neuvy-Saint-Sepulchre, Cambrai, Piacenza, Paderborn, Denkendorf, Eichstätt), she notes that their function was to give spiritual protection to ecclesiastical graves, to confer a status of sanctity on the sites where they were constructed and to increase the devotion of the faithful. She argues that the tomb of Christ at Lincoln is more like its continental counterparts and is

... probably not, strictly speaking, an Easter Sepulchre at all, but a tomb of Christ manifesting interesting parallels with German models and incorporating a number of variations.

Further, she claims that the tomb monument in Lincoln Cathedral is probably the only one of its kind in an English cathedral - and because the 'tomb of Christ' is adjacent to the tomb of the founding Bishop of Lincoln, Remigius, its position next to that burial might hold the clue to its purpose, namely to confer spiritual protection upon Remigius and to draw attention to his sanctity. A similar purpose seems to have been at work at the tomb of Christ at St Michael's, Fulda.

She continues her analysis of Easter sepulchres in eastern England by arguing that the form of the permanent Easter sepulchres, for example at Hawton and Heckington, derives from changes in liturgical practice:

In each case, as well as a tomb of Christ set into the north wall of the chancel, there is a founder's tomb ... access to a sacristy and, in the south wall, a set of sedilia and a piscina.

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24 Arnold, Fledborough and Irnham see Sekules 1986, p.126, note 3.
28 Ibid, p.118.
29 Ibid, p.123.
In other words, the Easter sepulchres are part of that major shift in theological understanding and liturgical practice which gave rise to complex sanctuary furnishings - a shift centred on the doctrine of transubstantiation, promulgated by the fourth Lateran Council in 1215:

...the tomb from which he [Christ] rises, the tomb which is visited by the Marys, is not represented by the whole structure, but by an aumbry within the structure. The aumbry is normally a central and prominent feature ... the relationship between Christ's tomb and his living body is made explicit and by implication so is the relationship between Christ's living body and the sacrament for which the tomb/aumbry was intended at Easter.30.

As the Feast of Corpus Christi had been universally established by the 1320s and as Corpus Christi guilds in England were first found in the eastern counties, Sekules argues that

...the development of interest in the feast of Corpus Christi in the early 14th century, provides the explanation for the conversion of the Easter Sepulchre into a monument permanently visible in the chancels of these parish churches in eastern England. As permanent monuments, they fall within the established tradition of the tomb of Christ, but the development of the design to feature an aumbry for the sacrament introduces a new element ... Within the framework of the Corpus Christi observance, it is very likely that they were intended as sacrament shrines.31

Sekules' hypothesis is intriguing, but whilst it reinforces the topography of Easter sepulchres (the north side of the chancel wall), it also raises a number of other questions. If the feast of Corpus Christi had such an impact upon the design of permanent Easter sepulchres in England, it seems reasonable to ask how many of these 'aumbry tomb' types exist - and where. And if they do not exist in large numbers, why not?

The questions, inevitably, are easier to raise than to answer. Sixty-five years prior to Sekules' research, in 1921, Neil C. Brooks published a major study entitled The

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30 Sekules 1986, p.123.
Sepulchre of Christ in Art and Liturgy\textsuperscript{32}. In this work Brooks traces the origins of the sepulchre from its earliest appearance in the fourth century. His iconographical analysis of the sepulchre is divided into two major 'streams', the Eastern and the Western. He draws attention to the earliest example, a Syro-Palestinian type in which the sepulchre is shown as

...one side of a quadrangular body, usually with diagonally latticed double doors, completed by a pyramidal or occasionally a cupola-shaped upper part, a sort of ciborium surmounted by a cross or palmette\textsuperscript{33}.

Staying, as it were, on the Eastern side of the Church divide, he distinguishes two other types: one he categorises as 'medieval Byzantine' from the tenth or eleventh century, which features an angel seated at the sepulchre carrying a lance-like rod and pointing to the empty tomb. The holy women come towards the tomb bearing myrrh or holding vases in their hands. Sometimes the sarcophagus is shown in front of a rock or is surmounted by a ciborium-like cupola.

The other type he categorises as a 'Psalter' sub-type - a tall, narrow structure, like a sentry box, with a door in front and a gabled roof, surmounted by a cross. It is peculiar to illuminated Psalters when reference to the Resurrection is made.

In the West, he claims that the iconography of the sepulchre begins with the earliest type being in the form of a

...cylindrical tower with a cupola shaped or conical roof\textsuperscript{34}.

A later type is what Brooks describes as being like a temple, i.e. a building having two or more storeys\textsuperscript{35}. The third Western type he defines as the 'Western Coffin-Tomb' and he claims that in the eleventh century the representation of the sepulchre as an edifice within an edifice began to disappear and the sarcophagus

\textsuperscript{32} Brooks 1921.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p.14.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, p.19.
\textsuperscript{35} See ibid, p.20.
... began to be represented by itself without architectural construction of any sort over it.  

He turns his attention from iconography to the development of varieties of Easter sepulchres in continental Europe and in England. In the latter he distinguishes between temporary Easter sepulchres, which he describes as probably resembling a hearse

... a foursquare framework of timber from each corner post of which rose a rafter slanting upwards, and all four rafters met at the top covered in a black cloth.

and permanent Easter sepulchres, which he subdivides into two kinds: those which were designed solely and specifically for the Easter ceremonies and those which were also the tombs of donors. Of the former, he claims that none is earlier than the thirteenth century, and adds that they may vary in structure from low, broad recesses, frequently at floor level, to the more highly decorated forms, such as those at Hawton and Sibthorpe (Nottinghamshire) or those at Bampton (Oxfordshire) and Withybrook (Warwickshire). He also suggests that within the category 'solely and specifically for the Easter ceremonies' should be included the fifteenth-century west Somerset chest tombs.

Brooks, then, takes a long, historical perspective in his approach to Easter sepulchres and, in common with other scholars, attempts a classification system which, incidentally, also includes the north-side category. He pays more attention, perhaps, to their iconographical characteristics than he does to their function, though he is very clear that in England there was no burial of the Host alone, and that the burial of cross and Host together came about through the influence of the Sarum rite.

The next link in the chain of studies of the Easter sepulchre is found in Francis Bond's *The Chancel of English Churches*, published in 1916. He distinguishes three forms of Easter sepulchre: firstly, a temporary structure made of wood; secondly, a special

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37 Ibid, p.73.
40 Bond 1916.
structure of masonry; and thirdly, a chest tomb or canopied tomb with a flat upper slab on which the temporary wooden framework was placed. He notes the absence of wooden Easter sepulchres:

Of the wooden Easter sepulchres two only are believed to exist; one is or was in Snitterfield vicarage, Warwick. It contains panels of Christ before Pilate, Christ bearing the Cross, the Deposition from the Cross, the Resurrection and the Appearance to St Mary Magdalene; but these panels are framed in a seventeenth-century chest; the panels themselves seem to have been carved between 1380 and 1400. Another is now in private hands in the north of Derbyshire, and is said to have been ignorantly ejected from the church of Hampton, Worcester; it is of fifteenth-century date and table form, with panelled and traceried sides; it is 4 ft. 3 in. long, 2 ft. broad, and nearly 3 ft. high.  

In addition to these wooden examples, he draws attention to the stone chest tombs:

Very frequently, however, the Easter sepulchre was placed on a stone chest-tomb standing in a canopied recess of the north wall of the chancel, or between the chancel and a northern chapel, as at East Harling and Long Melford.

He is emphatic that

Hundreds of such tombs remain.

He draws attention to South Pool, Devon, where there is a tomb

... evidently intended as an Easter sepulchre; for the effigy is detached and could be moved away at Easter, and at the back of the arch is a sculptured representation of the Resurrection and the discomfiture of the guard.

He also cites recesses on the floor level of chancels on the north side as being

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Bond 1916, p.234.
Ibid, p.234.
Ibid, p.236.
Ibid, p.236.
... probably intended for the framework of the Easter sepulchre\textsuperscript{45}

but it is noticeable that he does not attempt to describe how such recesses might function liturgically. He then makes a considerable leap in his analysis of Easter sepulchres by saying:

\textit{From the Easter sepulchre resting on a table-tomb it is no long step to that which is placed in a niche of its own in the wall ... It only remains to omit the tomb altogether, and we reach the final development, as exhibited in such examples as Hawton, Navenby, and Patrington\textsuperscript{46}.}

The fact that frequently table tombs and canopied tombs postdate the Hawton, Navenby and Patrington examples does not seem to dent his confidence in the validity of his argument.

It is noteworthy that the 'north side' categorisation also features in Francis Bond's work - which, to be fair, is more of a \textit{tour d'horizon} than an academic monograph. In his bibliography, Bond makes clear what his major sources were: they include Richard Gough's paper of 1780 in \textit{Vetusta Monumenta}, Alfred Heales' article of 1868 in \textit{Archaeologia}, and A. W. Pugin's \textit{Glossary} of 1844 (of which Bond gives the date as 1868 - although this was the date of the 3rd edition).

It is the name of Heales which features in every single work quoted thus far - and it is to his groundbreaking study that we must now turn\textsuperscript{47}. Heales refers in his introductory paragraph to \textit{Vetusta Monumenta}, describing it as

\textit{... the mine from which other writers have dug their materials}\textsuperscript{48}.

He then outlines his purpose:

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{45} Bond 1916, p.236.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, p.238-239.  
\textsuperscript{47} Heales 1868.  
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, p.263.  
\end{flushleft}
The subject of Easter sepulchres has never been treated as a whole and it seems a worthy task ... to present, in the form of a monograph, the whole subject in as complete a form as lies in the writer's power.\[49]\n
He proceeds to describe in detail liturgies both in England and in continental Europe and considers the range of Easter sepulchres in England. In his paper he stresses the significance of the north side of the chancel as the locus for Easter sepulchres and, in a subsequent paper published in 1880 in the *Surrey Archaeological Collections* on 'Brasses in Peper Harow Church', he says this:

The fashion for erecting ... structures to answer at once both Easter sepulchre and monument, set in towards the end of the fifteenth century and continued until the middle of the sixteenth century. It necessitated the horizontal surface of the tomb being flat and the monumental effigy is usually set in the wall face above, all being generally covered by a stone canopy. Whenever we find a monument of this form and period in this situation, namely against the north wall of the chancel to the north-north-west of the altar we may, in the absence of possible evidence to the contrary, have little doubt that it was built to answer the double purpose of a monument and an Easter sepulchre.\[50]\n
Heales' certainty is significant. It is, however, another of his statements which may well have seriously misled Sheingorn and others in their identification of aumbries as Easter sepulchres as I shall show shortly.

There can be no doubting the scale, the significance and the influence of Heales in helping to reveal the richness of relationship between liturgy and the Easter sepulchre structures, nor can there be any doubt of the way in which his foundational paper, delivered in 1868, has helped to shape research on this subject ever since.

There is only one other link in the chain which is worth noting before passing to the source and inspiration of Heales' own research, and that is the *Glossary* of A. W. Pugin.

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49 Heales 1868, p.263.
50 Heales 1880, p.37.
51 See later in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.100.
(who also published work under the name A. W. N. Pugin). He offers a definition of the Easter sepulchre which is redolent of mid-nineteenth-century ecclesiastical controversies. His definition is simple and to the point:

\[ A \text{ place where the Blessed Sacrament was solemnly reserved from Good Friday till Easter Sunday.} \]

He offers only two categories of Easter sepulchre:

1. Permanent, built in the north walls of the choir or chancel and adorned with rich ornamental covering and appropriate imagery.
2. Composed of framework and rich hangings set up for the occasion. Of the first kind, the most beautiful examples are those at Heckington and Navenby Churches, Lincolnshire, and Hawton Church, Nottinghamshire. But there are few parochial churches which are not provided with a tomb on the north side of the chancel which served for the sepulchre and was adorned on these occasions with hangings and other decorations.

He brings to the 'north side' categorisation a fresh insight:

\[ The \text{ sepulchre for Holy Week was always placed on the Gospel side of the altar, the position also occupied by the Paschal candle, the emblem of the Resurrection.} \]

Pugin's Glossary was seen by him as part of that 'mighty movement' which was concerned to bring about the revival of the architecture of the Middle Ages. He was passionate in wishing to

... aid the restoration of that truly beautiful furniture and decoration that antiently (sic) adorned every Christian church and of which the combined attacks

\[ \text{Pugin 1844.} \]
\[ \text{Ibid, p.186.} \]
\[ \text{Ibid, p.186.} \]
\[ \text{Ibid, p.187.} \]
\[ \text{Ibid, p.vi.} \]
of sacrilege and a revived paganism of the last three centuries have left us such poor remains.\(^7\)

The Easter sepulchre, in Pugin's eyes, was thus a potent symbol of the 'Age of Faith' and his descriptions are coloured by his heartfelt polemic.

It is a different, calmer tone which characterises the work of Richard Gough, who provides an introduction to the plates of Heckington and Northwold (Norfolk) in *Vetusta Monumenta*.\(^8\) He acknowledges his artistic source for the plates:

> [They were] engraved from the drawings of Mr Schnebbelie in the summer of 1789 ... they represent the Holy Sepulchre, the sepulchre of our Lord, in which our Saviour was deposited until his resurrection and which was placed on the north side of the chancel of our cathedral and parochial churches to be used in commemoration of that important event on the day on which it took place, or Easter Day, when the crucifix and pix [sic] which had been deposited in it in a solemn manner on Good Friday, the anniversary of the crucifixion, were taken out by the priest, pronouncing this text: 'Surrexit, non est hic'.\(^9\)

Gough quotes Francis Blomefield extensively, especially his *History of Norfolk*, which he describes as

> ...replete with information respecting our ecclesiastical antiquities.\(^{10}\)

It is clear, then, that Gough, like all the other scholars and antiquarians, had his own sources (these will be considered later in the thesis, in Chapters 10 and 11). It is perhaps appropriate and necessary, however, at this point to bring to an end this résumé of major writings about the Easter sepulchre. The résumé has covered over two hundred years of research and has attempted to show, albeit briefly, the main themes and influences on our

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8. *Vetusta Monumenta* was a series of occasional publications consisting of plates and text, issued by the Society of Antiquaries, London, during the period 1720-1905, to its subscribers - and these were later bound into seven volumes.


understanding of the Easter sepulchre phenomenon. It is perhaps worth pointing out what the common threads have been:

1. There has been considerable attention given by most of the authors to a limited range of permanent Easter sepulchres; the churches of Hawton, Heckington, Sibthorpe and Navenby have cropped up with remarkable regularity. This might in itself indicate the paucity of other convincing permanent Easter sepulchres.

2. On the whole, the authors, whilst exploring the liturgies surrounding Easter sepulchres, have not asked many questions in detail about how the sepulchres functioned as liturgical objects. For example, none of them has looked at the dimensions of the cross which was 'buried' during those liturgies, to see whether such an object would actually fit within the structures they have categorised as Easter sepulchres. The cross as a constituent element has been underemphasised, whereas the Host, particularly in the writings of the final decades of the twentieth century, has been overemphasised.

3. Each author has attempted to categorise Easter sepulchres in a way which implies a steady, linear historical development and, with the notable exception of Veronica Sekules, have failed to recognise the possibility of regional rather than chronological variation in the Easter sepulchre types.

4. The topography of the Easter sepulchre from Gough, writing in the late eighteenth century, to Duffy, writing in the late twentieth century, has been consistent. It is described almost invariably as being on the north side of the chancel.

5. But perhaps this historiographical survey has also revealed a certain elusiveness about permanent Easter sepulchres. There is absolute agreement about the ubiquity of temporary Easter sepulchres - but agreement about what permanent objects are or are not Easter sepulchres is noticeably lacking.

In these circumstances it seems essential first to trace the origins of Easter sepulchres in England, in order to see whether any greater clarity of definition can be achieved.
The earliest literary evidence referring to an Easter sepulchre in England is to be found in the Regularis Concordia — a document resulting from the Synodal Council¹ held in Winchester² possibly in 973³ at the invitation of King Edgar⁴ (959-975). The reference to the Easter sepulchre occurs in a series of carefully worded instructions about the liturgies which were to be used during Holy Week and Easter in the monasteries of the kingdom:

¹ One of the first Anglo-Saxon synods was the Council of Hertford (672), summoned by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury (602-90). For further information on Theodore and the Council of Hertford, and the role of the English Church in transcending the frontiers of the English kingdoms, see Carpenter 1988, pp.16-21.

² Notwithstanding the importance of the Winchester Synodal Council in the reformation of monastic and liturgical life, it is interesting to note that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle does not mention the Council.

³ There appears to be no consensus concerning the date of the Winchester Synod:
   Pamela Sheingorn describes it (see Sheingorn 1987, p.18) as taking place 'probably in 973.'
   Knowles (see Knowles 1949, p.42) says:
   *We are ignorant of the precise date, but it must have been in the neighbourhood of the year 970.*
   Janet Burton dates it (see Burton 1994, p.3) to 'around 970', whereas Yorke says (see Yorke 1988 (b), p.4) 'a date between 970 and 973 seems likely'.
   Crook, on the other hand, suggests (see Crook 2000, pp.162-163) 964 as the date:
   *The monastic reforms of the tenth century ... reached a symbolic climax with the promulgation of 'Regularis Concordia' at Winchester in around 964.*
   Ogden suggests (see Ogden 2002, p.19):
   *Between the years 965 and 973.*

⁴ King Edgar, himself, was not present at the Synodal Council. Cubitt traces the complex power struggles which could ensue when both king and archbishop were present (see Cubitt 1995, pp.49-59) and suggests that at the Mercian synods of the eighth and ninth centuries the king took a back seat, unlike the Frankish and Visigoth synods, where (see Cubitt 1995, p.57)
   *[The synods] were convened by the king.*
   It would seem that Edgar was thus following the earlier Mercian practice, rather than adopting Continental usage.
... on that part of the altar where there is space for it there shall be a representation as it were of a sepulchre, hung about with a curtain, in which the holy Cross, when it has been venerated, shall be placed.

The instructions appear simple but, in fact, are very ambiguous. The ninth-century Gallican Council had ordered that nothing should be placed on the altar except for the capsa and the relics and perhaps the four holy gospels and the pyx containing the eucharistic elements for the viaticum. In the light of this it is not surprising that Heales expresses some confusion about the phrase 'in una parte altaris':

This does not seem very clear; as the early medieval altars appear to have been solid, it may have been a recess beside, not in, the altar.

But Spurrell, in a well-argued analysis, explains that 'altare' is used in the *Regularis Concordia* in two senses; it can mean the table itself or it can also refer to the sanctuary.

It needs to be remembered that altars had, of course, been associated with martyrs from the earliest centuries, but then

... in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries especially, the popes decided to transfer the remains of many of the martyrs to places of safety within the city ... soon every church had its own relics and every altar was fitted with a 'sepulcrum' wherein the relics of the saints might be laid.

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5 The 'discovery' of the Holy Cross by Helena in 326 and subsequent 'feasts' in the liturgical calendar surrounding the cultus of the Holy Cross were significant themes within this Easter sepulchre rite. See later pages of this chapter, especially Adoratio section, on pp.29-40.

See also Cross 1963, p.619.

6 Symons 1953, p.44:

\[ \text{\textit{sit autem in una parte altaris, qua vacuam fuerit, quaedam assimilatio sepulcri velamenque quoddam in gyro tenuum quo, dum sancta cru}x adorata fuerit.}\]

7 See Dix 1942, p.27.
8 Heales 1868, p.265.
10 Jungmann 1960, p.187.
Dunbar Ogden, in his magnificent study of the relationship between Easter sepulchres and medieval drama, describes a variety of places where the sepulchre may have been situated, including the altar itself:

> The focal point of the action in the 'Visitatio Sepulchri' is the tomb ... indicated in play rubrics as the main altar, usually a veiled vessel on the main altar, a coffer, a coffer [sic] or altar surrounded by curtains, a temporary construction large enough to be entered, or a chapel with a receptacle and sometimes a sarcophagus and an altar. Inside churches at Aquileia, Gernrode, and Magdeburg permanent stone structures still survive which may well have been employed in dramatic observances of Easter.\(^{11}\)

Notwithstanding the ambiguities in the original *Regularis Concordia* instruction about the location of the sepulchre in the Good Friday ceremonies, it is very clear that once the cross had been deposited in 'the place of the Sepulchre', the liturgy itself moved on. A form of Communion followed; the instructions were specific:

> When this has been done [ie, the deposition of the Cross] the deacon and the sub-deacon shall come forth from the sacristy with the Body of the Lord, left over from the previous day, and a chalice with unconsecrated wine, which they shall place on the altar... And the abbot shall take a portion of the holy sacrifice and

\(^{11}\) Ogden 2002, p.39.

\(^{12}\) For the use of the sacristy as a place of Reservation, i.e. where the consecrated Host could be kept, see Dix 1942:

> The earliest certain evidence of the use of the sacristy for Reservation comes from Gaul and is as late as the second half of the sixth century. [p.24]

\(^{13}\) Van Dijk and Walker disagree with Dix:

> Reservation in the sacristy is attested from the fourth century onwards. [See Dijk 1957, p.26].

For further details on the 'Mass of the pre-sanctified' and the order of proceedings for the preceding day, Maundy Thursday, see King 1965, pp.11-12:

> The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified ... would seem to have been introduced into Syria in the early years of the sixth century by Severus, Bishop of Antioch (d.538) and later adopted at Constantinople and elsewhere ... Its use in Lent was formally prescribed by the Council of Trullo in 692. The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified probably appeared in the West for use on Good Friday in the following century.
shall place it in the chalice saying nothing; and all shall communicate in silence. When this has been done the brethren shall say Vespers, each one privately to himself and in his own place, after which they shall go to the refectory.\footnote{Symons 1953, p.45.}

Whilst in this thesis attention is being focussed upon one small component of the Regularis Concordia - the Easter ceremonies and their attendant structures - it needs to be recognised that bringing order and shape to the Holy Week liturgies was part of a much larger and broader political agenda. The Winchester Council was called by King Edgar at a time when the country was relatively stable and peaceful. The decades leading up to that Council, however, had been anything but peaceful; for the previous one hundred years England had been subject to considerable turbulence and destabilisation resulting from a series of Viking raids and conquests.\footnote{Norwegian raiders had plundered Lindisfarne in 793 and Jarrow in 794. The first Danish attack on southern England was at Sheppey in 835, and that was followed by repeated attacks on various parts of the country for a further thirty years. In 841 Lindsey, East Anglia and Kent were subject to fierce onslaught; in 842 Southampton was plundered and in 855 Viking raiders were in the region of the Wrekin, Shropshire (see Stenton 1971, p.243). Then, from 865 onwards, a large Danish army occupied East Anglia and, in the years that followed, the Danes overran the country northwards and westwards. Such was the cohesion and force exercised by the invaders that by 878 (only thirteen years after their successful conquest of East Anglia and much of the rest of northern and central England) it looked as though Wessex, the sole remaining kingdom in England, might also fall.}

From his base on the Isle of Athelney, Alfred the Great (849-899; r.871-899) led a determined and ultimately successful resistance movement, and by 879 had managed to achieve the security of Wessex. In the rest of England (the kingdoms of Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria) there were three permanent Danish armies - a powerful and threatening occupying force. Nevertheless, by 886, London itself was retaken by the West Saxons and this marked a pivotal moment in the struggle for the control of England.\footnote{Stenton 1971, p.259: To Englishmen at the time, the occupation of London gave the first indication that the lands which had lately passed under Danish rulers might ultimately be re-conquered.}
It is interesting to note, in passing, that it was during these most difficult years for Alfred that in 883 Pope Marinus sent Alfred a fragment of wood from the True Cross. It was presumably of such religious value to Alfred that it may have been kept in a place of safety, in the royal palace at Winchester, for instance, but was also (presumably?) received by him as a politico-religious gesture of some significance. It may be verging on the romantic to suggest that the cross carried for Alfred a resonance of the Constantinian vision: 'In hoc signo viates...' ('In this sign, you will conquer ...') but it would have borne for him and his court a considerable degree of importance. At the very least, it would have been a boost to morale.

The struggle for the political and military supremacy of England continued into the tenth century. There were further serious Viking incursions in 937 and 939 during the reign of Athelstan (925-939). It was the defeat of Eric Bloodaxe in 954 that marked the end of the Viking threat.

Garmonsway 1954, p.79:

In this year the host went up the Scheldt to Condé, and there remained one year. And pope Marinus sent the 'lignum Domini' to King Alfred.

In a fascinating footnote to this item, Garmonsway cites The Dream of the Rood by Bruce Dickins and A.S.C. Ross, and from it quotes 'It is just conceivable that the Brussels Cross preserves the fragment of the True Cross sent to Alfred by Pope Marinus' (see Dickins 1934, p.15). See also later in this chapter, pp.54-58, for a further exploration of the Brussels Cross.

Rollason takes the view that King Alfred took relics with him everywhere (see Rollason 1986, p.91).

For a lively study of Alfred's life, see Sturdy 1995.

Stenton 1971, pp.343-344:

The feature which distinguishes the reign of Athelstan from the reigns of Alfred and Edgar is the intimacy of his association with the leading western rulers of his time.

A Frankish mission to the court of Athelstan in 926 brought presents, including a number of relics, amongst which were

... the sword of Constantine the Great with a nail from the Cross in its hilt, the lance of Charlemagne with which the centurion had pierced our Lord [sic] side ... and fragments of the Cross [Ibid, p.345].

17 Garmonsway 1954, p.79:

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18 Rollason takes the view that King Alfred took relics with him everywhere (see Rollason 1986, p.91).

19 For a lively study of Alfred's life, see Sturdy 1995.

20 In 937 Olaf, regarded as the leader of the Vikings of eastern Ireland, allied his troops with those of the kings of Scotland and Strathclyde and invaded England. They were defeated by an army led by King Athelstan (ruled 925-939) and his brother Edmund at Brunanburh – a place not yet identified.

21 Stenton 1971, pp.343-344:

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of a particularly long and violent episode in English history\textsuperscript{22}. There were a number of attempts by King Alfred and his successors, once the invasions had been contained, to create stability\textsuperscript{23}.

The political and social context of this new Holy Week and Easter ceremony needs to be considered if we are to try to understand some of its meaning. It is possible to see the Winchester Synod of 973, therefore, not simply as a unique event only concerned with monastic reform\textsuperscript{24}, but as a stage in a long and successful programme, partly military and partly cultural, which was designed to create a stable, governable and defensible nation.

\textsuperscript{22} There is confusion surrounding the end of Eric Bloodaxe's kingdom. There are those who claim that Eric was expelled by the Northumbrians in 954 and that the kingdom was then taken over by Eadred (946-955), grandson of King Alfred the Great. But there is also a tradition that Eric Bloodaxe was killed at Steinmor (i.e., present-day Stainmore). F. M. Stenton, with understandable enjoyment of a good narrative, provides one:

\textit{It is possible that Eric may have been attempting an invasion of his lost kingdom when Oswulf brought about his death, but a battle on the heights of Stainmore, where the Roman road from Catterick to Carlisle drops into Edendale, rather suggests the last stand of a deserted king on the border of his country. (See Stenton 1971, p.362).}

\textsuperscript{23} The Danelaw, for example, was one such attempt.

\textsuperscript{24} Sarah Foot points out that a certain wariness is required when using the word monastery in relation to the Anglo-Saxon period:

\emph{There is no such thing as a typical Anglo-Saxon monastery, no single standard against which individual houses may be matched, every establishment was organised on idiosyncratic lines, according to the particular interests of its founders and subsequent inmates ... there are no norms governing the practice of monasticism in England before the tenth-century reformers imposed the standards of the Benedictine rule on all monastic houses.} [Foot 1992, p.213].

Foot also argues that to use the word 'monastery' as a translation of the word 'monasterium' in the Anglo-Saxon period is:

\emph{... to apply inappropriate standards of monastic observance to early Anglo-Saxon communities} [Ibid, p.225]

- although after the tenth-century reform, distinctions might be more reasonably be made between those houses which followed the reformed practices and those places lived in by seculars not following a monastic rule.
The religious context

The *Regularis Concordia*, then, can be seen as an important constituent part of that tenth-century stabilisation programme. But it should also be seen as part of a religious 'quickening' which was making such a significant impact upon northern and western Europe. The origins of that quickening are not difficult to detect; they can be traced directly to the monastic reform movement centred on Cluny which, under the leadership of Abbot Odo (927-942), was to have far-reaching consequences. It was from Cluny that ideas of a reformed monasticism sprang which, within a generation, had had an impact upon England.

David Knowles, in his study of monasticism in England, is very specific about how and where that impact was first felt:

The beginning of the monastic revival in England, which set in being a life that was destined to endure till the Dissolution of the monasteries six hundred years later, may be dated from the year c.943, when King Edmund [939-946], after his narrow escape from death on the cliffs of Cheddar, set Dunstan, still a young man, as 'abbot' in the church of Glastonbury.\[25\]

Dunstan, born at Baltonsborough, within sight of Glastonbury Tor about the year 909, had close connections with the royal court of Wessex. His parents, Heorstan and Cynethith were 'people of rank and importance'; his paternal uncle, Athelm, was the first bishop of the newly founded See of Wells (909) until he was moved to Canterbury by Alfred's successor, Edward the Elder (899-924) in 923\[26\]. Two of Dunstan's kinsmen also became bishops: Aelfheah the Bald (934-951), Bishop of Winchester, and Kynesiga

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25 Knowles 1949, p.31.
26 Symons 1953, p.xii.
27 Edward the Elder reorganised the sees in his kingdom, subdiving the two major sees, Winchester and Sherborne. Wiltshire and Berkshire became the diocese of Ramsey; Somerset became the diocese of Wells; Devon and Cornwall became the diocese of Crediton. Winchester continued to care for Hampshire and Surrey, and Sherborne for Dorset. There is evidence that Edward the Elder encouraged his thegns to settle amongst the 'pagans' of East Anglia (there was no bishop for East Anglia until 956).
who was Bishop of Lichfield from 934-964. Another relation, Aethelflaeda, was a niece of King Athelstan. In other words, whilst Dunstan's reforming zeal is not open to question, his capacity to bring about change was not unrelated to the fact that he moved in the most powerful circles. Knowles, himself a Benedictine monk, naturally emphasises Dunstan's spiritual qualities:

[It was] ... a sense of contact with a sanctity at once admirable and lovable, that gave Dunstan his unique position in the eyes of those who knew him, and it was this that enabled him to initiate, to inspire and to organize the new monachism of England.

Kobialka, on the other hand, seeks the causes of Dunstan's success, and the success of Aethelwold and Oswald, in their ability to acquire the institutional sites which then legitimised their 'magisterium'. He argues that the Regularis Concordia was needed both by the monastic reform movement led by Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald, and also by the King himself:

[He] needed them as promoters of royalist propaganda; they needed Edgar to protect them and to reform the Church and its servants.

It is impossible at this distance from the original events to disentangle the motives of those involved - but whether one takes Knowles' view that the monastic reform movement was the result of the charismatic leadership offered by Dunstan, or Kobialka's view that there was a necessarily close and symbiotic relationship between the king and the reformers, what cannot be gainsaid is that politics and religion were inseparable.

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28 For details of Aethelflaeda, see Maddern 1995, p.31. Whilst Dunstan was Abbot of Glastonbury, Aethelflaeda set up a number of cottages on the west side of the church. Dunstan was her spiritual director.

29 Knowles 1949, p.37.

30 Kobialka 1999, p.51. For further debate on the interrelatedness of monarchical and ministerial hopes, see Tellenbach 1993, pp.61-63. Tellenbach argues that the king's support of reform was not born solely of political necessity but grew out of his and his predecessors' notions of what constituted Christian responsibility in a monarch.
King Edgar, for example, was not anointed and crowned until 973 when he was thirty years old, probably because, as Margaret Deanesly says:

Dunstan saw a mystical connexion between the anointing of a king and ordination to the priesthood which would normally be deferred until that age.\(^{31}\)

There is also evidence in the preface to the *Regularis Concordia* itself, where the relationship between the king, God and the people is made explicit:

*Edgar the glorious, by the grace of Christ, illustrious king of the English and of the other peoples dwelling within the bounds of the island of Britain, from his earliest years began to fear, love and worship God with all his heart.*\(^{32}\)

The preface continues:

*[The king] moved by the grace of the Lord most gladly set himself to restore them [i.e., the monasteries] to their former good estate ... wherefore he drove out the negligent clerks with their abominations\(^{33}\), placing in their stead for the service of God ... not only monks, but also nuns under abbots and abbesses; and these out of a gratitude to God he enriched with all good things.*\(^{34}\)

The preface, perhaps unsurprisingly, fails to point out that many of the abbots and abbesses may themselves have been related to the royal household.\(^{35}\) The relationship

\(^{31}\) Deanesly 1961, p.279.

\(^{32}\) Symons 1953, p.1.

\(^{33}\) See Gransden 1989, pp.161-168, in which the author made the case that the monastic reformers’ achievements were less momentous than historians had previously suggested, and pointed out that the invective against the old ways in the preface to the *Regularis Concordia* bears a close resemblance to Bede’s similar invective.

\(^{34}\) Symons 1953, p.2.

\(^{35}\) Nineham 1993, p.189:

... tenth-century monks and nuns came exclusively from the upper classes.

Elizabeth Gardner develops this theme and argues that whilst the most usual place for a nobleman to be educated was in his household, monasteries and nunneries up to the time of the Dissolution also provided education for young men and women from upper-class households (see Gardner 1996, p.80).
between the royal family and religious reform is given even greater emphasis by the
author of the preface (possibly Aethelwold himself), comparing the role of the king
with Christ's:

Thus, in fulfilment of his royal office, even as the Good Shepherd, he carefully
rescued and defended from the savage open mouths of the wicked ... those sheep
which by God's grace he had diligently gathered together. And he saw to it
wisely that his queen, Aelfthryth, should be the protectress and the fearless
guardian of the communities of the nuns.  

There is a further, perhaps unconscious reference to the relationship between God and
the king in the Regularis Concordia. The customs, it is said, were designed to create
'uprightness of life and sweetness of observance' and then the suggestion is made that the
decrees might be fulfilled

... with affectionate devotion by those who would walk humbly and like little ones
in the royal way of the Lord's commandments.

The royal metaphor is striking.

The Regularis Concordia, then, was a document of the highest possible status which had
the combined weight and authority of the Monarchy and the Church behind it.

She suggests that particularly in relation to the nunneries, financial expediency may have been
one of the determining factors in this provision:

There are ... a few indications that boys were accepted for education and brought up
within the monastery with no intention of remaining there as monks. It seems likely that
this was a kind of private tuition which was reserved for the sons of distinguished
neighbours and benefactors.  

Aethelwold had trained at Glastonbury under Dunstan and during Edgar's boyhood had been his
principal tutor whilst abbot of Abingdon. He went on to become one of the king's closest advisers
(see Deanesly 1961, p.304).

The compilation of the Regularis Concordia was assigned by Aelfric to Aethelwold (see Knowles
1949, p.43).

Symons 1953, p.2.

Ibid, p.4.
It is in the light of the political and religious circumstances that have been outlined, albeit briefly, thus far, that questions need to be framed which may help to uncover the origins, function and meaning of the Easter sepulchre in England. The questions are these:

1. What were the sources of the Easter ceremony liturgies?
2. Did those ceremonies give rise to any particular developments in architecture on a small or large scale? And if they did, what was the relationship, if any, between those structures and ecclesiastical and royal authority?
3. Is it possible to trace to what extent the Regularis Concordia's instructions concerning the Easter ceremonies were implemented and thus discover a distribution pattern of Easter sepulchres in England in the tenth century?

What were the sources of the Easter ceremony liturgies?

It is clear that the liturgies of Good Friday to Easter can be subdivided into four specific sections:

a) Adoratio
b) Depositio
c) Elevatio
d) Visitatio sepulchri

It is necessary, therefore, to look at each of these in turn.

a) The Adoratio

St Cyril (c.315-386), who was Bishop of Jerusalem from about 349, claimed that the cross on which Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified was discovered in the time of Constantine (d.337)\(^39\). It was also Cyril who gave details of the finding of a cave tomb which they believed to be the tomb of Christ. The Emperor gave orders that the tomb should be preserved and that

\[... \text{a great church should be erected} \ldots\]

This basilica, known as the Martyrion, 'The Testimony' or 'The Witness', was dedicated on 17 September 335 inside the

\[^{39}\text{For a brief description of Constantine, see Cross 1963, pp.334-335.}\]
walls of the Roman veteran colony of Aelia Capitolina, soon again to be known by the ancient name of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{40}

It was according to a later tradition that the honour of finding the True Cross was associated with Helena\textsuperscript{41}, mother of the Emperor Constantine.

An account written by a fourth-century pilgrim to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, Etheria, probably a Spanish abbess or nun, is the first document to refer to a service taking place in which the cross is venerated\textsuperscript{42}. In the western Church, a feast in honour of the Cross of Christ ('The Exaltation of the Cross' or 'Holy Cross Day', 14 September) was associated with

\ldots the exposition of the supposed true Cross at Jerusalem in 629 by the Emp. Heraclius, after his recovery of it from the Persians into whose hands it had fallen in 614.\textsuperscript{43}

It was this mixture of legend, history, hope and longing which inevitably and naturally became associated with Good Friday - and which, by the tenth century in England, had a central place within the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter in the ceremony known as the \textit{adoratio}, the veneration of the Cross. In a major and painstaking study of tenth- and eleventh-century veneration ceremonies in England\textsuperscript{44}, Sarah Keefer establishes that the earliest known complete \textit{synaxis} of the Good Friday ceremonies is to be found in the \textit{Pontifical of Poitiers} dating from the mid-ninth century. She does not claim, however,

\footnote{Biddle 1999, p.1.}
\footnote{Cross points out (see Cross 1963, p.619) that there was a medieval belief that Helena was a native of England and that Geoffrey of Monmouth described her as the daughter of Coel ('Old King Cole') of Colchester. From the ninth century the abbey of Hautvillers, near Rheims, claimed to possess her body.}
\footnote{See Brooks 1921, p.31.}
\footnote{Cross 1963, p.480.}
\footnote{Keefer 2005.}
\footnote{Keefer employs the word \textit{synaxis} to refer to those acts of worship which were non-eucharistic, and uses the word \textit{liturgy} only for those services which were eucharistic.}
that the Poitiers document is a direct precursor of the Regularis Concordia Good Friday services, she simply notes that:

... the Veneration of the Cross in the 'Regularis concordia' was by no means an original design; a fairly complete order for this synaxis had been assembled from materials that had hitherto been in separate books, at least a century earlier than the 'Regularis concordia' synod, either near Paris or in the region of Bourges in France.

She suggests that there might have been some kind of veneration service in Anglo-Saxon England before the ninth century, and that the Regularis Concordia synaxis could have been a development of this. She also highlights the fact that there were some events in the early tenth century which could have given rise to a service which acted as a precursor to the one found in the Regularis Concordia. For example, the event when King Alfred received a fragment of the True Cross from Pope Marinus:

... could have been an occasion for instituting the more elaborate service known by then on the continent.

Or possibly, when Edward the Elder gave protection to Breton monks fleeing from Viking marauders

... some form of this service might have gained popularity in England at that time.

Such hypotheses are fascinating but, in spite of the most careful and detailed liturgical research, Keefer is unable to trace any definitive and explicit source links between the veneration ceremony in the Regularis Concordia and those services of a similar kind which existed on the Continent in the ninth century.

It may therefore not be possible, tempting as it is, to draw lines of descent from continental material - and, in terms of tracing the origins of the Easter sepulchre, that is
frustrating - but it may be helpful simply to outline that part of the synaxis which the
Regularis Concordia provides. This is the Regularis Concordia text for the adoratio
sequence on Good Friday:

On Good Friday the night Office shall be performed as has been said already. The brethren shall then come to Prime, walking barefoot until the Cross has been adored. On that same day at the hour of None, the abbot shall proceed with the brethren to the church and, having prayed awhile with the ministers of the altar, and being vested in the usual way, he shall leave the sacristy and come before the altar for prayer before going to his own seat in silence. Then the subdeacon shall go up into the pulpit and shall read the lesson of Osee the prophet, 'In tribulatione sua'; there follows the respond 'Domine audivi' with its four verses, after which the abbot says the collect 'Deus a quo et Judas' at which there shall be a genuflection. Then is read a second lesson, 'Dixit Dominus ad Moysen [sic]', followed by the tract 'Eripe me Domine', and the 'Passio Domini nostri Ihesu Christi secundum Ioannem'. At this Passion the deacon shall not say 'Dominus vobiscum' but simply 'Passio Domini' and the rest; nor shall 'Gloria tibi Domine' be given in response. When the words 'Partiti sunt vestimenta mea' and the rest are read in the gospel, straightway and as it were like thieves, two deacons shall strip from the altar the cloth which had before been placed under the book of the gospels. The 'Orationes sollemnes' are then sung, the abbot coming before the altar to go through them in order. The first one, at which there is no genuflection, he shall sing to a simple tone: 'Oremus dilectissimi nobis pro sancta ecclesia Dei' and the rest.

When these prayers have all been said, the Cross shall straightway be set up before the altar, a space being left between it and the altar; and it shall be held up by two deacons, one on either side. Then the deacons shall sing 'Popule meus', two subdeacons standing before the Cross and responding in Greek, 'Agios o Theos, Agios Yschiros, Agios Athanatos eleison ymas', and the schola repeating the same in Latin, 'Sanctus Deus'. The Cross shall then be borne before the altar by the two deacons, an acolyte following with a cushion upon which the holy Cross shall be laid. When that antiphon is finished which the

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89 Symons 1953, pp.41-44.
schola has sung in Latin, the deacons shall sing 'Quia eduxi vos per desertum',
the subdeacons responding 'Agios' in Greek and the schola 'Sanctus Deus' in
Latin as before. Again the deacons, raising up the Cross, sing 'Quid ultra' as
before, the subdeacons responding 'Agios' and the schola 'Sanctus Deus' as
before. Then, unveiling the Cross and turning towards the clergy, the deacons
shall sing the antiphons 'Ecce lignum cruicis', 'Crucem tuam adoramus Domine',
'Dum Fabricator mundi' and the verses of Fortunatus, 'Pange lingua'. As soon as
it has been unveiled, the abbot shall come before the holy Cross and shall
prostrate himself thrice with all the brethren of the right hand side of the choir,
that is, seniors and juniors; and with deep and heartfelt sighs shall say the seven
Penitential psalms and the prayers in honour of the holy Cross.

For the first prayer there shall be said the first three Penitential psalms with this
collect: 'Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee ascending the Cross; I beseech Thee
that the Cross may free me from the thrusts of the devil. Lord Jesus Christ, I
adore Thee wounded on the Cross; I beseech Thee that Thy wounds may be unto
the healing of my soul. Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee laid in the grave; I
beseech Thee that Thy death may be my life. Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee
descending into hell to set free those in prison there; I beseech Thee not to suffer
me to enter there. Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee rising from the grave and
ascending into heaven; I beseech Thee to have mercy on me. Lord Jesus Christ, I
adore Thee Who art to come in judgment; I beseech Thee, at Thy coming not to
enter into judgment with me a sinner, but, I beseech Thee, to forgive rather than
to condemn. Who livest and reignest.' For the second prayer there shall be said
the next two Penitential psalms with the following collect: 'Lord Jesus Christ,
most glorious Creator of the world, splendour of the Father's glory, co-eternal
with Him and the Holy Ghost; Who therefore didst deign to take flesh of a
spotless virgin and didst allow Thy glorious hands to be fixed to the gibbet of the
Cross that Thou mightest overthrow the gates of hell and free the human race
from death; look down and have mercy on me, a wretch borne down by the
weight of sin and polluted by the stains of my many misdeeds: in Thy mercy
forsake me not, most loving Father, but forgive that in which I have sinned most
impiously. Hear me, prostrate before Thy adorable and most glorious Cross that
I may deserve to stand before Thee pure and pleasing in Thy sight, Who with the
Father.' For the third prayer there shall be said the last two Penitential psalms
with this collect: 'Almighty God, Lord Jesus Christ, Who for our sakes didst stretch out Thy pure hands on the cross and didst redeem us with Thy holy and precious Blood, grant me so to feel and understand that I may have true repentance and good perseverance all the days of my life. Amen.' Then humbly kissing the Cross the abbot shall rise; whereupon all the brethren of the left hand side of the choir shall do likewise with devout mind. And when the Cross has been venerated by the abbot and the brethren, the abbot shall return to his seat until all the clergy and people have done in like manner.

It can be seen that the text proffers the following pattern:

1. Walking barefoot, the abbot and the monks proceed to the church.
2. The abbot prays with the altar-party (in the sacristy?); enters the church and prays at the altar, and then goes to his own seat in silence.
3. The sub-deacon goes to the pulpit and reads Hosea 6:1-6:

   'Come let us return to the Lord;
   for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;
   he has struck down, and he will bind us up.
   After two days he will revive us;
   on the third day he will raise us up,
   that we may live before him.
   Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;
   his appearing is as sure as the dawn;
   he will come to us like the showers,
   like the spring rains that water the earth.'

   What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
   What shall I do with you, O Judah?
   Your love is like a morning cloud,
   like the dew that goes away early.
   Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,
   I have killed them by the words of my mouth,
   and my judgment goes forth as the light.
   For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
   the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.
4. This is followed by the response *Domine audivi*.

5. The abbot then says the collect.

6. A second lesson follows: Exodus 12: 1-11:

   *The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you make take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord.*

7. This is followed by the tract *Eripe me domine* from Psalm 140:

   *Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man ...*

8. Immediately afterwards the story of the Passion is heard from John’s gospel, and this includes an acted sequence. When the words ‘They parted my garments amongst them’ are read, two deacons behaving ‘like thieves’ strip from the altar the cloth which had been placed under the book of the gospels.

9. The *Orationes sollemnes* are then sung, with the abbot moving from his seat to the altar, and from the altar he intones

   *Oremus dilectissimi nobis pro sancta ecclesia Dei...*
(Let us pray to our most beloved for the holy church of God...)

10. It is only at this point, after the readings, psalms, an acted episode from the gospel and intoned prayers, that the next major event happens. It is as though everything has been preparing for this moment, because now the cross is set up before the altar (ante altare) with a space left between it and the altar itself.

11. The cross is held up by two deacons\(^5^0\), one on either side (the rubrics are explicit).

12. Those deacons, holding up the cross, sing

\[ \textit{Popule meus...} \]

\[ \textit{(My people...)} \]

13. Their sung chant elicits a response from two sub-deacons standing in front of the cross who sing, in Greek

\[ \textit{Agios o Theos, Agios Yschiros, Agios Athanatos, eleison ymas...} \]

\[ \textit{(Holy God, the holy strong one, the holy immortal one, have mercy on us...)} \]

14. Their voices are then echoed by the schola\(^5^1\) (either the boys of the monastery or the official body of singers) who repeat the chant in Latin

\[ \textit{Sanctus Deus...} \]

\[ \textit{(Holy God...)} \]

15. Once this is done, the cross is then carried by the two deacons, and they are followed by an acolyte carrying a cushion on which the cross will eventually be laid. (The instructions for the deacons are not at all clear at this point; presumably they are intended to move with the cross closer towards the altar.)

16. Once the schola have finished singing the \textit{Sanctus Deus}, the deacons then chant

\[ \textit{Quia eduxi vos per desertum...} \]

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\(^{5^0}\) Bedingfield suggests (see Bedingfield 2002, pp. 131 and following) that the two deacons may be intended to parallel Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus.

\(^{5^1}\) Ortenberg claims that the ceremonies carried out by children in the \textit{Regularis Concordia} derive from Glent (see Ortenberg 1992, p. 24).
(Because I have led you out through the desert ...)

There is a response from the sub-deacons: they sing the Agios sequence as before, the schola responding, as before, with Sanctus Deus.

17. For the third time, the deacons raise the cross as previously and sing Quid ultra, and the sub-deacons, as previously, respond with the Agios sequence, followed by the schola with their Sanctus Deus sequence.

18. All the while the cross itself has been veiled because the next stage in this act of worship is the unveiling of the cross. This is done by the deacons who, turning towards the clergy, sing the antiphons Ecce lignum crucis; Crucem tuam adoramus Domine; Deum Fabricator mundi; and the verses of Fortunatus, Pange Lingua.

19. The abbot, once the cross has been unveiled, comes in front of the Holy Cross and prostrates himself three times. In this act of humility and obeisance, he is joined by all the monks on the right-hand side of the choir, seniors and juniors together.

20. The triple prostration completed, the abbot alone ('with deep and heartfelt sighs') says the seven penitential psalms (Psalm 7, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143 [numbering according to the Authorised Version of the Bible]) and the prayers in honour of the cross. The sequence is broken up so that the first three penitential psalms are said and are followed by a collect; the next two penitential psalms are followed by a collect; and, finally, the last two penitential psalms are followed by a collect.

21. The abbot kisses the cross and rises.

22. All the monks on the left-hand side of the choir 'do likewise with devout mind'.

23. The abbot then returns to his seat until everyone has completed the veneration.

* * * * *

It can be seen that liturgically this structure has three 'acts': the first is from the entry of the abbot until the end of the prayers and after the Passion reading; the second centres on the veiled cross; and the third centres on the unveiled cross, with the abbot himself prostrate in front of the cross, praying on behalf of the entire community. The drama is palpable.
But there is also a fascinating theological pattern to this three-act play; the first part itself is divided into three interlocking theological themes. The reading from Hosea 6: 1-6 opens with the verse

_Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up that we may live before him ..._

It is clearly meant to be understood by the monks hearing it as a reference to Good Friday/Easter, and yet inside it is a reminder of the inscrutable judgment and mercy of God directed to each individual:

_It is he who has torn and he will heal us._

The response to the reading is

_**Lord, I have heard.**_

The second reading (Exodus 12: 1-11) is an account of the Passover – and again is intended to reflect the belief (made very explicit in John's gospel, which follows – and not, be it noted, a theme in the other gospels) that Christ is the new Passover lamb; and the response to this reading is

_**Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men**_

– that is, the Exodus reading and its response call on the hearers to participate in the new Passover.

The third reading, from the gospel of John, explicitly refers to the Passover theme.

_Now it was the day of Preparation for Passover; and it was about noon. He [Pilate] said to the Jews: 'Here is your king!' They said to him: 'Away with him! Crucify him!'_

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[^38]: John 19:14.
It is a complex and powerful account of Christ's death, to which the response is the *Orationes sollemnes* prayers of reflection, led by the abbot himself. In brief, this first section of the Good Friday Synaxis is a restatement of salvation history, beginning with the mystery of God's judgment (tearing and yet healing), moving through the restoration/salvation motif of Passover, and ending with the apparent failure and triumphant cry ('It is finished') of the Johannine gospel.

The theological mood changes dramatically after this opening section in which attention has focussed via the Bible readings on the sweep of salvation history. Now attention switches to the veiled cross – the cross in the monastic setting being both the True Cross, as it were, and yet only a replica. The cross becomes the carrier, and also the recipient, of the salvation story. It is that story made manifest, made explicit. The response to the veiled cross emphasises the holiness of the event – both the event in history, the death of Christ, and the event in its contemporaneous expression in the liturgy. The response is a sung cry in Greek and Latin, voices echoing each other and calling to each other: *Agios o Theos – Sanctus Deus*.

The mood of mystery and exaltation is then intensified in the third part of this act of worship when the Cross is unveiled and *Behold the wood of the Cross* is sung. Thus far the worship has been profoundly communal – but the mood changes again as the abbot alone walks from his seat and, in full view of the assembled community, throws himself on to the floor, prostrate in front of the cross. He then, alone, recites the penitential psalms and the collects.

Again, theologically, those collects follow a most intriguing sequence. The first emphasises, by repetition, the actions taken by Christ in his redemptive self-offering:

> I adore Thee, ascending the Cross ... I adore Thee, wounded on the Cross ... I adore Thee, laid in the grave ...
The second collect emphasises Christ's heavenly glory and power\textsuperscript{53}, and then the third collect is a quiet, simple, introspective prayer; the richness of language and metaphor in the first two collects gives way to an almost child-like longing:

\[\ldots\text{grant me so to feel and understand that I may have true repentance and good perseverance all the days of my life.}\]

The words are said, it must be remembered, by the abbot alone, lying prostrate on the floor— that same abbot who, according to the Benedictine rule, was to be obeyed without question by all the monks in his monastery. The contrast between his normal omnipotence and this act of prostrate and broken humility is remarkable—and, no doubt, would have had a profound effect upon those who witnessed it. For they, then, in their turn, were also required to venerate the cross.

The Veneration/Adoratio sequence thus not only had an explicitly dramatic format, its theological and sociological content was also very rich and demanding. But the Veneration/Adoratio then led into a much quieter moment of recollection when the cross was placed in the makeshift sepulchre—and it is to this element that we now turn.

b) The Depositio

The depositio sequence is as follows\textsuperscript{54}:

\begin{quote}
Now since on that day we solemnize the burial of the Body of our Saviour, if anyone should care or think it fit to follow in a becoming manner certain religious men in a practice worthy to be imitated for the strengthening of the faith of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{53} M. Bradford Bedingfield, in his discussion of the Adoratio crucis, quotes the collect for Sext in the Leofric Collectar (see Bedingfield 2002, p.123, note 34):

\begin{quote}
Lord Jesus Christ, who at the sixth hour of the day mounted the wood of the cross for the redemption of the world, so that the whole world which had dwelt in darkness would be illuminated, grant always this same light to us in spirit and in body, through which we may come to eternal life.
\end{quote}

The two themes, Christ as a light to drive away darkness, and light emanating from the cross were, he says

\begin{quote}
quite native to the Anglo-Saxon liturgical audience.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} Brooks 1921, p.32:

\begin{quote}
The Regularis Concordia contains the earliest known text of the depositio.
unlearned common persons and neophytes, we have decreed this only: on that part of the altar where there is space for it there shall be a representation as it were of a sepulchre, hung about with a curtain, in which the holy Cross, when it has been venerated, shall be placed in the following manner: the deacons who carried the Cross before shall come forward and, having wrapped the Cross in a napkin there where it was venerated, they shall bear it thence, singing the antiphons 'In pace in id ipsum', 'Habitavit' and 'Caro mea requiescit in spe', to the place of the sepulchre. When they have laid the cross therein, in imitation as it were of the burial of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, they shall sing the antiphon 'Sepulto Domino, signatum est monumentum, ponentes milites qui custodirent eum'. In that same place the holy Cross shall be guarded with all reverence until the night of the Lord's Resurrection. And during the night let brethren be chosen by twos and threes, if the community be large enough, who shall keep faithful watch, chanting psalms.

When this has been done the deacon and subdeacon shall come forth from the sacristy with the Body of the Lord, left over from the previous day, and a chalice with unconsecrated wine, which they shall place on the altar. Then the priest shall come before the altar and shall sing in a clear voice: 'Oremus. Praeceptis salutaribus monsit', the 'Pater noster' and 'Libera nos quae sumus Domine' up to 'Per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.' And the abbot shall take a portion of the holy sacrifice and shall place it in the chalice saying nothing; and all shall communicate in silence. When this has been done the brethren shall say Vespers, each one privately to himself and in his own place, after which they shall go to the refectory. Then, rising up from table, they shall carry out the remaining duties of the day in the usual way. After the veneration of the Cross, those ministers or children who can shall shave and bath themselves if the number of the community is so great that Saturday, the next day, would not suffice for this. After 'collatio' each one shall say Compline in his own place silently and after the manner of Canons, as we said before: the rest shall be fulfilled in the accustomed manner. On these three days everything shall be carried out with a blessing in the refectory and in the usual way in Chapter\textsuperscript{55}.

\textsuperscript{55} Symons 1953, pp.44-45.
It is important simply to highlight the stage directions for the *depositio*. It has this pattern:

1. The deacons come forward (it does not specify from where they come. It also assumes that the abbot and the congregation remain seated).

2. They wrap the cross in a napkin.

3. They then carry it from the place where it had been venerated to the place of the sepulchre.

4. As they carry it, they sing three antiphons:
   
   Psalm 4, verse 9:
   
   *I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.*

   Psalm 15, verse 1:
   
   *O Lord, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill?*

   Psalm 16, verse 10:
   
   *Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.*

5. They place the cross in the 'sepulchre' and sing the antiphon *Sepulto Domino.*

   The stage directions are interrupted at this point with instructions which say that 'the holy Cross should be guarded with all reverence until the night of the Lord's Resurrection.' And if the community is large enough, two or three brothers should keep watch, chanting psalms.

It is clear that in this liturgical act, the cross is treated as though it were the body of Christ. The antiphons, for example, are about a person rather than an object and the Latin phrase *ac si Domini Nostri Ihesu Christi corpore sepulto*, translated by Symons as 'in imitation as it were of the burial of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ' is perhaps more accurately translated as 'as if it were the body of our Lord Jesus Christ having been buried'. The difference in translation could suggest that the cross itself was perceived as

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56 See Symons 1953, p.45.
the body of Christ – a theme which will be explored later in this chapter when we look at Anglo-Saxon crosses. What cannot be gainsaid is that the dominant metaphor is of burial, with the cross acting the part of the crucified and buried Christ.

This burial sequence is then followed by a Mass of the Pre-Sanctified in which the Host, consecrated the previous day (Maundy Thursday) is brought to the altar and everyone, beginning with the abbot, communicates in silence. This is followed by Vespers, each of the brothers saying it 'privately to himself'.

The tone of the *depositio* sequence is one of great solemnity. Silence is the distinctive feature, broken only by the singing of the antiphons, after which silence descends again. For the community the spiritual mood is one which moves from the great communal activity at the opening stages of the *veneratio* into the individuality and interiority of the abbot prostrating himself, and moves even further into interiority as each of the brothers receives the broken Host in silence. It is as though the community moves from the collective to the individual, and from the individual into the silence of death, with the Mass containing a hint of the resurrection which will follow.

It is important to recognise that in this tenth-century English synaxis the host is not buried with the cross\(^7\) – the cross itself is the bearer of meaning, a meaning which is heightened and given added poignancy as the brothers leave the 'Christ' in the sepulchre guarded only by two or three, waiting in the darkness of the abbey church.

On the following day, Holy Saturday, at the hour of None (3.00 pm) another major liturgy was enacted. It involved the lighting of the new fire from which, in turn, was lit the Paschal candle standing near the altar. Four lessons from the Scriptures then followed in which, beginning with the Creation story in Genesis\(^8\) and continuing

\(^7\) Brooks 1921, p.32:

The first known instance of the burial of a Host is of practically the same date as the *Regularis Concordia* ... a passage in the life of St Ulrich (d.973), Bishop of Aschburg, shows that the burial of a Host was in use there and was a customary practice in the latter part of the tenth century.

But he adds

for England there was no case of the burial of the Host only. [Ibid, p.37].

\(^8\) Genesis 1:2:2.
through the story of Exodus, the culmination came with a reading from chapter 54 of Isaiah. The seven-fold litanies were then sung. That was followed by the abbot singing the five-fold litanies, accompanied by the schola cantorum, going in procession to the font which was then blessed. The return to the altar was accompanied by the singing of the three-fold litanies; then, on a high note (the instructions in the Regularis Concordia are very specific) the master of the schola sang Accendite ('Go up'), at which point all the lights of the church were lit; and, after the abbot had intoned Gloria in excelsis Deo, all the bells were pealed. The collect and epistle followed and after Laudate Dominum was sung, the gospel itself, surrounded by clouds of incense, was read. The gospel was the story of the women going to the tomb. After this came the prayers and Communion, and all was rounded off by Vespers. Later that same evening, at 9.00, Compline was said.

Liturgically and theologically we can see that Holy Saturday centred on the Creation and Exodus stories and, accompanied by the blessing of the font, had therefore as its major theme, baptism - with all that that implied about sharing in the death and resurrection of Christ. The mood of the liturgy, set by the lighting of fire, the Paschal candle, the ringing of bells and the billowing incense, was one not of sorrow but of eager anticipation of the triumph of Easter Day. Hence, although it would have in a sense pre-empted the Easter Day 'drama' at the sepulchre, the gospel referring to the visit of the women to the tomb was a verbal preparation for what was to come in the early hours of the following morning.

It is important to trace these theological, dramatic and liturgical themes running through Good Friday and Holy Saturday because they set the mentality and the theological mood of the Easter sepulchre liturgies. The design of these liturgies, it would seem, was careful - a dramatic element was present throughout. In consequence, simply to claim the Easter sepulchre 'drama' as the fons et origo of western European drama, as some

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60 Isaiah 4.
63 Taken from Mark 16.
have done, is to miss the richness and subtle beauty of the Holy Week liturgy which, to be fully understood, needs to be considered in its entirety.

Once Compline had been completed on Holy Saturday evening, leaving two or three monks still guarding the sepulchre, the monastery would have become quiet.

c) **The Elevatio**

Then, at some time before Matins (2.00 am) the sacrists came into the church; they took the cross from its place in the sepulchre and

... *set it in its proper place*[^64].

d) **The Visitatio**

The monks arrived in the church in darkness with only flickering candlelight to accompany their presence[^65]. Matins began with sung responses and antiphons, three psalms were chanted and three lessons read. During the reading of the third lesson, four of the brothers put on their robes. One of them, wearing an alb, made his way 'stealthily' to the Easter sepulchre and sat there quietly, holding a palm in his hand[^66]. Whilst the third respond to the lesson was sung, the other three brothers, wearing copes and holding thuribles in their hands, entered and went to the sepulchre

... *step by step, as though searching for something*[^67].

The *Regularis Concordia* continues with its instructions:

*Now these things are done in imitation of the angel seated on the tomb and of the women coming with perfumes to anoint the body of Jesus*[^68].

[^64]: Symons 1953, p.49.
[^65]: Bryan suggests that one of Aethelwold's original contributions to the *Regularis Concordia* was the *visitatio*, which perhaps had been performed in conventual churches since his days at Abingdon (see Bryan 1981, p.61, and ibid, p.93 for a detailed examination of this hypothesis).
[^66]: Symons 1953, p.49.
[^67]: Ibid, p.50.
[^68]: Ibid, p.50.
When the monk/angel saw the three coming closer

... wandering about as it were and seeking something\(^{69}\)

he began to sing, 'softly and sweetly': *Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, O Christicolae*. The three answered together: *Ihesum Nazarenum*. The monk/angel responded by saying

*Non est hic. Surrexit sicut praedixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis.*

Having received this instruction to 'go and tell that he has risen from the dead', the three turned to the choir and sang: *Alleluia. Resurrexit Dominus*. The monk/angel

... as though calling them back\(^{70}\)

said the antiphon *Venite at videte locum* and then, lifting up the 'veil', he showed them the sepulchre devoid of the cross, with only the linen wrappings in place. The three moved towards the sepulchre, placed their thuribles within it, took the linen, held it up before the clergy\(^{71}\) and sang the antiphon *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*. They then placed the linen on the altar. The abbot announced the hymn, *Te Deum laudamus* and all the bells in the church were rung. After that the order of Matins began.

Again, one needs to place this liturgy in its physical context: darkness and flickering candlelight, the smell of incense still in the air from the previous night's liturgy, and the cross, which had been the subject of so much liturgical attention on the previous days, now in its proper place. And surrounding it all as the climax of the drama, the pealing of bells and the singing of *Te Deum laudamus*. The theological theme is expressed in a single line in the *Regularis Concordia*’s instructions; it refers to

... the triumph of our King in that He had conquered death and was risen\(^{72}\).

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\(^{69}\) Symons 1953, p.50.

\(^{70}\) Ibid, p.50.

\(^{71}\) For further discussion of the rôle of the women at the sepulchre, see Bedingfield 2002, p.169.

\(^{72}\) Symons 1953, p.50.
Attention, theologically speaking, has moved from the cross itself to the emptiness of the sepulchre. The metaphor is of a royal miracle. It needs to be recognised that unlike the *Rites of Durham*\(^3\), there is no procession of a resurrection image in this liturgy - that was clearly a much later development. In the tenth century the liturgy is spare and lean, with the triumph of the resurrection 'explained' by an empty grave and pieces of linen from that grave placed on the altar. The liturgy, whilst visual in some of its elements, relies largely on sound (the pealing of the bells and the *Te Deum*) to convey its doctrines. Its lack of visual effect in fact echoes, either consciously or unconsciously, the understated writing of Mark’s account of the Resurrection, with its haunting lines:

> So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid\(^4\).

As far as the Easter sepulchre itself is concerned, it is abundantly clear that it was a temporary structure situated near the altar - but we now come to the question of topography, which needs brief attention.

It is known that the Old Minster at Winchester was the setting for the synod at which the *Regularis Concordia* was promulgated\(^5\). It is conceivable, therefore, that the structure of that building may have played a significant part in shaping the liturgical instructions surrounding the Easter ceremonies.

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\(^3\) See Fowler 1903. The *Rites of Durham*, according to its subtitle, was 'a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites and customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written in 1593, and provides a vivid description of the Easter ceremonies at Durham in the early sixteenth century. It included:

> ... a marvellous beautifull Image of our Saviour representing the resurrection with a crosse in his hand in the breast thereof was enclosed in bright Christall [sic] the holy sacrament of the altar; through the which christall the blessed host was conspicuous.

[Fowler 1903, p.12].

\(^4\) Mark 16:8.

\(^5\) For a brief discussion of the relationship between the likely date of the Synod and the use of the Old Minster as the locus for the Synod, see Parsons 1975, pp.5-6.
The Old Minster was 'reformed' institutionally by Aethelwold on 21 February 964. The
building, constructed originally by Cenwalh of Wessex in 648 and dedicated to Saints
Peter and Paul, became a cathedral in 660.

*From Cenwalh onwards the kings of Wessex were usually buried in the Old
Minster and some at least were crowned there*\(^76\).

The New Minster, founded on 8 July 901, was built only four metres away from the Old
Minster, and its dedication seems to have taken place in 903 when

*... probably at this time ... Alfred's body was translated into the New Minster
from his original grave in the Old Minster*\(^77\).

The New Minster became, during the tenth century, the principal burial place of the royal
house. Between 979 and 988 the great west tower was added to the New Minster at the
expense of King Aethelred. It was a building of six storeys embellished with carvings
and sculptures\(^78\).

Meanwhile, the Old Minster was also undergoing expansion, being centred on the site of
St Swithun's original burial:

*... the importance of which was emphasised by flanking apses of immense size to
north and south*\(^79\).

The building, which was dedicated in 980, implies a west work comparable to the west
works of Corvey on the Weser or Werden-on-the-Ruhr. The new west work was 23
metres square and 35 metres high. It provided an axial entrance to the church and a
raised western choir which, as Biddle says, provided:

*... a suitable setting for choirs taking part in the Easter liturgy*\(^80\).

\(^76\) Biddle 1975, p.125.
\(^77\) Ibid, p.131.
\(^78\) Ibid, pp.134-136.
\(^79\) Ibid, p.136.
\(^80\) Ibid, p.138.
Whilst Martin Biddle is careful not to make definitive liturgical claims for the use of the west work, he suggests quite strongly that there must have been a close relationship between the architecture and the liturgies:

... the Old Minster was rebuilt in the years between 971 and 994 in a manner which suited the needs of the reformed monastery, and provided a suitable setting both for the liturgy as set out in 'Regularis Concordia' and for the accommodation of the large numbers of pilgrims now congregating at St Swithun's tomb.\(^3\)

There are two further themes within this west work development; the first relates to the influence of Carolingian and Ottonian culture upon the arts and culture of the royal palace and ecclesiastical complex at Winchester.

Richard Gem is unequivocal in his views:

\textit{The monument that best displays the influence of Carolingian and Ottonian ideas on late Anglo-Saxon architecture is the great west work built at Winchester Cathedral (sic) in the years between 971 - 980 x 994 under Bishop Aethelwold and possibly Aelfheah.}\(^2\)

He describes the building as in plan and scale

... very close to late Carolingian and Ottonian west works on the continent ... and there can be no doubt it derives directly from them\(^3\).

On a much smaller artistic scale, there are those scholars, for example Wilson, who argue that the acanthus leaf motif which dominated the art of southern England

... arguably, first encountered on the back of the Alfred Jewel ... derived directly from Carolingian sources.\(^4\).

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\(^{3}\) Biddle 1975, p.139.
\(^{3}\) Ibid, p.7.
\(^{4}\) Wilson 1984, p.156.
Frank Stenton draws a direct link between the Winchester school of illuminators of the tenth century and their Carolingian predecessors of the ninth century. If further evidence were needed of the Carolingian/Ottonian influences on liturgy and its architectural expression, Klukas provides it. He argues that there was a close liturgical and textual relationship between the *Regularis Concordia* and the Essen customary. At Essen there was an altar on a raised platform at the west end of the nave and

... since an axial entrance at the west was traditional [in Anglo-Saxon churches], this western chapel would more than likely have been at an upper level, over the entrance porch.

In his study of the development of Deerhurst Church, Gloucestershire, Klukas claims that

*The tenth-century liturgical arrangement would have provided three principal altars on axis: one in the western upper chamber, one dedicated to the Holy Cross at the entrance to the choir, and one dedicated to the Virgin at the chord of the apse.*

He draws parallels between the design of Deerhurst (reformed by Oswald c.970) and the design of the Old Minster:

*The Old Minster at Winchester ... included all of the features evident at Deerhurst. The altar dedicated to the Virgin was placed in an upper chapel in the westwork on axis with the nave. At the eastern end of the nave was the altar dedicated to the Holy Cross. The high altar [was] dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul.*

He draws further links between the architectural style of Anglo-Saxon churches of the late tenth century (some of which had west works) and the monastic reform movement:

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85 See Stenton 1971, p.443.
86 Klukas 1984, p.86.
87 Ibid, p.90.
Of the more than fifty houses reformed from Gorze [near Metz], at least twenty-four dating before 1100 survive in some form. Of these examples all had axial towers to the west with chapels on an upper level, and chambers flanking the choir.\footnote{Klukas 1984, p.92.}

He notes that St Dunstan was exiled to St Peter's, Ghent at the very moment it was being reformed by Arnold of Gorze with the assistance of Womar of Brogne.\footnote{Ibid, p.95.}

The use of these chapels on an upper level at the west end of Anglo-Saxon and Ottonian churches is a matter of some dispute. At Essen, Klukas maintains that the visitatio sepulchri was performed in the western tribune.\footnote{Ibid, p.93.} It is interesting to note that it was at the crossing of the nave with the eastern transepts that there was an altar to the Holy Cross, with a relic of the Holy Cross placed behind it on a marble column.\footnote{Ibid, p.93.}

In brief, it can be argued with a high degree of probability that the west works of the Old Minster were deeply influenced by Carolingian/Ottonian models, but there can be no certainty as yet about the liturgical use of the west works in England. It is an open question whether the ceremonies of Holy Week, including those surrounding the Easter sepulchre, used the west works or not. In favour of this argument that the Easter sepulchre ceremonies were performed there is the example already given from Essen. In addition, in the monastic church of Corvey in the ninth century, it is known that the lowest storey of the great western tower was designed as a deliberate echo of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.\footnote{Wood 2001, p.190.} On the other hand, as Spurrell has pointed out, in the Regularis Concordia there was apparently only one altar which could be described as 'the altar' even though there were many others in the church.\footnote{Spurrell 1992, pp.168-169.}
There is, however, a second theme which might swing the argument back in favour of the liturgical use of the west works at the Old Minster during Holy Week. There are those, as Gem says, who claim that the continental west works had a particular rôle in imperial or royal liturgy\textsuperscript{96}. Ortenburg, without specifying the rôle of the west works, argues that for tenth-century Anglo-Saxon England:

\begin{quote}
Ottonian Germany became a model on account of its concept of Christological kingship\textsuperscript{97}.
\end{quote}

Given that Ottonian west works had both a royal and a liturgical function, might the same, therefore, be true of the Old Minster? And might this help to explain the 'royal' metaphor which is found in the \textit{Regularis Concordia} during the Easter sepulchre ceremonies? An illustration of the singular importance of the royal connection with abbeys is provided by St Albans where after its re-foundations in about 970, three royal diplomas were received by the Abbey during the reign of Aethelred (978-1016), one of which provided

\begin{quote}
... unshakable evidence that Offa was being hailed as an important benefactor in the generation after [its] refoundation\textsuperscript{98}.
\end{quote}

And, as we have seen, the \textit{Regularis Concordia} itself not only had a royal patron, but in the recommendations concerning the relationship between Benedictine abbeys and the king, it ensured that abbots could only be elected \textit{cum regis consensus et consilio}, ie only with the king’s consent. The royal theme can be strengthened, albeit in a circuitous way, by noting that in York\textsuperscript{99} during the remarkable outpouring of building and liturgical activity at Winchester, there was no sign of any kind of revitalisation and expansion. The link between west works, the monastic reform movement, the liturgy and monarchy, seems to have been a particularly southern English phenomenon.

\textsuperscript{96} Gem 1983(b), p.7.
\textsuperscript{97} Ortenberg 1992, p.265.
\textsuperscript{98} Crick 2001, p.79.

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The underlying questions, then, are these: a) Where in the church building, in the descriptions of the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies in the *Regularis Concordia*, do the various component parts occur?  b) Did they occur partly in the west work or did they occur primarily in the main structure of the church? To a certain extent, the questions as posed depend upon the dating of the west work extensions of the Old Minster and the dating of the *Regularis Concordia*. If the former were being constructed, as Biddle suggests, between 971 and 974 and the dedication of the building was not until 980, then the instructions of the *Regularis Concordia* (itself composed c.970) would seem to predate construction of the west work. Certainly, as one reads the *Regularis Concordia* liturgical instructions, there is not a single reference which might lead one to the conclusion that the west work was in use. Rather the liturgy, in its very simplicity, seems to be designed for a relatively simple building. More to the point, the suggestion that upper chapels in the west work could have been the place for the sepulchre and for the burial of the cross, makes no dramatic or symbolic sense. 'Burial' does not happen, as it were, in an upper chamber; it happens at ground level. Further, because the *Regularis Concordia* is clear that one of the purposes of the ceremony is for

... the strengthening of the faith of unlearned common persons and neophytes

the visibility of the ceremony would be of the essence. Such visibility could not be achieved in the small chapels of the upper west work, but would be achieved if the ceremonies took place in the main body of the church. Notwithstanding all the royal metaphors, it can be safely concluded that the Easter sepulchre ceremonies themselves, in England at least, did not take place in the west work of Anglo-Saxon churches but were centred either at the altar dedicated to the Holy Cross in the nave or, even more likely, at the high altar in the quire.

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100 Raw makes a claim for the use of the west works for the Easter sepulchre ceremonies, based on the images of the three Maries in the Benedictionals of Aethelwold and Robert of Jumièges. The sepulchre is shown in those images as a circular staged tower with a square base and a crypt beneath which, she says, may have been modelled on the tower of the Old Minster, built by Bishop Aelfheah and dedicated in 993-4:

'... the ritual tomb must have stood under Aelfheah's tower.' [See Raw 1990, pp.46-47]

It is a claim which is not borne out by the liturgical evidence from the *Regularis Concordia*.

101 Symons 1953, p.44.
If we can then assume that the west works did not feature in the Easter sepulchre liturgies, at least in England, we can now turn our attention to another salient feature in those liturgies, that is, the cross. It was a cross which was adored, a cross which was buried and a cross which featured when the Resurrection itself was represented. What kind of cross might this have been? The *Regulartis Concordia* offers us some clues. In the liturgies for Holy Week and Easter, the cross for the *adoratio* sequence was set up before the altar (*ante altare*)\(^{102}\); it was held up by two deacons, one on each side\(^{103}\); it could fit on to one cushion carried by a deacon\(^{104}\); it could be wrapped in linen\(^{105}\) and be thus 'buried' in the Easter sepulchre. Early on Easter Day, before Matins, it was taken from the sepulchre and put 'in its proper place'\(^{106}\). If we assume that the two deacons required at the *adoratio* sequence were there simply to provide dramatic symmetry (and not because the cross was of such a size that it required the strength of two people to hold it upright), all the other characteristics that it has - for example, being able to be accommodated on a cushion - suggest a cross of no great size; yet it would need to be large enough to carry the amount of theological weight placed upon it and to be visible to the onlookers. If that same cross were a reliquary cross containing a relic of the True Cross, then that would make it extremely suitable.

There is one cross still extant, the 'Brussels cross'\(^{107}\) (see Fig. 2) which fulfils all these criteria. Measuring 21.5 inches by 10.75 inches (549mm x 277mm), it is constructed from a flat oak core and was originally covered entirely with metal sheeting. Most scholars are agreed that it dates from the early eleventh century\(^{108}\). It is not only its size...
Brussels Cross  [Cathedral of St Michael & St Gudula, Brussels]
which makes this such a fascinating and beautiful object, however, it is also its rich and densely layered iconography. Around the edge of the cross is an inscription:

_Cross is my name; once trembling and drenched in blood I bore the mighty king._

The phrase is

... _an allusion to the Old English poem 'The Dream of the Rood'_.

The cross, therefore, through its self-referential verbal imagery is 'personified'. The other inscription on it, 'Drahmal made me', has a saga-like sonority and beauty. The cross, it would seem, is not regarded as simply one physical object amongst others but is seen as having its own inherent vitality. In this sense it echoes the _Dream of the Rood_ where there is a remarkable identification of Christ and his Cross in the poem, and

... _both share a significant act of volition. That of the Cross is explicit and that of Christ implicit. Both are heroic ... They are seen in intimate and isolated association, a heroic and redemptive stasis. The Cross shares Christ's defeat, but it is soon to share his glory too._

The very vitality of the cross is echoed in a similarly heroic, though less poetic, form in some stories surrounding a cross at the monastery of Abingdon. During the Danish invasion it was claimed that

... _the crucifix came to life and, with its arms, extracted stones from the walls of the monastery and drove the Danes away._

The crucifix also came to life on another auspicious and critical occasion:

_During the Council that considered the expulsion of clerics from monasteries that took place sometime between 964 and 969 (otherwise known as the Easter Council) the Christ figure on the Holy Cross came to life and announced to the solemn gathering of abbots and abbesses that the expelled clerics' complaint

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109 See Webster 1984, p.91; see also Gordon 1926, pp.235-238.


against Dunstan was to be condemned because Dunstan's actions to restore
destroyed monastic churches were exemplary and right\textsuperscript{112}.

The 'vitality' of the Brussels cross, it would seem, was part of a long Anglo-Saxon
tradition expressed in both poetry and propaganda. But there is also on the Brussels
cross a series of theological references. On the reverse of the cross, at the centre, is the
'Agnus Dei', (see Fig. 3), which Webster describes as

\begin{quote}
the apocalyptic lamb holding the Book of Judgment\textsuperscript{113}.
\end{quote}

But the 'Agnus Dei' is not only Judge, it is also a symbol of resurrection; the lamb carries
the Cross of Victory. Surrounding the 'Agnus Dei', at the four extremities of the cross,
are the symbols of the four evangelists\textsuperscript{114}: the winged eagle of St John is at the top of the
cross; at the bottom is the winged ox, representing St Luke; to the left-hand side, on the
transverse beam, is the winged man representing St Matthew; and to the right, the
winged lion representing St Mark. These symbolic creatures have more than one
reference; not only do they represent the four evangelists, but they also take the
imagination towards the description of heaven\textsuperscript{115} in the Book of Revelation and to the
ceaseless song about God:

\begin{quote}
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come\textsuperscript{116}.
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{112} Kobialka 1999, p.48.
\item\textsuperscript{113} See Webster 1984, p.91. For a fuller description of the theological symbolism of the lamb, see
Sweet 1979, pp.122-126.
\item\textsuperscript{114} The winged creatures from the Book of Revelation (Revelation 4:7) were first represented in art
from the fifth century (see Cross 1963, p.812).
\item\textsuperscript{115} Sweet 1979, pp.115-116:
\begin{quote}
The setting of the scene cannot be tied down to any one earthly model. One might think
of Solomon's temple with its cherub throne ... or of the synagogue, with its scroll of the
law in the central place of honour, its elders ... or of a law-court ... one cannot delimit
the intended associations and meanings of the imagery.
\end{quote}
\item\textsuperscript{116} Revelation 4:8.
\end{itemize}
Brussels Cross (detail)
That song is directed towards the 'Agnus Dei' lamb, who is seen as both slain and also victorious - a clear reference to the Christ who, through the lamb imagery is seen as the sacrificial victim of Passover and also the one who redeems and heals.

The visual and theological imagery of the Brussels cross is thus very rich indeed, but there are two further details which may add yet more richness. There are some\textsuperscript{117} who have suggested that the garments referred to in the \textit{Dream of the Rood}, for example:

\begin{quote}
\textit{I saw the glorious tree, joyfully gleaming, adorned with garments, decked with gold}\textsuperscript{118}
\end{quote}

might represent the

\begin{quote}
... veil or the pall with which the cross is shrouded on Good Friday to be dramatically revealed on Easter Sunday\textsuperscript{119}.
\end{quote}

The second detail relates to the fact that the Brussels cross is not 'simply' a cross - it also houses within itself, in its heart, as it were, a fragment of the True Cross\textsuperscript{120}. This 'Cross within a cross', in addition to all the 'personification' that has already been outlined, would make such a cross a remarkable theological object, if it had been used, in Easter sepulchre ceremonies\textsuperscript{121}.

\textsuperscript{117} See Smith 1975, pp.29-35 for further details.

\textsuperscript{118} Gordon 1926, p.235.


\textsuperscript{120} See Strihou 2000, p.40:

\textit{Concernant la relique même, d'Ardenne estima qu'elle pourrait être un fragment de la vraie croix, offert par le pape Marin [sic] I à Aelfred, roi du Wessex, en 883 ou 885. La relique aurait appartenu à la famille royale anglo-saxonne jusqu'à la fin du x\textsuperscript{e} siècle.}

\textsuperscript{121} M. B. Bedingfield [see Bedingfield 2002, footnote 58, p.129] quotes Aelfric's instructions about the cross:

\begin{quote}
Christians must truly revere the sanctified cross in the Lord's name, because we do not have the one on which he suffered, but its likeness is holy nevertheless, to which we bow in prayers constantly to the great Lord who suffered for mankind, and the cross is the remembrance of his great passion, holy through him, although it grew up in a forest.
\end{quote}

[Footnote continues on next page]
It cannot be claimed, of course, that the Brussels cross was the one used in the Easter sepulchre ceremonies at Winchester, outlined by the *Regularis Concordia*, but it may well be suggestive of the kinds of crosses used in other places in England for such ceremonies, that is, crosses which were capable of 'personification', that were said to contain relics of the True Cross, that were rich not only in materials but also in theological symbolism. It may even be conjectured that the very 'vivacity' of the cross was a theme which later emerged within the overtly Eucharistic tradition when a Host (the 'Body of Christ') was 'buried' alongside the cross.

In addition to the Anglo-Saxon 'Brussels cross', there are two other crosses extant which deserve brief exploration, namely an Anglo-Saxon reliquary cross and an Anglo-Saxon pectoral cross.

The Anglo-Saxon reliquary cross in the Victoria and Albert museum (see Fig. 4) is 7.2 inches high (18.5 cm) by 5.3 inches wide (13.4 cm) and is constructed of gold plaques on a cedar base, with the Christ figure itself made from walrus ivory; the titulus and the medallions depicting the symbols of the evangelists are made of cloisonné enamel. There would appear to be a fragmentary inscription around the edge of the cross, listing the saints' relics once contained within the cavity beneath the figure of Christ. The cross itself may have been thought to be a relic of the True Cross. Williamson is very clear that the elements on the front of the cross were made at the same time and that the figure of Christ is 'distinctly Anglo-Saxon'. He suggests that it bears a close resemblance to tenth-century Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, such as the Ramsey psalter and the Sherborne

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In other words, even if the cross in the Easter ceremonies did not contain an alleged fragment of the True Cross, by association it had its own inherent holiness.

Ælfric's instructions were written c.955-c.1010, but probably c.1005 - see Bedingfield 2002, p.17.

H. P. Mitchell identifies the inscription as containing the word *ligni*, which refers he says to the reliquary containing a fragment of the True Cross (see Mitchell 1925, p.328). He argues a date for the cross on the basis of the filigree work resembling similar decoration on Essen crosses of 973 and 982, and the walrus ivory as being typical of Anglo-Saxon work of the late tenth century.


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58
Fig. 4

Anglo-Saxon ivory reliquary cross [V & A Museum, London]
pontifical, and that it functioned as a cross which was hung above a reliquary or shrine. Webster, in 1984, drew attention to the function of the cross:

... the suspension loop may have been to hang the cross above an altar.

Stone, in a much earlier monograph, in 1955, argued that this was not a composite German/Anglo-Saxon artefact, but suggested that it might be of entirely English workmanship:

All that can be said is that it must have been worked some time between about 990 and 1030. Christ is handled in the quieter Winchester manner. Nevertheless... the droop of the head, the tragic expression on the face, the twisted locks of hair and the knots and swirls of the drapery continue to give the figure the life and grace and the touch of morbid introspection that were the characteristic English contributions to the art of the era.

It should be noted that this reliquary cross is only half the width and one third of the height of the Brussels cross. In that it contained, or was constructed from, a fragment of the True Cross, that element would enable it to carry the theological weight of the Easter ceremonies - but its size (only 7.2 ins by 5.3 ins) suggests that it would not have the visibility to be a public, liturgical piece. It has the 'feel' of a piece constructed for use by an individual for private meditation and prayer, rather than one which was commissioned by a large institution.

The third example (see Fig.5) of a portable Anglo-Saxon cross is even smaller. Measuring only four inches and eleven sixteenths (11.92 cm) high by one inch and thirteen sixteenths (4.62 cm) wide and with a depth of one inch and one sixteenth (2.7 cm), it is a reliquary cross made of walrus ivory. On the back of the cross are the 'Agnus Dei' and symbols of the four evangelists; on the front of the cross is an archer crouching.

126 Webster 1984, p.118.
127 Stone 1955, p.41.
128 Ibid, pp.41-42.
129 This cross is to be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Fig. 5

Anglo-Saxon reliquary cross [V & A Museum, London]
amongst foliage, aiming his bow and arrow at a bird. Beckwith claims that this figure represents Ishmael - a figure who also occurs on the mid-eighth-century Ruthwell cross, and on a cross of St Andrew at Bishop Auckland dating from the late eighth century. The 'type' of Ishmael may derive from commentaries of Jerome and Augustine on chapter four of Paul's letter to the Galatians, says Beckwith, where Paul refers to chapter twenty-two in Genesis, and contrasts Isaac and Ishmael where Isaac was seen as a 'type' of the New Testament whereas Ishmael was seen as a 'type' of the Old Testament. The 'Agnus Dei' on the reverse of the reliquary cross is thus interpreted as representing Isaac.  

However it may be that Beckwith has provided an over-elaborate interpretation - which, for example, takes no cognisance of the bird being the target of the bowman. Would not a simpler (and more plausible?) interpretation be that the carver had in mind:

Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
a fruitful bough by a spring;  
his branches run over the wall.  
The archers fiercely attacked him,  
shot at him, and harassed him sorely;  
yet his bow remained unmoved,  
his arms were made agile  
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob  
(by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel),  
by the God of your father who will help you,  
by God Almighty who will bless you  
with blessings of heaven above,  
blessings of the deep that crouches beneath,  
blessings of the breasts and of the womb.  
The blessings of your father  
are mighty beyond the blessings of the eternal mountains,  
the bounties of the everlasting hills ...  

For this interpretation, see Beckwith 1966, pp.117-124.
For more detail on archery in the Bible, see Hill 1994.

This is a blessing verse which can be read by any wearer of such a pectoral cross as having protective qualities.

Or, alternatively, the carver might have intended that the archer at the centre of this reliquary cross refer to Psalm 11, in which the overall theme is again one of trust and protection:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In the Lord I take refuge;} & \\
\text{how can you say to me, ‘Flee like a bird to the mountains;} & \\
\text{for lo, the wicked bend the bow, they have fitted their arrow to the string;} & \\
\text{to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart;} & \\
\text{if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?'} & \\
\text{The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven;} & \\
\text{his eyes behold, his eyelids test, the children of men.} & \\
\text{The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked,} & \\
\text{and his soul hates him that loves violence.} & \\
\text{On the wicked he will rain coals of fire and brimstone;} & \\
\text{a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.} & \\
\text{For the Lord is righteous, he loves righteous deeds;} & \\
\text{the upright shall behold his face.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

It seems that either interpretation of the archer makes a simpler and less convoluted explanation of the iconography than the Ishmael suggestion. After all, would the wearer be likely to wear the New Testament symbol of the ‘Agnus Dei’ next to his chest, and therefore hidden, whilst giving status and visibility to an Ishmael motif? Would not a protective/blessing image provide greater interpretative and theological coherence?

The scale of this cross, like the previous one, suggests a private\textsuperscript{133} rather than a public use (possibly worn by an abbot or abbess?); it is unlikely, from the point of view of visibility and drama, to have been used in the Easter ceremonies.

\textsuperscript{133} The Old English will of Wulfwara (984-1016) includes a grant to St Peter’s monastery at Bath for ‘two gold crucifixes’, see Whitelock 1955, p.524.
What kind of cross, then, might have been used for the Easter ceremonies? On the evidence currently available and taking account of the need for dramatic visibility in the liturgy, and the theological doctrines being carried, the ideal would have been a cross such as the Brussels cross - richly decorated, dense with theological symbolism, capable of stimulating imaginative 'personification' - and, if possible, containing a relic of the True Cross. The reformed monasteries were capable of expending large sums of money to commission such crosses; there is evidence, for example, that Aethelwold

... filled his church at Abingdon with spectacular works in precious metals: a golden wheel with lamps and bells, a retable of gold and silver, three large crosses, two bells, silver candlesticks and a massive chalice.\(^{134}\)

On the other hand, one cannot ignore one of the outcomes of such splendid gift giving - the large number of crosses that could be accrued. As Raw points out:

The importance of the cross in the life of the Anglo-Saxon church can be inferred from the large number of crosses and crucifixes owned by churches; Hereward and his outlaws were able to steal fifteen, all of gold and silver, when they broke into the abbey church of Peterborough in 1070. An inventory of Ely in 1075/6 notes that the abbey possessed nineteen large crosses and eight smaller ones ... At Peterborough a huge crucifix of silver and gold, the gift of Abbot Leofric, towered over the altar. At Harold's church of Holy Cross, Waltham, a figure of the crucified Christ, carved out of flint, or possibly black marble, stood near the altar. It was visible from the doors of the church.\(^{135}\)

In these circumstances where the churches seem to have been filled with an array of crosses and crucifixes, how would one be chosen for the Easter sepulchre ceremonies? Presumably it would be the cross most valued, either by age, monetary value, or by association through containing a relic of the True Cross.\(^{136}\) The latter seems to me the

\(^{134}\) Raw 1990, p.9; see also Yorke 1988(b), note 55, p.7.
\(^{135}\) Ibid, pp.40-41: Anglo-Saxon crucifix iconography.
\(^{136}\) It is possible that monetary value and theological worth were elided as, for example, in the Enger cross, a form of the crux gemmata, which also contained a relic of the True Cross - see Lasko 1994. For the relationship between stone sculpture of the Anglo-Saxon period and metalwork crosses, see Hawkes 2003.
most likely to provide that arresting, entrancing quality needed to enable it to embody the religious beliefs, hopes and fears of the worshipping community.

There is an intriguing problem which relates not so much to the cross as to the actual structure of the Easter sepulchre. As can be seen from the scene of the three Marys at the sepulchre in the Aethelwold Benedictional (see Fig.6), the form of the tomb is long and narrow with two towers. The linen cloths can be seen at the entrance to the tomb. Is this particular image indicative of the shape and structure of the Regularis Concordia Easter sepulchre? J. J. G. Alexander, whilst acknowledging that the Aethelwold Benedictional sepulchre is not like the

... usual round building with cupola found in the early Christian examples and still in the Utrecht Psalter and in the Drogo Sacramentary\textsuperscript{138}

states that this form can, nevertheless, be found in two ivories of the later Metz school\textsuperscript{139}.

Before drawing any conclusions about the earliest recorded Easter sepulchres in England, there is one further detail which needs to be touched upon and that is the relationship between the ceremonies surrounding the Easter sepulchre and late Anglo-Saxon burial customs. It would appear that at the same time that the Easter sepulchre ceremonies were being described in the Regularis Concordia, new burial and funerary practices were coming into existence\textsuperscript{140}. For example, the rite for consecrating churchyards seems to have emerged during the early tenth century and then to have become

... codified and widely practised by the early eleventh century ... Anglo-Saxon bishops were at the forefront of that development and may have been the architects of a rite that came to be practised throughout the western church. The tenth century was a time of immense change in the organisation of the Anglo-
Fig. 6

Three Marys at the Tomb [Illustration from the 'Benedictional of St Aethelwold']
Saxon church and the evolution of a spatial dimension to sanctify was part of that revolution.

There were also changes to burial practice; whilst many burials appear to have taken place with the corpse wrapped in a shroud (cf. the cross being wrapped in linen), there developed in the late ninth and tenth centuries a custom of outlining and supporting the head with stones in a pillow or earmuff arrangement. This kind of arrangement was also discovered by Biddle in his archaeological excavations at St Albans. However, it is intriguing to note that whilst at St Albans head-support stones were the norm, at Winchester only 15% of the excavated Anglo-Saxon graves had head supports. St Albans was a poorer and more modest abbey in the late Anglo-Saxon period than was the wealthy royal capital, Winchester.

It is possible, nevertheless, that the use of a cushion for the cross in the Easter sepulchre ceremonies may have echoed the developing burial rites of Anglo-Saxon England.

Conclusion
In the light of all the evidence provided in this chapter, what conclusions can be drawn? This study of the tenth century seems to have shown that:

1. The dominant metaphor of the Easter sepulchre ceremonies was of death and burial.
2. There was no eucharistic element involved in the 'burial' process, that is, the Host was not buried.
3. The sepulchre itself was a temporary structure.
4. The cross was a central and powerful element, having a 'personalised' character and, in some cases, was thought to contain a relic of the True Cross.
5. The locus of the Easter sepulchre was almost certainly the high altar and not the west work, though there may have been some degree of 'travel' between the high altar and the nave-based Holy Cross altar.

Biddle 2001(b), pp.71-72.
6. The liturgy surrounding the Easter sepulchre was theologically rich and allusive with much of the emotional and spiritual 'meaning' of the ceremonies carried by non-verbal elements - darkness, lights, peals of bells and incense, for example.

7. The power structures of the abbey were turned upside-down in the liturgies, so that the abbot, for example, became a figure of profound abasement, rather than of dominance and high status.

8. At the visitatio sepulchri the cross did not play any major rôle at all and 'evidence' for the risen Christ was provided by the 'play' and by the demonstration that the sepulchre itself was empty. There was no attempt to elide resurrection with the cross or with a resurrection image.

The question now to be addressed, therefore, is whether all these factors remained stable through subsequent centuries or whether there were any developments.
3 EASTER SEPULCHRES IN THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES

It would seem not unreasonable to assume that the liturgies of Holy Week formulated at the Winchester Synod with such ecclesiastical and royal authority would have been adopted by those monasteries most closely associated with the monastic reform movement and its proponents, Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald. It is, in fact, possible to trace links between some of these monasteries; for example, the hymnal used at Worcester during the abbacy of St Wulfstan in the second half of the eleventh century, was the one used in Winchester at the time of Aethelwold; saints particularly honoured at Winchester in the tenth century (Birinus, Swithun and Judoc), also appear one century later in Wulfstan's Portiforium; even the type of script written in both Winchester and Worcester shows marked similarities. If details such as these can be found in one setting (Worcester), which have obvious and close links with another (Winchester), it suggests, on the face of it, that the liturgies of the Regularis Concordia would also have been used.

Unfortunately, that degree of certainty is not obtainable and, more to the point, it is known that where the Regularis Concordia was introduced in other places, e.g. Eynsham

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1 The spheres of influence of Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald were as follows:
- Aethelwold: Abingdon, Winchester, Ely, Peterborough, Thorney, Milton Abbas, and possibly St Neots (see Yorke 1988 (b), pp.1-12) and Chertsey (see Koblalka 1999, p.49).
- Oswald: Westbury-on-Trym, Ramsey, Deerhurst (see Klinkas 1984) and Worcester.

For further details of the above, see Knowles 1949, esp. pp.37-42. Symons makes it clear that active participation in the work of reform was not confined to monks:

Among the principal houses of men reformed before the close of the tenth century may be mentioned Nunnaminster, Ramsey, Wilton, Wareham, Wherwell, Shaftesbury, Reading, Horton, Berkley, Exeter and St Mildred's, Thanet. (see Symons 1953, p.xxiii).

It is interesting to note that the vast majority of these foundations lay within the old boundaries of the kingdom of Wessex.

2 St Wulfstan was appointed Prior of the cathedral monastery at Worcester, c.1055, by Bishop Evaldred (1046–1062), see Jones 1998, p.82.

2 Ibid, pp.85-86.
(Oxfordshire), by Aelfric, a former and devoted student of Aethelwold⁴, it was changed and adapted for local use⁵. Some elements of the Holy Week liturgy, for example, were considerably simplified. Aelfric's instructions about the service involving the veneration of the cross on Good Friday completely omit the depositio crucis (the 'burial' of the cross) and the visitatio sepulchri, one of the dramatic highlights of the Regularis Concordia liturgy⁶.

Aelfric wrote similar instructions about the Holy Week liturgies in the 'pastoral letter' for Wulfstig, Bishop of Sherborne, and for Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York. These letters, written between 992 and 1005, had secular clergy and parishes in mind⁷. Joyce Hill, in her careful study of these letters, adduces evidence for their use in Worcester, Winchester, Canterbury and York, and at diocesan level in Sherborne, but concludes:

... taken, all in all, it has to be admitted that the nature of the surviving manuscripts is such that they do not generally allow us to see the pastoral letters being used in the circles for which they were intended ... what we cannot do with confidence is ... to judge what effect they actually had on the eleventh-century secular church⁸.

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⁴ In the introduction of his letter, Aelfric states that he was a student of Aethelwold, see Jones 1998, p.111.

⁵ Knowles argues [see Knowles 1949, p.66] that the Regularis Concordia was essentially the fruit of a single, great occasion and says:

... it was not in the genius of tenth-century England to conceive of a number of separate bodies as governed by an abstract code.

⁶ Jones 1998, p.39:

Although Aelfric saw the Concordia as a useful model, he was not at all timid about adopting and supplementing the source where necessary. In the preface he claims, with a hint of pride, that to observe all the customs of Aethelwold's Winchester, his own alma mater, would be too much for his present charges.

Jones argues that the omission of the visitatio sepulchri may have been because there were too few participants available for the liturgy at Eynsham, or because the Office was too long.

⁷ For further details, see Hill 1992.

⁸ Ibid, pp.115-116. It is, however, important to recognise the potential influence of the monastic reform movement through the work of bishops in their dioceses. [Footnote cont'd on next page]
Notwithstanding this careful, balanced and negative conclusion, it seems possible (but no more than that) that by tracing the range and impact of Wulfstan's homilies, we might be able to surmise where the Aelfric version of Holy Week liturgies, transmitted to Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester (1002-1016), could have reached.

Julian Wilcox, in his study of the spread of Wulfstan's homilies, makes the following claim:

The place of copying of the manuscripts and the place of composition of the homilies [that is, homilies plundered and used by later sermon writers] demonstrate the following spread of Wulfstan's works: Worcester, Winchester, Exeter, Ramsey, Canterbury or Rochester.

And he goes on to say:

Certain patterns are apparent from the evidence and the re-use of Wulfstan's homilies. Wulfstan's diocese of Worcester was clearly vital to the transmission of his homiletic works as, probably, was York. Winchester was also important, as, at a later date, was Exeter. Canterbury, on the other hand, played a strikingly minor rôle.

It would seem that whilst it is possible to trace the theological influences which had an impact upon Aelfric and Wulfstan, it is remarkably difficult to assess the impact they,

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H. R. Loyn makes clear that from the time of Dunstan to the election of Stigand as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1052, all the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and most of the bishops, were monks (see Loyn 1991, p.252).

Farmer, writing of the monastic revival says:

It has been calculated that until 1042 nine-tenths of the bishops were monks ... The reform thus became a national instead of a sectional movement. [Farmer 1975, p.13].

10 Ibid, p.213.
12 Barlow 1963, p.286: Aelfric and Wulfstan were widely read in the Carolingian theologians and liturgists, such as Firmin (d.753/4), Alcuin and Alcuin's pupil, Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of Fulda and Abbot of Mainz.
themselves, had on the monasteries and churches of England. In relation to the Easter sepulchre, for example, it can only be surmised that Aelfric’s simplified version of the liturgies was known, used and transmitted by Wulfstan. But it is reasonably clear that if Aelfric omitted both the burial of the cross (the depositio) and the visitatio sepulchri from his version, then the likelihood of any permanent physical feature representing such a sepulchre in eleventh-century churches is very, very small. Further, tentative, support for this conclusion comes from a completely different source, from Scandinavia.

Canute (King of England 1016-1035), on coming to England was ‘schooled’ by Wulfstan (Bishop of Worcester 1002-1016; Archbishop of York 1002-1023) in the ways of Christian kingship. He was taught that

... gratitude to God for his good fortune as well as remorse for the blood he had shed was best expressed on lavish gifts to the church and acts of ostentatious piety. We can read this in Canute’s foundation of a minster church on the site of the battle of Ashington (Essex) or in the stagey translation of the murdered Archbishop Aelfheah (Alphege) from London to Canterbury in 1023. Above all, perhaps, we can read it in Canute’s pilgrimage to Rome and attendance there at the imperial coronation of Conrad II in 1027.

It was one year later that Canute founded the first monastic settlement in Norway at Laurent on Nidarholm, a small island in the Trondheim fjord. That monastery of St Laurent was probably staffed by monks who came from the group of monasteries reformed by Aethelwold.

Lilli Gjerløw, in her study of early Christian liturgy in eleventh-century Norway, refers to a fragment of an English missal. This fragment is, she says:

... one of the earliest extant English missal fragments.

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14 The Oslo missal fragment is catalogued as M1 in the catalogue of the Norsk Historisk Kjeldeskrift Institutt, Oslo.
She argues that it was probably written not

... in a great scriptorium like that of the Old Minster, but one of the monastic houses within St Aelthelwold's sphere of influence, where the Old Minster tradition of script may have lingered on well nigh into the eleventh century.\(^\text{16}\)

She makes very clear, however, that

... the find of the early English missal fragment (Mi 1) containing the Good Friday prayers and psalms as prescribed by the Regularis Concordia ... does not imply that the Regularis Concordia itself was ever adopted in Norway.\(^\text{17}\)

She draws attention to the missal (Mi 13), the Nidaros ordinary, in which a sepulchre is mentioned\(^\text{18}\):

Secondum usum autem quorundam crux a populo adoratur, si post decantationem hymnorum moram fecerit, alia preparetur et accipientes eam in minibus predicti sacerdotes incipient antiphonam 'Super omnia ligna cedrorum' et ponant eam super altare in eminentiori loco vel in sepulcro si habetur, conventu interim cantate responsorium 'Recessit pastor noster' vel responsorium 'Sepulto Domino', si crux in sepulcro collocatur.

Translation:

According to custom, however, while the cross is adored by the people, if he has made a pause after the singing of hymns, he should prepare [the] other things and taking it in their hands the appointed priests should begin the antiphon 'Super omnia ligna cedrorum' and they should put it on the altar in an eminent place or in the sepulchre if there is one. Meanwhile the convent should sing the responsory 'Recessit pastor noster' or the responsory 'Sepulto domino' if the cross is put in the sepulchre.

\(^{15}\) Gjerlov 1961, p.36.
\(^{16}\) Ibid, p.36.
\(^{17}\) Ibid, p.68.
\(^{18}\) Ibid, p.78.
Gjerlow, having drawn attention to the southern German origin of the responsory *Recessit dominus*\(^{19}\), then makes a significant statement:

> No medieval sepulchre of the English type, a recess in the wall, or a shrine intended for the Host alone, without the cross, has hitherto been discovered in Norwegian medieval churches. Nor would any special construction be needed if the sacristy was used for the 'sepulchre' ... or if the general prescription of the Nidaros ordinary\(^{20}\) was followed, and the cross simply replaced 'in loco suo'\(^{21}\)

Thus if there are no permanent Easter sepulchres in Norway, in spite of the *Regularis Concordia* having a possible influence on that country through the evangelising efforts of eleventh-century monk-bishops, a further plank is put into the argument that permanent Easter sepulchres may not have had any place in eleventh-century churches. There is one further argument to be marshalled in buttressing this case - and to do so it is necessary to return to the tenth century and to England. It is highly likely that Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald and their followers had a significant influence, not only upon the liturgies of the tenth century, but also upon the overall shape and plan of the churches in which those liturgies were celebrated.

The cult of Dunstan, for example, may have played a major part by shaping the design of the Romanesque cathedral at Canterbury. John Crook argues that the Anglo-Saxon cathedral of Canterbury provides:

> ... a clear - if late - example of a Carolingian-style ring-crypt that may be linked to the cult of a major local saint ... Eadmer's description seems to indicate a ring-crypt similar to that of S. Crisogono, with a central passage leading to the western 'confessio' containing Dunstan's relics, surmounted by a raised monument ('pyramis')\(^{22}\).

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19 Gjerlow 1961, p.78:

> The oldest known text where it appears is the breviary of Zurich from the year 1260, Zentralbibl. MsC.8b.

20 The Nidaros ordinary probably originated in the early thirteenth century.


22 Crook 2000, pp.105-106. For further details concerning ring crypts, see also Gem 1983 (b), for example:
There is no evidence thus far, however, that an Easter sepulchre was given permanent architectural form in that building.

The form of the church adapted at Abingdon, under the abbacy of Aethelwold, was an aisled rotunda, which Gem asserts

"... can hardly be interpreted other than as a tower-like rotunda with a surrounding ambulatory and with an apsidal chancel to the east."

Again, there is no evidence to suggest that a permanent Easter sepulchre was created at Abingdon within the rotunda shaped church, although that very shape may have had a deliberate echo of the Jerusalem Anastasis Rotunda centred on the site of the Resurrection.

Oswald, the third in the great triumvirate of tenth-century monastic reformers, built his church at Ramsey (about 969) in a style which deliberately reprised the cross. The *Vita St Oswaldi* (about 995) says that Oswald

"... began to initiate the foundations of the church. And since he had protected it by the sign of the revered cross ... so also therefore he began to construct the buildings of that place in the fashion of a cross: a porticus on the east, on the

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**Brixworth has a ring crypt around its apse ...** [but] there is no firm date for the crypt and it may well be secondary to the main fabric of the church ... which itself can be placed no more precisely than a probable bracket in the eighth or ninth or even tenth century.

[Gem 1983 (b), p.5].

He continues:

"This ... form of the church at Abingdon relates unmistakably to the group of buildings deriving from the early ninth-century Carolingian chapel of the imperial palace at Aachen. [Ibid, p.9]."

Gem traces (see Ibid, p.11) the rotunda shape from Aachen (where there was a relic of the Virgin’s robe) to the Blachernae palace at Constantinople, where her omphorio was enshrined.

This was in its turn related to

"... the church outside Jerusalem sheltering the tomb from which she was assumed into heaven, leaving only her robe behind. [Ibid, p.11]."
south and on the north; a tower in the middle; in the west he annexed a tower to the church.

Deerhurst in Gloucestershire, a foundation which may well have been reformed by Oswald about 970, had by the end of the tenth century a heightened western tower: a new tower chamber was created in the north and south walls, in which there are aumbries; the chamber may have served as a chapel. It is likely that following the liturgical arrangements of the tenth century, there would have been

... three principal altars on an axis: one in the western upper chamber, one dedicated to the Holy Cross at the entrance to the choir, and one dedicated to the Virgin at the chord of the apse.

Whilst Deerhurst may well have been consciously designed to be an appropriate 'theatre' for the Regularis Concordia liturgies, and whilst its design may also have had elements within it which were to be found not only in Winchester but also, for example, in Essen, nevertheless there is no evidence that a permanent feature 'labelled' as an Easter sepulchre existed in its structure.

It would thus seem that at the end of the tenth century and in the earliest decades of the eleventh century, whilst some churches may have been designed with the liturgies of the Regularis Concordia specifically in mind, none of them actually made provision for a permanent Easter sepulchre. The liturgy, as it were, filled and used the entire building (which by its overall shape may have had overt theological meaning), but the temporary Easter sepulchre, as described in the Regularis Concordia (if used at all) would appear to have been an entirely adequate locus for the specific part of the Holy Week liturgy centred on Christ's tomb.

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26 Klukas 1984, p.90.
27 The minster for canonesses rebuilt by the Abbess Theophanu (1039-1058) in the eleventh century had a west work combined with a western apse. At the west end of the nave was a raised platform, on the chord of the apse, where the visitatio sepulchri was performed:

At the west side of the crossing stood the altar of the Holy Cross with a relic of the True Cross placed behind it on a marble column. The high altar stood in the square choir over a raised crypt. [Ibid, p.93].
In the light of all this, it is possible to come to some interim conclusions about permanent Easter sepulchres in pre-Conquest England:

1. The Synod of Winchester in the *Regularis Concordia* made very clear that the sepulchre was a temporary structure near the altar - in which a cross was buried and at which there was a liturgical drama (the *visitatio sepulchri*).

2. In spite of the high status of the *Regularis Concordia* and in spite of his obvious regard for Aethelwold, Aelfric felt free to adapt the Holy Week liturgies according to local need. He omitted the 'burial' of the cross and the *visitatio sepulchri*.

3. When Aelfric passed on the Holy Week liturgies to Wulfægæ of Sherborne and Wulfstan of Worcester, those liturgies similarly omitted the burial of the cross and the *visitatio sepulchri*. Where there is no cross burial and no *visitatio sepulchri*, there is no necessity to create a permanent, or even a temporary, Easter sepulchre.

4. Whilst the direct influence of the *Regularis Concordia* on Norway is impossible to determine, the fact that some elements of the *Regularis Concordia* seem, at the least, to have influenced a twelfth-century missal, and the fact that there are no permanent Easter sepulchres in Norwegian medieval churches leads one to suppose that a permanent Easter sepulchre was not a necessary feature of the liturgy.

5. The churches in England influenced in their overall shape and design by the cults of Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald, provide no evidence for permanent Easter sepulchres.

In short, in England before the Conquest, there really is no evidence for the existence of permanent Easter sepulchres - and even temporary ones, following the changes to the liturgy suggested by Aelfric, are extremely (and necessarily?) elusive.
The Easter sepulchre liturgy after the Conquest

But what happened to the liturgy of Holy Week and Easter after the Conquest? Evidence for what took place at Canterbury is, fortunately, very clear. Lanfranc (c1005-1089), in his Decretals gives explicit instructions about the Holy Week ceremonies.

On Maundy Thursday after None, the children and those who were to celebrate Mass vested; the priest or abbot wore rich vestments; the deacon, a dalmatic; and the subdeacon, a tunicle. Instructions were given about who was to sing and who was to carry the candlesticks and thurible. The desks were removed from the choir and the Mass began, sung according to the festal rite. Enough Hosts were consecrated for Maundy Thursday as well as reserved for Good Friday. Then further instructions followed:

28 There were 'crown wearings' at Winchester in 1068, 1069, 1070, 1072 and 1086 (see Bates 1989, p.110 and following pages.) It is interesting to note that the Laudes Regiae, ritual chants sung during Mass at great religious festivals, were also an aspect of the crown wearings:

They honoured the powers wielding authority in heaven and on earth. The Laudes sung in Normandy ... began with the choir singing 'Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat', which was repeated by the congregation. The choir then called on support for the Pope, the King of the Franks, Duke William of the Normans and all bishops ... with the congregation interposing 'Christus vincit' after each appeal ... It is likely that they were instituted after the triumph of Hastings and that they were first sung at Easter 1067. No Laudes are known in England before 1066. [Ibid, p.115].

It can be assumed that the Laudes would necessarily have shaped the structure of the Easter liturgy at Winchester, and were deliberately designed to weave together heavenly and earthly kingship.

29 See Knowles 1951, pp.38-47.

30 Throughout his descriptions of the liturgy, Lanfranc lays great emphasis upon the vestments that were to be worn, for example:

When the litany [Holy Saturday] is begun the brethren shall go to their desks as on feasts of twelve lessons, and after the third invocation the priest shall return to the sacristy, put off his chasuble and stole and return to choir [sic]. When the cantors have sung 'Omnes sancti, orate pro nobis', the priest, deacon, subdeacon and three converses shall leave the choir, and the priest shall vest in a chasuble, the deacon in a dalmatic and the subdeacon in a tunicle. [Ibid, p.45].
When Mass is ending the desks shall be carried back to the choir and the board be rapped for Vespers\textsuperscript{31} and when Mass is over the prayer before Vespers shall be said as they kneel at their desks.

Meanwhile, the priest shall approach the altar in procession and go to an appointed place fittingly prepared, and there lay the Body of the Lord, incensing the place before and after he lays down the Host. A lamp shall burn without ceasing before the spot\textsuperscript{32}.

It is to be noted that the 'appointed place fittingly prepared' is not described in any way.

Such drama as there is in this liturgy is reserved for the cloister and the refectory. In the cloister the cellarer and the almoner prepared warm water for the foot washing; the abbot and the monks genuflected and bowed to the poor ('they shall adore Christ in the poor\textsuperscript{33}'), and having intoned the antiphon \textit{Dominus Jesu}, the abbot and the brothers then washed the feet of the poor, wiped and kissed their feet, and touched them with their foreheads. A gift of drink and money to the poor (two pence) followed. After further prayers the abbot and the prior then washed, dried and kissed the feet of all the brothers, and the day was finally rounded off with Compline.

Whilst the evening of Maundy Thursday witnessed the procession carrying the consecrated Hosts to the 'appointed place', it seems likely that, from a dramatic and theological perspective, the ceremonies of foot and hand washing in the cloister and the refectory would have made a greater impact upon the participants.

\textsuperscript{31} Micklethwaite refers to 'clappers':

\textit{The returns of church goods in Lincolnshire in Elizabeth's time ... often include clappers or claps. They were things to make a noise with on the three last days of Holy Week, when by custom the church bells were not used ... I am not sure what a clapper was like here, but I think it was a board hung up by a loop and struck with a mallet. A like machine was used in monastic cloisters. At Rouen they used a horn instead of bells in Holy Week.} [Micklethwaite 1901, pp.58-59].

\textsuperscript{32} Knowles 1951, p.31.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p.32.
Good Friday became the setting for the next small episode of drama. After None, the priest, deacon and other ministers vested. (As previously, Lanfranc made explicit what vestments each was to wear: the priest a chasuble and the deacon a stole.) At the reading of the Passion

... when the words are reached 'They have divided my garments among themselves,' two ministers in albs by the altar shall pull off towards themselves on right and left two cloths which were put on the altar before the office 34.

After the reading and the prayers, the ceremony of the Veneration of the Cross took place. Two priests, vested in albs, approached the veiled cross which was ad altare matutinale, that is, at or beside the Morrow Mass altar. Taking the cross, they carried it a little way forward singing *Popule meus*. Two deacons, robed in albs and standing ad gradus ante altare maior, that is, at the step of the high altar, answered: *Agios o theos*. The choir sang *Sanctus Deus*, the priests: *Quia eduxi vos* and the deacons: *Agios*. This liturgical and musical responsory chorus was repeated until the priests carrying the cross came to the high altar, where they then unveiled it and began the antiphon *Ecce lignum*. Everyone then knelt on carpets laid in front of the altar, the abbot and the vested ministers prostrated themselves, praying

... briefly and simply 35.

The foot of the cross was kissed by everyone who then returned to the choir. If other lay people or clerics were present, the cross was carried to them

... in another place more suitable for their worship 36.

Once the cross had been honoured by everyone, it was carried

... to the place where they are to set it up 37.

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34 Knowles 1951, p.40.
36 Ibid, p.41.
37 Ibid, p.41.
The participants knelt on the ground and bowed. At this point the priest and deacon went to the place where the Corpus Domini had been placed on Maundy Thursday. There, incense having been placed in the thurible, the priest censed the Corpus Domini, it was handed to the deacon, who carried it back to the altar. The instructions continued:

*When they approach the altar all the brethren shall adore the body of the Lord on their knees.*

Mass followed, and once all had received communion, the board was struck and the monks, having processed out to the cloisters where their feet were washed in warm water and having put on their day shoes, returned to the church for Vespers.

A comparison of this liturgy with that of the Regularis Concordia highlights the following differences:

1. The cross itself no longer has the 'personification' element of the Regularis Concordia liturgy. Theologically speaking, there has been a transfer of personification from the cross to the consecrated Host.

2. The foot washing ceremonies have become more important - but the washing, drying and kissing of the feet on Maundy Thursday must have set up some resonances in the minds of the monks when they then kissed the 'foot' of the cross.

3. There is no attempt in Lanfranc's Constitutions to create a 'sepulchre'; the cross in this liturgy is not buried - but because the Maundy Thursday Host had been taken in procession to an 'appropriate place', it is easy to see how later rites would conflate the burial of the cross in the Regularis Concordia with an apparent 'burial' of the Host which took place on Maundy Thursday rather than on Good Friday.

4. There was in the Regularis Concordia liturgy some clarity about narrative chronology: in Lanfranc the chronological clarity of the narrative has been sacrificed for theological doctrines surrounding the consecrated Host. The Host was the 'living' body of Christ and, unlike the cross in the Regularis Concordia,

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Knowles 1951, p.41.
could thus not really be 'buried'. In brief, theology has overtaken and, to some extent confused, the flow of the narrative.

Following the Mass and Vespers on Good Friday, there was a meal which consisted of bread and water and raw herbs, whilst what would have been the brothers' supper was given to the poor. While the community were at their simple meal, the sacristans and as many priests as were needed remained in the church to wash all the altars, firstly with water and then with wine.

Again, in comparison with the *Regularis Concordia*, the drama of the narrative of Good Friday, when the brothers stayed to keep watch at the 'sepulchre', has been lost. No doubt the cleansing and washing process of the altars would have conveyed the starkness of the evening - and might in later liturgies be transferred, as in Hereford, to the washing of the cross, itself, with wine and water.

The central liturgical motif of Holy Saturday was the lighting of the new fire and the ceremony of light:

> When the litany is done the cantors shall sing thrice in a loud voice 'Kindle the lights,' and then, and not before, shall the candles and other lights before and about the altar be lighted ... and the bells shall then begin to be rung, not ceasing till the end of the Kyrie.

After Vespers came another innovation:

> ... they shall go in procession to the crucifix.

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39 The stripping and washing of the altars is mentioned from the seventh century onwards (see Tyrer 1932, p.107) but the ritual was normally carried out on Maundy Thursday and not on Good Friday. See also Tyrer 1932, p.118: In some churches, especially those served by Canons, the Washing of the Altars took place, not on Maundy Thursday, but on Good Friday. We have found one instance of this in Engalind - at Canterbury, where Lanfranc orders the Altars to be washed today [Maundy Thursday] after Vespers.

40 Knowles 1951, pp.45-46.

41 Ibid, p.46.
This instruction is probably meant to refer to the great crucifix set up by Lanfranc on a beam which stretched north-south across the nave at its eastern end. The crucifix would have had the figures of Mary and St John on each side of it.

Again, this Holy Saturday post-Vespers procession marks a break in the narrative. The storyline is interrupted; the crucifixion is revisited. In the Regularis Concordia liturgy the emphasis was upon light, certainly, but also, through the presence of the sepulchre and because of the reading of the story of the three Marys, the emphasis was upon the resurrection of Easter day.

The instructions in Lanfranc's Constitutions for Easter day itself are almost anticlimactic:

... before the night choir, all the bells shall be rung for Matins, then by two and two as usual. At the invitatory there shall be four in copes, and the psalms as in the Rule, that is 'Domine in virtute tua' and the rest. During the lessons thuribles shall be borne round.

There was no elevatio, no visitatio sepulchri - and therefore, of course, no Easter sepulchre. It is significant that during the days that followed, after Lauds and Vespers, a procession was made to the crucifix. One is left with the distinct impression that the saga-like theology of the Regularis Concordia has begun to give way to new theological

See Gibson 1978, pp.164-165:

Stigand had given such a group to his other cathedral of Winchester and to Ely, and a 'great cross' to St. Augustine's, Canterbury; archbishop Ealdred gave a cross 'of German work' to Beverley minster; and a resourceful abbot of Bury St. Edmunds in the same period took the exact measurements of the Volto Santo of Lucca and had it reproduced to scale by his own craftsmen at home. These wonders have all vanished; they are the early expression of a devotion that was to find its way into every parish church, growing banal through repetition. In the 1070s however such crucifixes were unfamiliar in Normandy and France: they could be found in the Rhineland, where perhaps they originated, northern Italy and England. The crucifixes in Lanfranc's cathedral was English, with a difference. Above it were two cherubim, one on either side, as the cherubim that watched over the ark of the covenant. They were complemented by the cherubim on the central tower, who guarded the ark-like nave of Christ Church itself.

Knowles 1951, p.47.
doctrines surrounding the Mass, the *Corpus Domini* and the crucifix. And in Lanfranc, of Easter sepulchres there is not a word.

It is known that the *Monastic Constitutions* of Lanfranc were introduced, as Gjerløw says\(^4\), at Rochester (Lanfranc's own foundation):

> ... at St Albans with the abbacy of Lanfranc's nephew, Paul of Caen, and in the newly reorganised cathedral priory of Durham. Worcester possessed a copy of the *Decreta*, and their influence can be traced in the late medieval Westminster customs. From St Albans they were, in the 1130s, introduced in Croyland Abbey.

But Lanfranc also made explicit in the preface to the *Monastic Constitutions* that he did not expect his instructions to be followed slavishly:

> ... we are all free to add or to take away or to make changes if we think alteration to be an advantage, following right reason or the judgment of those better informed; for however far a man advance, it is the worst of failings for him to suppose that he can go no further. An increase or decrease in the number of monks, conditions in different places and the inevitable changes of circumstance, added to diversity of opinion shown in this or that way of thinking - all these often make for changes in matters which have long been unaltered. Hence it is that no one church can exactly imitate the practices of another\(^5\).

It would seem, then, that Lanfranc took a fairly tolerant and liberal view of liturgical development\(^6\).

In other monasteries, for example at Glastonbury, the introduction of new liturgies by Abbot Thurstan in 1083 sparked a monastic rebellion. Whereas in Winchester

\(^4\) Gjerløw 1961, p.95.
\(^5\) Knowles 1951, p.1.
\(^6\) It is nevertheless intriguing to discover that in the Romanesque cathedral of Old Sarum, dedicated in 1092, there would appear to have been an Easter sepulchre. At least, to be more accurate, Richard Gem, writing about that cathedral, includes an area to the north side of the presbytery, which is described as an Easter sepulchre, on a detailed plan of excavation drawn by D. Montague between 1912 and 1924. (see Gem 1990, p.11).
... the old liturgy of the Regularis Concordia completed one hundred years earlier survived unchanged. Winchester proclaimed continuity\textsuperscript{47}.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, therefore, there would appear to have been no fixed and unalterable liturgy across the nation; the Decreta Lanfranci jostled with the Regularis Concordia, perhaps to the mutual enrichment of both or to the perplexity of those who travelled from monastery to monastery. In such a mixed liturgical economy the question is: were there any permanent Easter sepulchres in the eleventh and twelfth centuries? As the Regularis Concordia liturgy required only the creation of a temporary sepulchre and Lanfranc's liturgy had nothing within it which necessitated even a temporary structure, the answer to the question posed must be 'No.'

Some degree of clarity in things liturgical only begins to emerge in the thirteenth century with the birth of what came to be known as the Sarum rite.

\textsuperscript{47} Golding 1994, pp.172-173.
EASTER SEPULCHRES IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY: THE SARUM RITE

The Sarum Rite
One of the complexities surrounding this attempt to trace the use and development of Easter sepulchres is the number of gaps which seem to exist between the rites already outlined - the Regularis Concordia of the tenth century and Lanfranc's Decretals of the eleventh century - and those which are to be found in the thirteenth-century Sarum rites. Some comfort may be taken from the words of A. A. King who, in attempting to trace the origins of the Sarum rite, concludes:

... when all is said and done, and in spite of what has been discovered in the way of similarities with other uses, it must be confessed that with our present knowledge it is quite impossible to identify any specific 'ancestor' for the Sarum use. Its essential framework is ... in the same line of development as Lanfranc's statutes for Canterbury, the Ecclesiastical Offices of John of Avranches and ultimately, perhaps, the 'Ordines Romani'.

In other words, the trajectory of the use is reasonably clear but its origins are not.

King places the Sarum ordinal and the consuetudinary as

... twin products of the early 13th century.

If he is correct in doing so, then there is a significant and unfilled (and unfillable?) gap between the rites of Holy Week, as outlined by Lanfranc, in the latter part of the eleventh century and the arrival on the scene of Sarum in the early thirteenth century - a gap of

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1 For a careful analysis of late Anglo-Saxon service books, see Hohler 1975:
   ... tenth- and eleventh-century English books do not present a neat picture of continental usages being adopted, but rather stages in the adjustment, by fairly stupid men most of the time, of some pre-existing body of texts and usages of Italian origin current in England to what, by the tenth century, was fashionable in Northern Europe. [Ibid, p.81].

2 King 1959, p.307.

3 Ibid, p.306.

some one hundred and forty years or so. King expresses his difficulties with the task of trying to trace the origins and development of Sarum thus:

[It] is the more perplexing in that the liturgy of each particular Church was not stereotyped in the Middle Ages; each use was from time to time borrowing from its neighbours, adding, retrenching, changing.\(^5\)

It would seem that any attempt to trace a cause-and-effect chain from the rites of the Regularis Concordia, via Lanfranc, to the Sarum rite is doomed to end in melancholy failure. And if this be the case, then trying to trace evidence-based theological shifts and their outworking in liturgy is also bound to be very difficult. The best one can do is make broad-brush assumptions and hope that by doing so, assertion is not taking the place of the painstaking building of a case.

What can be said with real certainty is that the Sarum use became increasingly popular from the thirteenth century onwards,\(^6\) and it is to that rite and its provisions for the ceremonies of Holy Week that we now turn.

The Maundy Thursday rite begins after the singing of None with a procession to the west door of the church where, in the vestibule, penitents have gathered. After being admonished and after the hearing of a lesson, the penitents kneel and rise three times and are then led in procession, having been

... restored to the bosom of the Church.\(^7\)

Collects, prayers and an absolution follow, and the solemn Mass begins. At the offertory, the rubric gives this instruction:

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\(^5\) King 1959, p.305. It is interesting to note that the phrase 'adding, retrenching, changing' was used by Edmund Bishop (see Bishop 1918 (a), p.300), but King seems not to have acknowledged the derivation.

\(^6\) See King 1959, especially pp.284-302, for a detailed study of this.

\(^7\) Warren 1913, vol.1, p.238.
Three hosts should be placed by the sub-deacon for consecration; of which two should be reserved for the following day, one to be received by the priest, the other to be deposited with the cross in the sepulchre.

There are no instructions about how the two Hosts set aside for Good Friday are to be treated, nor where they are to be kept overnight. At communion on Maundy Thursday the pax was not given, nor the Agnus Dei sung; but if a bishop were present, then the Agnus Dei was said 'solemnly' and the vessel containing the holy chrism was kissed instead of the pax. Once Mass and Vespers were concluded, the clergy assembled in the church:

... to wash the altars, to perform the Maundy, and to say Compline.

The water having been previously blessed, a procession consisting of two high-ranking priests, accompanied by a deacon, a subdeacon and a candle bearer robed in albs and amices, and two clerks carrying wine and water, moved to the high altar. There wine and water were poured over it and as this was happening, the choir sang the following responsory:

On the mount of Olives I prayed unto the Father:
Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

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8 The custom of reserving a Host for use on Good Friday seems to have originated in Rome in the seventh century (see Tyrer 1932, p.105).

In the Mozarabic rite:
... a cross, a missal (or bible), a censer, a small bell, and an incense-boat containing incense are placed with the host in the sepulchre (here called 'monumentum'), and this is locked with two keys and sealed with two seals. [Tyrer 1932, pp.106-107].


11 Ibid, p.245.

12 The stripping and washing of the altars is mentioned in the seventh century: Sixteenth Council of Toledo, canon 8:
... except on the day of the Lord's Passion when the altars remain stripped.

[Tyrer 1932, pp.107-108.]
Thy will be done.

The versicle was:

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.
Thy will be done.  

In turn, each altar in the church was washed with water and wine, with a separate responsory for each, and the collect prayer read for the saint in whose honour the altar was dedicated. The final responsory to be used at the last altar to be washed was:

Lying men compassed me about; they scourged me without a cause.
But thou, O Lord, my defender, avenge me

with its accompanying versicle:

For trouble is hard at hand, and there is no one to help.
But thou, O Lord, etc.

It is interesting to note that whereas in the Regularis Concordia of the tenth century it was the cross itself which was personified, in the Sarum use, whilst the altars themselves are not personified in quite the same way, an element of personification is nevertheless present.

The washing of the altars was followed by the procession into the Chapter House where, after the reading of the gospel (John 13:1-15) the ceremony of foot washing took place.

Unlike the Maundy ceremony in Lanfranc, the foot washing is solely for the members of the community - the poor, and gifts to the poor, have been abandoned.

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13 Warren 1913, vol.1, p.245.
14 Ibid., p.245. The reference in the versicle is to Psalm 22.
15 In the Hereford rite, the foot washing is carried out by the bishop and dean; in Rouen, by the archbishop (see Bishop 1918, p.294).

In York, the foot washing took place before the stripping of the altars (see Tyrer 1932, p.109).
On Good Friday, after None, the priest robed in a red chasuble and accompanied by deacon and subdeacon robed in amices and albs, processed to the altar. Lessons and responses (including Hosea 6:1-6 and Exodus 12:1-11) and the Passion according to John (John 18 - 19:1-37) were read. The only dramatic element (also found in Lanfranc and the Regularis Concordia) occurred at the phrase 'They parted my garments amongst them,' when two acolytes approached the altar and took from it two linen cloths which had been placed there for that purpose. A series of collects was then read and, on completion, the priest celebrant divested himself of his red chasuble and took his seat near the altar, accompanied by deacon and subdeacon. At which point two other priests, 'of higher rank' 16, barefoot and vested in albs, without apparels, solemnly held aloft between them the veiled cross and took their position behind the high altar, on the right-hand side, and chanted these verses:

*O my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. Because I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour* 17.

The priests, as it were, interrogate the congregation, taking to themselves the part of God. The deacons respond to the 'interrogation' with the 'Thrice Holy', namely

*Agios o Theos, Agios Iskyros, Agios Athanatos, Eleyson ymas*

and the choir echo the song with the English translation

*Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us* 18.

This interrogative sequence is followed by the priests who, all the while, have been holding the cross aloft, unveiling it and singing

*Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world. O come, let us adore* 19.

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17 Ibid, p.258.
18 Ibid, p.258.
19 Ibid, p.259.
The choir respond with the anthem

\[ \text{We adore thy cross, O Lord, and we praise and glorify thy holy resurrection; for,} \]
\[ \text{lo, by the cross joy hath come to the world}^{20}. \]

Psalm 67 is sung with the anthem above interspersed between each verse; at the anthem everyone genuflects. The rubric then gives explicit instructions:

\[ \text{Meanwhile the cross shall be solemnly placed on the third step of the altar, two} \]
\[ \text{priests being seated close to it, one on the right hand, the other on the left}^{21}. \]

Unfortunately, what is not made clear is whether the cross is laid at an angle on the altar steps or whether it is placed on a processional shaft.

The members of the community, barefoot, proceed to adore the cross

\[ \text{beginning with those of highest rank}^{22}. \]

The priests seated by the cross sing the first verse of the hymn 'Faithful cross, above all other', with the choir repeating each verse of the hymn after the priests.

Once the hymn is ended, the cross is carried through the choir to

\[ \text{... a spot where it may be adored by the people before some altar}^{23}. \]

Once this is completed, the cross is carried back to the high altar and the Mass begins, the priest having put back on his red chasuble. The Host used at the Mass is the one set aside on Maundy Thursday - but no instructions are given, either about where it is kept or how it is to be taken to the altar. At the Mass, of course, only the priest communicates; the rest of the community participate by observing and listening.

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21 Ibid, p.259.
Vespers follow Mass, then the priest divesting himself of his red chasuble and accompanied by 'one of superior rank', both wearing surplices and barefoot, place the cross in the sepulchre. In that sepulchre, in a pyx, is the remaining Host that had been consecrated on Maundy Thursday. The priest celebrant alone then says the responsory:

\[
\text{I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit:} \\
\text{and I have been even as a man that hath no strength,} \\
\text{free among the dead.}
\]

The versicle in response is:

\[
\text{Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,} \\
\text{in a place of darkness, and in the deep.} \\
\text{I have been even as a man that hath no strength,} \\
\text{free among the dead.}
\]

The rubrics instruct the priest and his companion to genuflect and rise during each responsory. The choir meanwhile remains kneeling. The sepulchre is censed and the door shut (sic) and a further responsory is sung:

\[
\text{The Lord being buried, the sepulchre was sealed: rolling a stone to the door of} \\
\text{the sepulchre: setting soldiers to watch it.}
\]

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24 Warren 1913, vol.1, p.263.
25 At Rouen and Hereford, the cross is placed in the sepulchre between the _adoratio_ and the procession to bring the reserved sacrament to the altar. In the _Sarum_ rite, as can be seen, the ceremony takes place after Vespers. Also at Rouen and at Hereford, only the cross was 'buried' whereas in _Sarum_, the cross is 'buried' together with the Host (see Bishop 1918, pp.295-296). In York the cross was 'buried' immediately after the _adoratio_ (see Tyrer 1932, p.132).
26 Psalm 88: 4-5a.
28 In the Hereford rite there is also a reference to a door related to the sepulchre: _Let the holy cross be carried to the door of the sepulchre_ [Bishop 1918, p.295]. As the instruction is specific about the door, it seems to imply a large structure, for example, a side chapel (?), rather than an aumbry, or possibly a specially created temporary structure. At the sepulchre the cross was washed with wine and water and dried with a towel.
Lest peradventure his disciples should come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead.\(^9\)

Three further anthems follow. Firstly:

\emph{I will lay me down in peace and take my rest: for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.}

Secondly:

\emph{At Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling in Sion.}

Thirdly:

\emph{My flesh also shall rest in hope.}

A period of silence and private prayer is then succeeded by the clergy going back

\emph{...as they please, in no fixed order}\(^{30}\)

except for the priest celebrant, who puts on his red chasuble again and leaves in procession accompanied by deacon, subdeacon and the other ministers of the altar.

A wax candle at the sepulchre is mentioned in the rubrics:

\emph{From that time one wax candle at least shall burn continually before the sepulchre, until the procession of the Lord’s Resurrection on Easter Day}\(^{31}\).

It is very noticeable what a different ethos there is in this rite, compared with the \textit{Regularis Concordia} ceremonies. In the \textit{Sarum} rite the liturgy is much more closely choreographed; the celebrant priest is careful to robe in particular garments and divest himself of his chasuble from time to time; the processions are precisely delineated, likewise the responsories and accompanying genuflections. From a dramatic point of

\(^{9}\) Warren 1913, vol.1, p.264.

\(^{30}\) Ibid, p.264.

\(^{31}\) Ibid, p.265.
view, it is orderly and contained. There is no expectation that the drama will run out of control. It is elegant rather than robust, self-consciously theological rather than being driven along by the inherent complexities and dynamics of the human drama. Narrative remains but is less central than liturgical propriety.

Theologically, two things have happened. First, the cross itself, whilst retaining some of its centrality - at the veneration, for example, and at the *depositio* - is now having to share the stage with the pyx-and-Host. Secondly, the doctrine of transubstantiation, given the highest authority by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, is given physical expression in the rite by the Host being treated as the Body of Christ. There is, however, within this, a narrative difficulty: if the body is 'substantial' (in the theological sense) and thus represents the eternally living body of Christ, to 'bury' it, as though it were 'dead' is to create a narrative difficulty - though not necessarily a theological one.

From a social-antropological viewpoint, it is also clear that the priesthood has increased in significance compared with the situation in the tenth century (hence all the emphasis upon robing and processions); the Maundy foot washing has become a drama internal to the church community (the poor no longer feature); the sense of the powerful abbot, as in the *Regularis Concordia*, prostrating himself before the cross has given way to a procession of clergy adoring the cross briefly before resuming their places.

Meanwhile, as far as the Easter sepulchre is concerned, the rubrics and the rite are not as prescriptive as one might hope. The sepulchre itself is not described nor is its place within the topography of the church delineated. All that one can deduce is that it is capable of receiving a cross and a pyx with a Host, and that it has a door. This suggests that it does need to have a distinct structure, though this could easily be a wooden and fabric one. This raises, inevitably, a question about the structure itself and might, on the face of it, suggest that an aumbry was indeed the sepulchre. (This issue will be explored in the following chapter.)

The ceremonies for Easter Eve are centred on the blessing of the new fire. The prayer accompanying the ceremony itself explores the metaphor of light:

... *thou, who lightest every man that cometh into this world, enlighten the consciences of our hearts with the fire of thy love; that we being inflamed by thy*
fire, and illuminated by thy light, and having the darkness of sin expelled from our hearts, may by thy guiding light be deemed worthy to come to light eternal\textsuperscript{32}.

Incense is blessed and is regarded as having properties suitable for exorcism:

\textit{I exorcise thee, most unclean spirit, and every illusion of the enemy ... that wheresoever this incense or frankincense shall be, there thou shalt in no wise dare to approach}\textsuperscript{33}.

The exorcism then continues in a second prayer:

\ldots that wherever the smoke of its sweet scent shall spread abroad, it may miraculously prevail, in virtue of thy holy name, to put to flight all phantastic assaults of unclean spirits, and to drive away all diseases, and to restore health\textsuperscript{34}.

Following a hymn, the blessing of the paschal candle takes place, with prayers being chanted\textsuperscript{35}; incense grains are then inserted into the candle in the shape of a cross, the candle is lit from the new fire - and candles are then lit throughout the church. Lessons, collects and litanies follow. After this a procession is formed, including an acolyte carrying a cross, candle bearers, thurifer, a boy carrying a book and another boy a candle with which the font will be blessed, two deacons carrying oil and chrism, subdeacon, deacon and priest. As they process down the south side of the church, another litany is sung invoking the prayers of all the saints\textsuperscript{36}.

At the font, the water is blessed, the priest dividing the water with his hand in the form of a cross; he also throws water from the font into the four quarters; and then he breathes upon the water, again in the form of a cross; candle wax from a lighted candle is dropped into the font in a cross shape, and finally the candle is dipped into the middle of the font and a cross shape made.

\textsuperscript{32} Warren 1913, vol.1, p.266.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p.267.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, p.268.
\textsuperscript{35} See Ibid, pp.270-272.
\textsuperscript{36} See Ibid, pp.279-280.
Having blessed the font, the procession returns to the altar, singing a litany ('Thou, the holy angels' king'), and at the altar Mass begins. When the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is sung, the bells of the church are rung in a great cacophony, and once Mass is ended and Vespers completed, the ceremonies come to their conclusion.

All the while the Easter sepulchre has been ignored, as has the cross and Host which it contains. There is much movement, processions take place, there are rubrics, for example, about where ministers and candle bearers shall stand at the high altar - but no suggestion that they are having to move in such a way as to avoid the sepulchre. It may be safe to assume that the sepulchre is not in the sanctuary but perhaps close by, between the sanctuary and the choir. The only hint of the Resurrection itself comes in an anthem almost at the very end of the Mass:

> In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.\textsuperscript{37}

Even in the prayer at the blessing of the font, the resurrection theme is absent; instead there is much emphasis upon cleansing, rebirth and purification.

It is at the beginning of the Easter day ceremonies that the sepulchre, quite briefly, becomes the centre of attention. In the church, before Mass, and with the entire building lit by candles, the community assembles. Then the rubric says:

> Two clerks of higher rank, with candle-bearers, thurifers, and the clergy around them, shall go to the sepulchre, and after first censing the sepulchre with great veneration, that is to say, with genuflection, they shall speedily and with privacy place the body of the Lord upon the altar.\textsuperscript{38}

The phrase 'speedily and with privacy' is not easy to interpret, but it presumably means, as has been suggested above, that the sepulchre itself is not in the sanctuary but close by. (There would be no need to specify haste if the sepulchre were the aumbry on the north wall of the chancel next to the altar.)

\textsuperscript{37} Warren 1913, vol.1, p.288.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, p.289.
Having placed the Host on the altar, they then return to the sepulchre and from it take out the cross. The actual phrase in the rubric concerning the subsequent procession is 'the cross which has been raised from the sepulchre' - which might imply a coffer rather than an aumbry. You would not raise a cross from a cupboard. The anthem 'Christ being raised' is sung and, meanwhile, the procession advances:

... by the south door of the presbytery through the middle of the quire.\(^{39}\)

The instructions are written with a particular church in mind - but, nevertheless, they are not unambiguous. It may be safe to assume that the sepulchre is somewhere between the choir and the sanctuary on the north side. The procession, perhaps leaving by the south door of the presbytery, then walks westwards down the south presbytery aisle and makes its way through the centre of the choir before exiting via the north door of the presbytery. The cross in the procession is carried by the two priests who took it originally from the sepulchre, with thurifers and candle bearers preceding them. The procession then moves to an altar on the north side of the church.

Meanwhile, at the high altar, the sub-treasurer has taken the pyx and suspends it (still enclosing the consecrated Host) in a 'tabernacle'.\(^{40}\) All the bells of the church are rung 'in a clash'\(^{41}\) and the anthem 'Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more' is sung. The anthem is couched in terms of a challenging, forensic debate; the words following 'Christ being raised', etc, being:

\emph{Now let the Jews declare how the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre lost the king when the stone was placed, wherefore they kept not the rock of righteousness; let them either produce him buried, or adore him rising, saying with us, (the quire shall answer thus) Alleluia, alleluia.}\(^{42}\)


\(^{40}\) Ibid, p.289. For further details concerning the means of reservation of the Host in a pyx, see Micklethwaite 1901, pp.30-31.

\(^{41}\) Warren 1913, vol.1, p.289.

\(^{42}\) Ibid, p.289.
In the north-side chapel a prayer is said. Then the rubric asserts what should happen next:

... all shall genuflect with joy in the same place, and adore the cross, especially those of higher rank, and then they shall return quietly, without procession, to the quire.  

The instruction about returning 'without procession' is specific - and in a rite where the details and orders of processions are such a feature, a moment of disorder is unexpected. Presumably it not only echoed the similar instruction on Good Friday evening after the deposition at the sepulchre:

... all others shall go back as they please, in no fixed order

but was also intended to convey something of the confusion of the earliest New Testament witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

Following the placing of the cross on the north-side altar and the return of the participants to the choir, all the images and crosses throughout the church were uncovered, and the bells rung for Matins.

After the singing of Sext a great procession formed, which then made its way around the church and the cloisters as the choir sang 'Hail, festal day'. On returning to the church a station - focus point for special prayer - was kept at the cross, that is, at the great rood which, as in Lanfranc's Canterbury, would have been placed on a beam to the east of the nave. There the precentor began the anthem:

An angel stood at the sepulchre of the Lord, clad in shining raiment: the women beholding him, filled with exceeding terror, stood afar off. Then the angel spake, and said unto them, 'Fear not, I say unto you, for he whom ye seek among the dead now liveth, and the life of mankind has risen with him. Alleluia.'

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44 Ibid, p.264.
The words 'Fear not', etc, of the anthem then formed a responsory for this further statement proclaiming the glory of the Christ:

\[
Praise\ him\ who\ was\ crucified\ in\ the\ flesh;\ and\ glorify\ him\ who\ was\ buried\ on\ our\ behalf,\ and\ adore\ him\ who\ rose\ from\ the\ dead.^{46}\]

The procession made its way into the choir - and Mass followed.

From the description of the Sarum rite for Easter day, it can be seen that, apart from the processions, there are three powerful visual elements - the cross, laid in the sepulchre, later carried to a north-side chapel; the Host, taken from the sepulchre in its pyx to the tabernacle above the high altar; and the great rood^{47}, which became the station where the New Testament story of the angel and the Marys was rehearsed. In brief, the sepulchre itself, although a candle burned beside it, was not the focus of the Easter theological narrative - that had now become located in three different parts of the church.

In these circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that the Easter sepulchre, as a permanent and embellished piece of architectural furniture, is so elusive. It actually plays only a fleeting part in the Sarum Holy Week liturgies and 'resurrection' is centred elsewhere: on a cross, on the elevated Host and on the rood.

At the risk of oversimplification, it might be helpful at this stage to draw a comparison between the liturgies for Holy Week specified by the Regularis Concordia, the Decreta Lanfranci and the Sarum rite, as they relate to the Easter sepulchre.

1. **Regularis Concordia**

In the Regularis Concordia the narrative element of the liturgy is strong; one 'act' follows another in an orderly but vigorous fashion. It is the cross which carries the theological weight of the drama; it is adored (adoratio), buried (depositio) and raised (elevatio). The temporary sepulchre provides the locus not only for the depositio and elevatio but also

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^{47} The rood was also one of the major 'stations' in the Hereford/Rouen Palm Sunday rite - see Bishop 1918, p.292.
for the *visitatio sepulchri*. The cross 'personifies' the dead and risen Christ; there is no 'burial' or 'resurrection' of a consecrated Host.

2. **Décréta of Lanfranc**

In Lanfranc, the narrative drive of the Holy Week story has been sacrificed in the interests of a more cerebral exploration of the theological doctrine of the Mass. The Host becomes the carrier of theological weight; it is laid in 'an appropriate place' on Maundy Thursday and carried solemnly from that place to the altar on Good Friday. It should be noted that although there has been an *adoratio* ceremony of the cross on Good Friday, there is no *depositio* and no *visitatio sepulchri*. On Holy Saturday the great crucifix is the centre of attention, not the cross which was 'adored' on Good Friday. In these liturgical and theological circumstances, where attention has shifted to the Host and the rood, there is no need for an Easter sepulchre, either temporary or permanent.

3. **Sarum rite**

In the Sarum rite, elements from the *Regularis Concordia* and Lanfranc are combined; the narrative flow of the *Regularis Concordia* has, to a very limited extent, been rediscovered. The cross is 'adored' and 'buried' on Good Friday and 'raised', with much rejoicing and a solemn procession, on Easter Day. There is, however, no *visitatio sepulchri*.

The Host is 'buried' in the sepulchre with the cross on Good Friday and on Easter Day is placed centrally on the high altar - though, as noted, not with as much solemnity or ritual as is accorded to the cross. The procession to the great rood, which in Lanfranc took place on Holy Saturday, has now become part of the Easter Day celebration.

The theology of Easter Day is centred visually on the 'risen cross' (in its special place in the north side chapel), on the elevated Host at the high altar and on the great rood at the junction of the nave and the chancel. The unifying theological factor is, of course, the person of Christ: 'adored' in the cross, 'seen' in the Host and 'gazed at' on the rood. In these circumstances, especially when the reception of the Host at communion was such a significant and rare event for the participants, it is perhaps understandable that the Easter sepulchre itself should play such a secondary rôle. The theme of death and burial (shared by both cross and Host) is strong but perhaps not so dominant, and certainly not so
visually or theologically compelling as to require the creation of a permanent sepulchre. A temporary sepulchre would be a useful and honoured 'prop' - but perhaps no more than that. It could be argued that it played a similar rôle in late medieval liturgy to that played by the Christmas crib in contemporary worship - honoured and enjoyed, but then put away for another year.

Between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries it can be seen that theological attention has shifted from the centrality given to the cross in the *Regularis Concordia* to an increasing but not monopolistic attention given to the Host. The cross itself, however, remained a significant bearer of religious belief and emotional commitment, especially at the *adoratio*, for almost six centuries, that is until the reforms of the sixteenth century. The great rood came on to the liturgical scene in the eleventh century, presumably reflecting that shift towards affective spirituality which can be traced to Anselm (c1033-1109), amongst others.

The cross in the tenth and eleventh centuries was, essentially, personified. But in the twelfth century it began to be loaded with other cultural and doctrinal meanings - and therefore, presumably, the liturgies surrounding the Easter sepulchre took on a new colour. In the *Sarum* rite it is evident that the cross itself played a critical rôle. It was 'buried' with due reverence in the sepulchre on Good Friday. It was raised from the sepulchre on Easter Day and was carried by two priests in a procession, and was thus given a place of honour. The climax of the procession was arrived at when the cross was placed on a north side altar and was there adored, with accompanying genuflections.

In terms not only of its theological and liturgical function, but also because of its shape and size, the cross would have continued to play a determinative rôle in the Easter sepulchre structures, whether temporary or permanent.
Having outlined the liturgy (and its inherent theology) in the Sarum rite, the question of the nature and form of the Easter sepulchre used in that rite inevitably arises.

It has been shown that in the original rubrics the Easter sepulchre was said to have a door and was capable of receiving a pyx with a Host and a cross. But it also needs to be remembered that the rubrics were written for their original architectural setting, that is, Salisbury, and whereas that sepulchre, and the one in Hereford, presumably, had a door, it does not necessarily follow that all churches using the Sarum or the Hereford rites had exactly the same architectural provision. Indeed, if the references within the Sarum rite to the existence of a north-side chapel, where the cross was adored, are assumed to imply, or require, that every church using that rite had such a north-side chapel, the untenability of that assumption can be easily demonstrated by looking at the architectural configuration of many medieval churches. In other words, the Sarum rite rubrics would have had to be interpreted and adapted according to the vagaries of the architectural space available in each church using the rite.

But the question that follows from the description of the Sarum rite outlined in the previous pages is whether that rite might have necessitated or made desirable any form of permanent Easter sepulchre. In particular, were aumbries the earliest form? It is possible to see why Sheingorn, in trying to bring some degree of order and pattern to the story of Easter sepulchres in England, argues that the prototype of permanent Easter sepulchres was

\[ A \text{ simple small recess in the north chancel wall, possibly entirely plain, with or without a door} \]

Following the lead of Heales she begins to lay the foundations for her hypothesis about the significance of the north wall of the chancel as the classical locus for Easter sepulchres. She suggests that aumbries\(^1\)/lockers on the north wall may have functioned as such sepulchres:

\(^1\) Sheingorn 1985, p.35.
\(^2\) For a detailed history of the aumbry, see Dix 1942.
Given that the location of this recess is the same as that of an Easter Sepulchre and that its function in general centered on the safekeeping of sacred objects, Alfred Heales is surely correct in suggesting that such a recess could well have been used as an Easter Sepulchre.

It may be that Heales in his undoubted enthusiasm for Easter sepulchres has misled Sheingorn and others who have accepted, unchallenged, his original statement. Writing in 1868 and describing tomb recesses, Heales states:

In the overwhelming majority of churches there is no such tomb-like recess, but we do find, very frequently indeed, a small arched or square headed recess to the north-west of the altar, sometimes with a modern door remaining, and always with the marks of hinges and bolts; this, which we commonly call an aumbry, would be extremely suitable as the depository for the pyx or the pyx and crucifix; and it seems exceedingly likely that it was intended to receive them in Holy Week, rather than to entrust them (as must elsewhere have been the case) to the temporary wooden structure.

The difficulties with the Heales/Sheingorn hypothesis - that lockers on the north wall of the chancel were 'exceedingly likely' to have been used as Easter sepulchres - are, firstly, that it fails to take seriously enough the dominant metaphor of 'burial' within the Sarum rite version of the Easter sepulchre liturgy and, secondly, that it also fails to analyse the great variety of places within church buildings in which lockers are actually found.

To take the latter point first – I drew up a database of such lockers within the counties of Buckinghamshire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire and Westmorland, and using the RCHM survey of each of those counties as the main source of information, the statistics of lockers in each county are as follows:

1 Sheingorn 1987, p.36.
2 Heales 1868.
3 Amongst the others is A. A. King, who states:
Many of the aumbries to be met with in parish churches and cathedrals would have served as Easter sepulchres, reliquaries or receptacles for books and sacred vessels.
[King 1965, p.97.]
4 Heales 1868, p.296.
1. Buckinghamshire has a total of 52 lockers, of which only 23 (44.4%) are in the north wall of the chancel, 7 are in the south wall of the chancel and the remainder are in other parts of the church.

2. Herefordshire has a total of 49 lockers, of which only 13 (26.5%) are in the north wall of the chancel, 5 are in the south wall and the remainder (31) are found elsewhere in the church.

3. Hertfordshire has a total of 18 lockers of which only 6 (33.3%) are in the north wall of the chancel, 1 is in the south wall and the remainder (11) are found in a variety of settings in the church.

4. Westmorland has a total of 7 lockers of which only 3 are in the north wall of the chancel.

Thus of the 126 lockers in the churches of these four counties, only 45 (35.7%) are in the north wall of the chancel, 13 are in the south wall; ie 46% of all lockers are in the chancel whereas the remainder, 54%, are scattered in various parts of the church. Weston-under-Penyard and Fownhope in Herefordshire, for example, both have lockers in the second stage of a tower. Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, and St Michael's, St Albans, in Hertfordshire, have lockers on what is now the outside walls of their churches – perhaps used by anchorites? A number of churches, for example, St Ippolyts in Hertfordshire and Marsh Gibbon in Buckinghamshire, have double lockers, and there are others, such as St James, Hanslope, in Buckinghamshire and Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire, where there are no fewer than three lockers in the chancel.

This would seem, on the face of it, to suggest that lockers were multipurpose storage cupboards whose location in the liturgical topography of the churches was not necessarily very significant. Van Dijk and Hazelden Walker refer in their work on eucharistic reservation to a 'miracle' related to an aumbry (locker) which reveals the use to which such lockers may have been put:

*Rupert of Deutz, d.1135, records how a wooden pyx with the sacrament was in its usual place near the altar in a wooden cupboard with a door and lock. With the pyx were other vessels destined for the sacred ministry, namely another pyx with

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7 Flood 1993, p.83.
unconsecrated hosts, cruets, a censer, candles and some linen. All was burnt [in a fire] except the pyx with the sacrament.

It needs to be noted that there is an irresolvable dispute between Dix who claimed that in England the reserved sacrament, from the twelfth century onwards, was invariably kept in a pyx suspended above the high altar - and Van Dijk and Hazelden Walker, who claim that

Eucharistic reservation has varied greatly throughout the centuries and at no time and in no place should uniformity be expected.

They then go on to say

There must have been many exceptions to the suspended pyx style of reservation.

They do acknowledge, however, that

those [aumbries] which survive and, in one way or another, show their eucharistic purpose appear to date from the fifteenth century onwards.

As for the function of aumbries, they see that function in multipurpose terms:

The purpose of aumbries is obvious ... the storage of valuables for the ministry, such as holy oils, candles, cruets, incense, linen, etc, and the holy eucharist as well.

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8 Dijk 1957, p.40.
9 Dix 1942, p.25:
   Suspension [of the pyx containing the reserved sacrament, ie consecrated hosts] was common but not the universal rule in France; it was never very common in Germany outside the Rhineland ... from the twelfth century onwards the suspension of the sacrament over the high altar was the universal rule in Ecclesia Anglicana ... and there is no reason to suppose that it had ever varied since before the Norman Conquest.
10 Dijk 1957, p.25.
11 Ibid, p.43.
12 Ibid, p.43.
Miri Rubin, in her major study of the Corpus Christi festival in northern Europe, draws attention to an order from Bishop Walpole of Ely in 1300:

_We ordain that henceforth the pyx with Christ's body and the chrismatory containing the oil for the sick be placed in the new chapel situated near the old bell-tower, and there it should be kept respectfully under the safe custody of keys, so that day and night the secular priests who will be in charge of administration of sacraments at the time, will be able to lay hands on them easily, and to fulfil their duties without any danger_14.

His ordinance could be taken to imply that aumbries/lockers were the place where the reserved sacrament was kept (though it is clear that he has a particular building in mind) and might refute Dix's bold assertion that hanging pyxes were the invariable means of reservation in England. Miri Rubin points out that

_Pyxes were meant to be closed and with a lock; the requirements of Bishop Quivil of Exeter in 1287 were: 'The eucharist pyx should be of silver or at least of ivory with a lock'_.15

It is possible, therefore, that Bishop Walpole's edict refers not to an aumbry but to a pyx, though an aumbry seems the most likely interpretation of his instructions.

If lockers really are cupboards for storage, does it not suggest that they would be unlikely to be used as Easter sepulchres because they neither had the physical characteristics which lent themselves to the 'burial' metaphor of the Good Friday rites, nor did they have that sense of being supremely and uniquely important from a dramatic and theological point of view? A cupboard, used daily for other things, would hardly convey the notion of 'tomb', let alone 'the Lord's tomb' to anyone.

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13 Dijk 1957, p.42.
15 Ibid, p.45.
Further evidence in favour of the suggestion that aumbries were simply multifunctional cupboards is provided by Francis Bond in *The Chancel of English Churches*\(^{16}\). In a chapter of that book devoted to aumbries, he argues that aumbries and the parish chest were the equivalent of what would later become the vestry, i.e., a place for storage for a variety of objects, including valuable silverware and liturgical garments. He quotes extensively from the *Rites of Durham*, thus:

> At Durham every altar had 'several aumbrie [sic] and some two' ... 'In the north side of the quire there is an Almerye, near to the High Altar, fastened in the wall, for to lay anything pertaining to the High Altar. Likewise there is another Almerye in the south wall of the quire, nigh the High Altar, enclosed in the wall, to set the chalices, the basons and the crewetts in ...'\(^{17}\).

In the *Rites of Durham*, the very detailed description of the Easter ceremonies, including an account of the *Christus* monstrance figure, is followed immediately by a description of the aumbries. It might have been expected that if any of the aumbries were used at Durham as an Easter sepulchre, that would have been mentioned but, in fact, no connection is made.

In the colour plates of the lockers which follow (they have been collected as the result of personal visits to churches in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire for the purposes of research for this thesis), it is possible to see quite clearly that the metaphor of burial, so prevalent within the Holy Week liturgy, is not given plastic form; rather, the lockers by their design speak loudly and simply of their functionality. They do not appear to have any architectural features to indicate that they might have been prototypical Easter sepulchres.

**Locker images, details and measurements**

These locker images, together with information concerning details and measurements, have been extracted from a database specially compiled for this research. The prints consist of identified lockers where both images and measurements have been acquired. Each locker has been categorised into the following types: 1) simple, square, open

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\(^{16}\) Bond 1916.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, pp.206-208.
recess; 2) simple, square, rebated for door; 3) double lockers, rebated; 4) triple lockers; 5) arched lockers; and 6) others.

**Locker categories**

1. **Simple, square, open recess**

   Examples of this type of locker may be found at:

   a) **Luton, St Mary, Bedfordshire** *(Fig. 7)*

      Measuring 17" by 18" by 13", this locker is in the south aisle, west of the south transept.

      Pevsner does not identify or comment upon this locker\(^{18}\); neither does Cobbe\(^{19}\).

   b) **Oakley, St Mary, Buckinghamshire** *(Fig. 8)*

      This is a 13" square recess in the north wall of the tower.

      The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments states:

      *Locker: in N. wall of tower, rectangular [sic], without rebate\(^{20}\).*

   c) **Tring, St Peter and St Paul, Hertfordshire** *(Fig. 9)*

      Undated, this locker measures 19" by 15" by 11" and is positioned 13" above floor level in the north wall of the chancel below a thirteenth-century window.

      Pevsner does not mention this locker\(^{21}\).

      The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments states:

      *Locker: in N. wall of chancel small recess\(^{22}\).*

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19 See Cobbe 1899.
20 Royal Commission 1912, p.264.
22 Royal Commission 1910, p.223.
Fig. 7

Square locker  [Luton, St Mary, Bedfordshire]
Square locker  [Oakley, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
Square locker  [Tring, St Peter & St Paul, Hertfordshire]
Sheingorn speculates that this might be an Easter sepulchre:

?ESp; rectangular recess in N wall of chancel below 13c lancet window\(^{23}\).

2. **Lockers: simple, rebated for door**

Examples may be found at:

a) **Houghton Conquest, All Saints, Bedfordshire** (Fig.10)

This is a (possibly) fifteenth-century locker in the south aisle wall, measuring 12" by 12" by 9½".

Pevsner does not identify or comment upon this locker in the south aisle wall, nor upon the other two lockers in the chancel\(^{24}\).

Winlaw writes:

... in the south aisle there are evidences of a small piscina and another aumbry\(^{25}\).

b) **Swineshead, St Nicholas, Bedfordshire** (Fig.11)

Measuring 16" by 14" by 11\(\frac{1}{2}\)\", this locker/recess is to be found in the north chancel.

Pevsner does not mention this locker\(^{26}\).

Sheingorn does not include this church in her survey.

c) **Upper Dean, All Hallows, Bedfordshire** (Fig.12)

Placed in the north wall of the thirteenth-century chancel, this locker measures 26" by 20" by 12".


\(^{25}\) G. P. K. Winlaw in his undated church guide: *The History of All Saints Church*, p.4.

Simple locker, rebated  [Houghton Conquest, All Saints, Bedfordshire]
Simple locker, rebated  [Swineshead, St Nicholas, Bedfordshire]
Fig. 12

Simple locker, rebated  [Upper Dean, All Hallows, Bedfordshire]
Pevsner does not identify or refer to this locker in the chancel.\(^7\)

Sheingorn refers to the parish as Dean (Nether) and also states that it is dedicated to All Saints. She describes the locker as

**ESp locker in N wall of a 13c chancel.**\(^8\)

(Pevsner dates the chancel to the early fourteenth century.\(^2\))

Wade, in the parish guide, does not identify or refer to the locker.

d) Yelden, St Mary, Bedfordshire (Fig. 13)

There would originally have been two adjacent lockers in the north chancel wall. The larger, measuring 17" by 18", has an unknown depth, owing to a memorial brass covering. The smaller and still useable locker/recess, measuring 15" by 10" by 11", extends irregularly inwards, westward, towards the inner wall of the larger recess.

Pevsner does not identify or comment upon the existing locker in the north wall of the chancel.\(^9\)

Sheingorn does not identify or comment upon either of these recesses. She does however refer to

**ESp in N wall of chancel; recess with trefoiled arch that has 2 pinholes in cusps**.\(^10\)

e) Clothall, St Mary, Hertfordshire (Fig. 14)

This is an undated locker, measuring 23" by 23" by 14½", in the north chancel at the east end.

The locker is not noted nor identified by Pevsner.\(^11\)

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\(^7\) See Pevsner 2002 (a), p.74.

\(^8\) Sheingorn 1987, p.80.


\(^12\) See Pevsner 2002 (b), p.132.
Simple locker(s), rebated  [Yelden, St Mary, Bedfordshire]
Simple locker, rebated  [Clothall, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments mentions a locker:

... in chancel, on N.E., square [and] in chapel, on N.W., square \(^{33}\).

- but I have been unable to discover the latter.

f) St Albans Abbey, Hertfordshire (Fig. 15)
This is an undated recess in the eleventh-century north wall of the south ambulatory; it measures 23" by 21" by 20".
Pevsner does not mention this locker in his description of the Abbey\(^ {34}\).
The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments sites the locker

In the N. respond of the arch between the S. aisle of the presbytery and the S. transept \(^ {35}\).

Neale in his work of 1877\(^ {36}\) does not identify or comment upon the locker illustrated (in Fig.15).
The HMSO guide\(^ {37}\) does not identify or comment upon the locker illustrated – and using the plan\(^ {38}\) provided in the guide of the positions of medieval altars, it may be seen that the locker is not near any of the known medieval altars.

g) Sarratt, Holy Cross, Hertfordshire (Fig.16)
This locker, with an actual internal recess measuring 23" by 24" (depth unknown) has a modern safe door measuring 14" by 14". It is situated 27" above the floor in the fourteenth century north wall of the chancel, which was lengthened in the fourteenth century.
Simple locker, rebated [St Albans, Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, Hertfordshire]
Fig. 16

Simple locker, rebated  [Sarratt, Holy Cross, Hertfordshire]
There is no mention of this locker by Pevsner in his description of the church.

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments does mention this locker:

... in N. wall of chancel, small, square.

Sheingorn describes this locker:

ESp & square-headed aumbry in N wall of chancel both date from 14c when chancel was lengthened; ESp has modern trefoiled head. [See also Fig 37]

h) Aston Sandford, St Michael, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 17)

This undated recess, measuring 17" by 18" by 12", is in the east wall of the chancel which was rebuilt in the fifteenth century.

The locker is not referred to by Pevsner in his description of the church.

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments states:

The Chancel ... appears to have been rebuilt in the 13th century ... Locker: in N. wall of the chancel, rectangular [sic], with rebated edges.

Sheingorn does not include this church in her survey.

i) Dinton, St Peter and St Paul, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 18)

Nearly square, measuring 20" by 19" by 13½" deep, this simple recess with rebated edges is in the north wall of what is probably a thirteenth-century chancel.

See Pevsner 2002 (b), pp. 332-333.

Royal Commission 1910, p. 201.

Shewing 1987, p. 166. She attributes her information to volume 2 of the Victoria History of the County of Hertford.

See Pevsner 1960, p. 53.

Royal Commission 1912, p. 22.
Simple locker, rebated  [Aston Sandford, St Michael, Buckinghamshire]
Fig. 18

Simple locker, rebated  [Dinton, St Peter & St Paul, Buckinghamshire]
Pevsner does not refer to this locker.\(^{44}\)

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments describes the recess as being

\[
\text{Locker: in N. wall of chancel, square, with rebated edges, probably old, re-touled. [Chancel is thirteenth century]}
\]

Sheingorn does not include this church in her survey.

\(j\) Hulcott, All Saints, Buckinghamshire \((\text{Fig. 19})\)

This is a simple, rebated locker with a modern door placed in the north-east wall of the south chapel, measuring a nominal 30" by 30" by 19" (it narrows internally to a wedge shape).

There is no note of the locker in Pevsner.\(^{46}\)

\(k\) Little Brickhill, St Mary Magdalene, Buckinghamshire \((\text{See Fig. 20})\)

This simple rebated locker measures 19" x 20" x 17" and dates from the sixteenth century or later. It is positioned in the east wall of the south chapel to the north of the east window.

There is no mention of this locker in Pevsner's work.\(^{47}\)

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments describes this as

\[
\text{Locker: in S. chapel - in E. wall, below string-course N. of E. window, square, 16th-century or later date, oak door made from 17th-century panel.}
\]

Sheingorn does not include this locker in her survey.

\(^{44}\) See Pevsner 1960, pp.106-107.

\(^{45}\) Royal Commission 1912, p.125.

\(^{46}\) See Pevsner 1960, pp.173-174.

\(^{47}\) See Ibid, p.189.

\(^{48}\) Royal Commission 1913, p.175.
Fig. 19

Simple locker, rebated [Hulcott, All Saints, Buckinghamshire]
Simple locker, rebated  [Little Brickhill, St Mary Magdalene, Buckinghamshire]
l) **Pitstone, St Mary, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 21)**
This rebated locker recess measures 24" by 14" by 19" and is situated in the north chapel between the north windows. It is undated.

Pevsner does not mention the locker.⁴⁹

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments states:

**Locker:** In N. chapel - between the N. windows, square, with deep rebate, hinges, and hasp for lock.⁵⁰

Sheingorn does not include this church in her survey.

m) **Upper Winchendon, St Mary Magdalene, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 22)**
This is a medieval recess/locker, measuring 16" x 19" x 18", in the north wall of the chancel.

The recess is not mentioned by Pevsner in his general description of the church.⁵¹

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, however, notes the following:

**Locker:** in N. wall of chancel, plain, square, with old wooden lining.⁵²

Sheingorn does not include this locker in her survey.

3. **Double lockers, rebated**

Examples may be found at:

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⁴⁹ *See Pevsner 1960, p.224.*

⁵⁰ *Royal Commission 1913, p.238.*

⁵¹ *See Pevsner 1960, p.273.*

⁵² *Royal Commission 1912, p.300.*
Fig. 21

Simple locker, rebated  [Pitstone, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
Simple locker, rebated  *Upper Winchendon, St Mary Magdalene, Buckinghamshire*
a) **St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire (Fig. 23)**

This is an undated pair of simple rebated lockers, found in the north wall of the chancel. The left-hand recess measures 16" x 13" x 13" and is 56" above floor; the right-hand one measures 25" x 29¼" x 13½" and is 49" above floor.

Pevsner does not identify or refer to these lockers.

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments refers to the lockers:

... two, in the N. wall of the chancel.

Sheingorn does not refer to this church in her survey.

b) **Irechester, St Katherine, Northants (Fig. 24)**

This pair of double rebated locker recesses are in the south chancel wall and both measure 22" x 16" x 14".

Sheingorn draws attention to another feature in Irechester church, namely

... niche with straight-sided pediment enclosing quatrefoil near NE corner of chancel.

- but she makes no reference to this pair of lockers (double aumbry) on the south wall of the chancel.

4. **Triple lockers**

An example may be found at:

**Oakley, St Mary, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 25)**

These three locker recesses are in the south wall of the chancel and are stacked one on top of the other. The two top ones measure 9½" by 13" by 11" and the one at the bottom measures 10" by 8" by 11". The recesses are undated but appear retooled.

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54 Royal Commission 1910, p.130.
Double lockers, rebated [St Ippolyts, St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire]
Double lockers, rebated  [Irchester, St Katherine, Northamptonshire]
Fig. 25

Triple lockers  [Oakley, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
Pevsner does not refer to this set of triple locker recesses⁵⁶ and neither does the RCHM inventory for Buckinghamshire, nor Sheingorn.

5. **Arched lockers**

Examples may be found at:

a) **Arlesey, St Peter, Bedfordshire (Fig. 26)**

   This undated arched locker/aumbry, measuring 26" (to peak) by 21" by 17", is in the north chancel wall.

   Pevsner does not refer to this locker in his description of the church⁵⁷.

b) **King's Langley, All Saints, Hertfordshire (Fig. 27)**

   This is a pair of thirteenth-century arched double recesses, measuring 34" to peak by 19" by 18½" - one a piscina and one a locker (?) - in the south wall of the chancel.

   Pevsner only identifies and comments on the piscina:

   *The only indications of pre-c15 architecture are the c13 PISCINA in the chancel wall⁵⁸.*

   He does not refer to it as a double piscina because only one of the recesses is clearly a piscina.

   The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments refers to the recesses as a piscina

   *... in the S. wall of the chancel, 13th-century, with locker⁵⁹.*

   The Parish Guide also makes reference to the recesses but describes them (inaccurately) as being a

---

⁵⁶ See Pevsner 1960, pp.218-219.
⁵⁷ See Pevsner 2002 (a), p.42.
⁵⁹ Royal Commission 1910, p.134.
Fig. 26

Arched locker [Arlesey, St Peter, Bedfordshire]
Arched double lockers  [Kings Langley, All Saints, Hertfordshire]
...fine double piscina, probably of the late thirteenth century, which is a little overwhelmed by its striking neighbour, the reredos (erected in 1878)\(^6\).

It is possible that one of the recesses was changed from being a piscina to a locker at a date later than the thirteenth century.

c) Stagsden, St Leonard, Bedfordshire (Fig. 28)
This arched locker recess measures 11" by 14" by 10" and is in the south chancel wall.

Pevsner does not mention this recess in his description of the church\(^6^1\). Sheingorn refers to an arched recess which, in her categorisation, she suggests might possibly be an Easter sepulchre:

\[?E\text{Sp/aumbry; shoulder-arched recess in wall of } N\text{ chancel near E end; } 13c.\]

The Parish Guide draws attention to the arched recess:

\[On \text{ the south wall a fourteenth-century piscina } ...\text{ and a small arched recess in the wall.}\]

d) Shelton, St Mary, Bedfordshire (Fig. 29)
This arched recess is in the north wall of the chancel and measures 20" by 21" by 11". It may be observed that the inner surface is irregular with sunken two-level rectangular cut-outs. The recess is datable to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

Pevsner does not mention this recess in his description of the church\(^6^4\).

\(^6^0\) W. C. R. Hicks: All Saints Church, King's Langley: Tomb of Edmund of Langley and Isabel of Castile, [Langley PCC], 1976, pp.4-5.

\(^6^1\) See Pevsner 2002 (a), p.147.

\(^6^2\) Sheingorn 1987, p.85.

\(^6^3\) The undated church guide, to which no author is attributed: St Leonard's Church, Stagsden, [St Leonard's PCC], p.2.
Fig. 28

Arched locker  [Stagsden, St Leonard, Bedfordshire]
Fig. 29

Arched locker  *[Shelton, St Mary, Bedfordshire]*
Sheingorn refers to this locker recess in her work:

\textit{?ESp: triangular-arched recess in N wall of chancel; W half of sill has rectangular sinking}.^65

In fact the west half of the sill has two rectangular cut-outs, one inside the other.

6. \textbf{Others}

These include the following at:

a) Tingrith, St Nicholas, Bedfordshire \textit{(Fig. 30)}

This locker recess, measuring 20" by 10" by 9", does not fit into any of the preceding categories and I have therefore listed it under 'others'. Situated in the north wall of the chancel, the recess penetrates through to the vestry.

Pevsner does not mention this locker recess in his brief description of the church.\footnote{See Pevsner 2002 (a), pp.142-143.}

Sheingorn describes this recess as

\textit{?ESp: small cinquefoiled opening in N wall of chancel blocked by buttress; 1450-1500}.^67

In fact the opening referred to by Sheingorn is continuous from the chancel to the vestry, where the opening has been extended and now houses a Victorian (?) safe. Because the floor level of the chancel has been raised (the vestry floor to the north side is much lower), it is difficult to imagine what the function of the opening might have been. It is conceivable that it was a squint (but it would be rare for a squint to be given an elaborate cinquefoiled treatment). Also it might just possibly

\footnote{Sheingorn 1987, p.84.}

\footnote{Sheingorn 1987, p.85.}

\footnote{See Pevsner 2002 (a), p.156.}
Fig. 30

Locker recess [Tingrith, St Nicholas, Bedfordshire]
have been a 'low-side' window from which, it is said, the clerk rang a
hand-bell at the elevation of the Mass.

b) *Irchester, St Katherine*, Northants *(Fig. 31)*

This recess measures 20" by 19" by 18" (the depth is irregular, being
deeper to the left).

Sheingorn refers to this locker recess:

> ?ESp; niche with straight-sided pediment enclosing quatrefoil
> near NE corner of chancel; ledge or bowl below, now at floor
> level, but floor has been raised 2 feet; hole in wall at back of niche
> has suggested use for baking altar-breads; use as ESp also
> possible ... 13c. 68.

* * * * *

Having looked carefully at the *Sarum* rite (taking due cognisance of the fact that the
liturgy would have had a determinative effect upon the design of Easter sepulchres) and
having looked at a wide variety of lockers, it is possible to come to some *tentative*
conclusions:

1. Lockers were used as multipurpose cupboards -- the very design and the variety
   of locations of lockers seems to bear this out.

2. To extrapolate from sixteenth-century written accounts (in which the testator
   requests that his body be buried on the north side of the altar where the sepulchre
   was 'wont to stand') a hypothesis that therefore any niche, locker or recess on the
   north side of the altar would have been an Easter sepulchre is not supported by
   the visual or liturgical evidence.

3. The primary liturgical act essential to the *Sarum* rite concerning Easter sepulchres
   was the 'burial' of a cross and a consecrated Host. This suggests very strongly
   that the ruling metaphor of the ceremonies was 'burial and resurrection', in which

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Fig. 31

Locker recess  [Irchester, St Katherine, Northamptonshire]
case a multipurpose cupboard would not adequately give expression to that concept.

4. If lockers were Easter sepulchres, one might have expected them to have been given more significant architectural treatment than is in fact the case in the vast majority of instances. The lockers that have been described and illustrated thus far are remarkably plain and undifferentiated.

However, there are five lockers which have not yet featured but which have been described by others from time to time as Easter sepulchres – and thus, before coming to any final and firm conclusion, it is necessary to look at each of them in turn.

a) **Aston Clinton, St Michael**

The niche featured in *Fig. 32* has been heavily restored over the years. It was first noted as an Easter sepulchre by 'P' (Samuel Pegge), a contributor to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1796. He wrote:

"In the North wall ... is a small niche with a flowered arch, bouquet point and on top of the pillars two figures, that on the West broken, on the East a female. On each side of the pillars is a very narrow slit. Whether this is the remains of a holy sepulchre must be left to the determination of better judges."  

George Lipscomb, visiting Aston Clinton fifty-one years later, in 1847, described this recess as

"... an arched niche with a canopy ornamented with trefoils, a flowered finial between two small mutilated statues, one on the dexter side with both legs broken off and only a small portion of the drapery remaining, the other decapitated."

It is to be noted that Lipscomb did not venture an opinion about whether it was an Easter sepulchre or not.

69 *Gentleman’s Magazine* 1796, p.841.

Fig. 32

Locker, restored  [Aston Clinton, St Michael, Buckinghamshire]
On 8th August 1895 the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society made an excursion to the church and noted that on the north side of the chancel there was

... a beautiful ogee arch\(^71\)

but, like Lipscomb, did not suggest that the niche might be an Easter sepulchre.

The *Victoria History for the County of Buckingham* simply referred to it as

... much restored\(^72\)

but stated that it was 'possibly' an Easter sepulchre\(^73\). A few years later, in 1912, the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments classified it as an Easter sepulchre:

*Easter Sepulchre:* in N. wall of chancel (2ft. 2in. wide, 10 in. deep), with trefoiled, ogee head, crocketed label and carved finial, pilasters at the sides with corbels carved as heads of knights in mail coifs, late 14th-century, much restored; the tops of knights' coifs, pilasters above them, with carved angel finials, modern\(^74\).

Pevsner, several decades later, also referred to the chancel as being heavily restored [by E. B. Lamb, 1849-50] but merely refers to the niche as a recess\(^75\).

Previous scholars, then, are not agreed about its function, though it would seem from the brightly painted angels of a recent restoration, that there is an attempt to ensure that it should be 'read' as an Easter sepulchre.

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\(^71\) Downs 1897, p.468.
\(^72\) Page 1908 (b), p.317.
\(^73\) Ibid, p.317.
\(^74\) Royal Commission 1912, p.20.
\(^75\) Pevsner 1960, p.53.
The difficulty of agreeing with that interpretation relates to its dimensions. It is thirty-six inches high, twenty-six inches wide but only fourteen inches deep, and it is designed around a vertical axis - and, as a result, it does not, by its design, make any reference to the death and burial theme of the Sarum rite. Any cross in this niche would have to be placed vertically rather than horizontally - and this could therefore mean that it was the niche in which the 'raised' cross was placed on Easter Day (in the Sarum rite, it will be recalled, the cross was venerated in a north-side chapel).

The restoration has been so heavy and so clumsily didactic that it makes analysis quite complicated. Whilst the recess might originally have functioned as the niche for the venerated cross, it might equally well have been used simply as an image niche (the carved corbel of a knight's head in a mailed hood was part of the restoration programme; it was not part of the engraving in the Gentleman's Magazine article of 1796). What the niche speaks of most clearly is the determination of a zealous and heavy-handed restorer to ensure that it should be regarded as an Easter sepulchre - and one can only guess at the motivation lying behind that.

b) Furneux Pelham, St Mary (Fig 33)

This, like Aston Clinton, has also been heavily restored, though not with such exuberant didacticism. Again, the interpretation of this particular niche over the centuries is interesting. Chauncy, visiting Furneux Pelham in the early eighteenth century, does not refer to the niche56, nor does Salmon in 1728; the latter wrote simply:

The Church consists of a Chancel and three Isles [sic] and a Chapel open to the rest, East of the South Isle77.
Fig. 33

Locker, restored

[Furneux Pelham, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
Cussans, in 1872, refers to the niche as a

... *lancet-headed aumbrey*\(^78\)

In 1910, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments' inventory for Hertfordshire expresses certainty about the niche being an Easter sepulchre:

Easter Sepulchre: in N. wall of chancel, recess with modern arch\(^79\).

In contrast, the *Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, a few years later in 1914, is not quite so positive in its assertion. It first describes the chancel as being of late thirteenth-century date and then later states:

*In the north wall is a small recess with trefoil-arched head, all of modern stonework, possibly an Easter sepulchre*\(^80\).

However, the certainty of the Royal Commission report is echoed by some later writers. G. H. Cameron, writing in 1939-1940, says:

*Other things of interest in the chancel include the Easter Sepulchre which, except the stone work at the back, has been entirely renewed*\(^81\).

And Whitelaw, writing in 1990, also describes the niche as an Easter sepulchre:

*Inside are the thirteenth-century three-fold sedilia with piscina, together with an Easter sepulchre in the chancel*\(^82\).

Pevsner, however, does not categorise the niche as an Easter sepulchre\(^83\).

The pattern of interpretation, therefore, moves from no comment in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, to certainty in the second decade

\(^{78}\) Cussans 1872, p.150.

\(^{79}\) Royal Commission 1910, p.91.

\(^{80}\) Page 1914, p.104.

\(^{81}\) Cameron 1940, p.176.

\(^{82}\) Whitelaw 1990, p.95.

\(^{83}\) See Pevsner 2002 (b), p.144.
of the twentieth century. But apart from noticing that pattern (it will be explored further in Chapter 10 of this thesis), it is also important to recognise that this niche was part of the restoration programme in the nineteenth century. It has to be asked whether that programme, perhaps like Aston Clinton's, was influenced by those Victorian ecclesiologists who wished to discover Easter sepulchres in medieval churches (see later, in Chapter 11).

The main question to be asked, however, also relates to its design. It has a marked vertical axis and, as has been suggested in relation to Aston Clinton, this does not fit easily with the death and burial theme of the Sarum rite. Is it not possibly more plausible to read this niche as either an aumbry or a credence or as an image recess? A comparison of the illustration with that of a fresco by Taddeo Gaddi (Fig.34) of two fictive niches c.1328-1334, at the base of the east wall of the Baroncelli Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence\(^\text{84}\), suggests that to describe the niche as a kind of aumbry/credence is probably more accurate than positing its use as an Easter sepulchre.

c) Redbourn, St Mary (Fig.35)

The interpretation of this niche follows the pattern outlined in relation to Aston Clinton and Furneux Pelham; neither Chauncey nor Salmon, writing in the eighteenth century about Redbourn, mention the recess. Clutterbuck, however, in 1815, refers in some detail to two recesses on the south wall of the chancel\(^\text{85}\) but fails to refer to the niche opposite. Cussans, writing in 1881, states very firmly that the niche is an Easter sepulchre:

\[\text{In the south chancel wall ... is a large double sedile ... and on the north side is an Easter Sepulchre}\]\(^\text{86}\).

Perhaps, surprisingly, neither the Victoria History of the County of Hertford of 1908 nor the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments' inventory for Hertfordshire of 1910, claim that the recess is an Easter sepulchre. Similarly, in

\(^\text{84}\) For an essay on the Baroncelli Chapel, see Norman 1995 (b), esp. pp.169-179.

\(^\text{85}\) Clutterbuck 1815, p.183.

\(^\text{86}\) Cussans 1881, p.234.
From a fresco by Taddeo Gaddi [Baroncelli Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence]
Fig. 35

Locker [Redbourn, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
the first edition of 1953, Pevsner does not speculate on its function, merely stating:

*The Piscina and Sedilia and a recess in the N chancel wall are ogee-headed.* 87

However, the second edition of 1977 Pevsner, revised by Bridget Cherry, continues the quotation above:

... *perhaps of c.1350, above an earlier Purbeck shaft and capital of the C13. - EASTER SEPULCHRE, also C14.* 88

Whitelaw also claims that the recess is an Easter sepulchre 89.

A careful examination of the recess is necessary because its form tends, again, to suggest that it has a strong vertical axis. In fact, its horizontal axis is greater than its vertical axis (twenty-three inches long; seventeen and a half inches high). It is capable therefore of receiving a cross laid flat, as though for burial. Compared with the other lockers in the church its horizontality is quite marked. Patently it did not have a door (there are no rebates) and was, therefore, not a multipurpose cupboard. It could have been an image niche, though its lack of verticality would argue against that. It could have been a credence but in this case, where it is also designed as a niche of some significance, it seems reasonable to conclude that it might be an Easter sepulchre. From a liturgical point of view, it fits all the requirements. However, the lack of detail at the base of the mouldings might suggest that this niche could be a nineteenth-century antiquarian reconstruction, having used materials that were to hand during the nineteenth-century refurbishment of the church.

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87 Pevsner 1953, p.190.
88 Pevsner 2002 (b), p.276. The information relating to the Easter sepulchre is stated as being supplied by Mr. A. Featherstone.
89 Whitelaw 1990, p.115.
d) Sandon, All Saints. (Fig. 36)

The antiquarian pattern of interpretation is the same as that for Furneux Pelham and Redbourn; neither Chauncy nor Salmon, writing in the eighteenth century, make any reference to the niche, and nor does Clutterbuck, writing in 1815; but, by the 1880s, the definition of the purpose of the niche as an Easter sepulchre has made its first appearance:

There is an aperture in the wall under a single widely-splayed arch ... It is difficult to determine the purpose it was intended to serve. It is not in the place where aumbreys are usually to be met with, and may have been devised as an Easter sepulchre.

It is almost possible to hear Cussans thinking aloud as he goes through the options of what the recess might be.

In 1905, F. W. Low gave a paper about Sandon Church to the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society; in it he wrote:

But the most interesting feature is undoubtedly the crocketted recess in the north wall within the Communion area. It originally had a door in front, (the hole for the hinge may be seen at the bottom), and [it] seems most likely that it was intended as an 'Easter Sepulchre', in which the reserved Host was kept from Maundy Thursday until Easter Day.

Again, the measurement of this recess may be significant. As can be seen, it is twelve inches high, twenty-three and a half inches wide and only eleven inches deep. It is designed on a horizontal axis and thus echoes the death and burial motif of the Sarum rite. The treatment of the finials indicates that this recess was regarded as having significance – a comparison with examples of multipurpose cupboards makes this quite clear. But whilst a cross could be laid horizontally in such a chamber, it would, of necessity, be quite small, that is, it could only have a maximum cross-arm width of ten inches and a height, when standing, of twenty inches.

Cussans 1873, p.156.
Low 1906, pp.45-46.
Fig. 36
[see also Frontispiece, Fig. 1]

Locker  [Sandon, All Saints, Hertfordshire]
Nevertheless, if this particular locker is seen within its original liturgical context, it seems sensible to designate it as a possible Easter sepulchre.

c) **Sarratt, Holy Cross (Figs. 16 and 37)**

Sarratt has the distinction of having two recesses on the north side of the chancel, in close proximity. The first is a square-headed aumbry (see earlier in this chapter, page 108) with a recess for a door, measuring twenty-three inches by twenty-four (the depth is unknown); the second recess, within twelve inches of the square-headed aumbry, is twenty-six inches high, eighteen inches wide and seventeen inches in depth, and has a strong vertical axis.

Chauncy does not record the existence of either of these niches; Salmon remarks that in the chancel there is

... _a Nich [sic] for holy Water, and two others for Images at half Length._

Clutterbuck does not record the recesses on the north side of the chancel but does refer to the piscina on the south side.

Cussans, in 1881, says:

> _In the north wall of the chancel is a deep apsidal niche, which may have been an Easter sepulchre._

In 1895, F. T. Davys wrote a paper for the St Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society about Sarratt Church:

> _On the North side of the Chancel is a small apsidal trefoiled niche, Ift. 6½ins. wide by 1ft. 11¾in. high, and 1ft. 3½in. deep. It has been_
Fig. 37

Locker [Sarratt, Holy Cross, Hertfordshire]
suggested that this was an Easter sepulchre, as among the furniture of the church is 'a cloth of yellow silk for the Sepulchre' ⁹⁵.

He continued his description:

Adjacent to this niche is a locker in which the sacred vessels were kept, but the door and ironwork are now missing ⁹⁶.

(The door has now been replaced by a safe.) The *Victoria History of the County of Hertford* states:

In the north wall are two recesses, one having a modern trefoiled head; it is probably that one served as the loculus for the Easter Sepulchre ⁹⁷.

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments' 1910 *Inventory for Hertfordshire* follows the Victoria County History lead and seems like a direct quotation from it:

Recess: in N. wall of chancel, small, with modern head, possibly loculus for Easter Sepulchre ⁹⁸.

Pevsner does not mention the recess ⁹⁹, whereas Whitelaw states:

* A piscina and sedilia of the fifteenth century remain in the chancel as well as a recess which is probably an Easter sepulchre ¹⁰⁰.

Was this vertical recess an Easter sepulchre? Its apsidal structure means that if it was designed to receive a cross, that cross could not have been laid in it horizontally, and instead would have had to stand upright. But this is not in

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⁹⁵ Davys 1898, p.70.
⁹⁶ Ibid, p.70.
⁹⁷ Page 1908 (c), p.441.
⁹⁹ See Pevsner 2002 (b), pp.332-333.
¹⁰⁰ Whitelaw 1990, p.119.
conformity with the death and burial motif of the Sarum rite. It is possible, though unlikely, that it might have been the place equivalent to the north-side chapel where the cross could be venerated once it had been 'raised' from the tomb – but even in a church as small as Sarratt, that would be to obscure its visibility. It seems more likely, therefore, that it was an image niche (for an image of Our Lady), before which lights would have burnt. It is another example of a late Victorian, early Edwardian, antiquarian attempt to 'see' it as an Easter sepulchre – and thus its original purpose has probably been significantly redefined.

Of the five lockers which have been examined and illustrated in this section, it can be seen that two (Aston Clinton and Furneux Pelham) have been so heavily restored that to make any unequivocal claims about their status as Easter sepulchres is fraught with difficulty. One of the recesses (Sarratt), whilst only lightly restored, does not lend itself to the liturgy of the Sarum rite; but the purpose of two of the lockers (Redbourn and Sandon) seems, when all other options have been explored, to remain reasonably uncontroversial. These two can, with a degree of safety, be regarded as permanent Easter sepulchres, though Redbourn could have been designed as a credence. What are the characteristics which these two recesses have which lead to a possible Easter sepulchre definition? It is partly because of their architectural treatment; they have been given a heightened degree of significance compared with the other lockers that have been examined and it is also, partly, because they are designed on a horizontal axis and are therefore capable of fulfilling the theological and liturgical demands of the Sarum rite. In brief, from a liturgical perspective, they work; they fulfill their task.

From the analysis of lockers in this survey, then, what firm conclusions may be drawn? It would appear that for a locker recess to be regarded as an Easter sepulchre, it needs to have three distinguishing and distinctive characteristics:

- Firstly, it needs to have an architectural treatment which is consonant with the theological doctrines it is trying to convey.
- Secondly, it has to be capable of being used in such a way that the death and burial theme is given appropriate expression. It is likely, therefore, to have a horizontal axis.
- Thirdly it has to be liturgically as well as aesthetically 'fit-for-purpose'.

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What this conclusion suggests, therefore, is that only those lockers which have those three significant characteristics can safely be said to be Easter sepulchres – and it implies, clearly, that to argue that any locker on the north side of a chancel is likely to have been an Easter sepulchre is not at all persuasive.

If this conclusion is correct, it follows that permanent Easter sepulchres actually are very rare indeed. Only two lockers in this survey really match the criteria outlined above, namely Redbourn and Sandon in Hertfordshire. But, as will be shown in Chapter 10 of this thesis, and as has been strongly hinted at already, the influence of nineteenth-century antiquarians and ecclesiologists, in trying to discover and discern large numbers of Easter sepulchres in English churches, has been very significant - not least in our understanding of late medieval religious and cultural history.

But if most lockers in English churches were not Easter sepulchres, is it possible that tomb recesses and altar tombs provided a more credible locus for parts of the Easter liturgy? This will be explored in the next chapter.
It will be recalled that in the first chapter of this thesis a number of authors were quoted who referred to tombs and tomb recesses as places which might have been used, or especially created, for the Easter ceremonies. Sheingorn, for example, in her classification system, posited three tomb categories\(^1\) as follows:

1. A large arched recess in the north chancel wall that could have contained an effigy.
2. An elaborate structure set in the north wall with figural sculpture, usually with a small niche, possibly associated with a tomb.
3. A table or chest tomb, with or without a canopy, standing against or near the north wall of the chancel.

The categorisation is a very clear one and the first category will form the basis for this chapter, but because the north side of the chancel is used as one of the defining features of an Easter sepulchre, it will be important, as it was in the preceding chapter on lockers, to look at that particular feature in some detail.

**Tomb recesses**

Using the same database as for the locker survey - that is, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHM) surveys of Buckinghamshire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire and Westmoreland, and taking as the parameters c.1200-1500, the statistics relating to tomb recesses are as follows:

In **Buckinghamshire** there are 32 tomb recesses of which only 11 are in the north wall of the chancel, that is, 21 are in places in the church other than the north wall.

In **Herefordshire** there are 14 tomb recesses, of which only 2 are in the north wall of the chancel; the remainder are elsewhere.

In **Hertfordshire** there are 19 tomb recesses, of which only 2 are in the north wall of the chancel. Of the remainder, 1 is in the chancel on the south side: Tewin; 4 are in the south aisle: St Albans Abbey (1), St Ippolytts (1) and Great Munden (2); 4 are in the

\(^1\) Sheingorn 1987, p.35.
nave: Datchworth (1) and Little Munden (3); four are in the exterior walls of the church: Baldock (3) and St Michael’s, St Albans (1); three are in south side chapels and one is in the north aisle.

In Westmoreland only four recesses are recorded, none of which is on the north side of the chancel.

And, to complete this survey, but using Pevsner as the database (there has been no RCHM survey for this county) for Bedfordshire, there are 30 tomb recesses, 11 of which are in the north wall of the chancel, including Podington, which has 4 recesses in the north wall; the others are widely scattered in various locations in churches. The thirty Bedfordshire tomb recesses are found in only 19 churches, which means that in Bedfordshire, only approximately 20% of churches have any tomb recesses.

In total, therefore, in these five English counties (Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire and Westmoreland) there are 99 tomb recesses, of which just over 25% are in the north wall of the chancel, and just under 75% are in other locations in churches. These statistics seem, on the face of it, to suggest that the primary function of a tomb recess was, as its name implies, to be the housing for a tomb. It could well be argued that unless tomb recesses in churches have some iconographical or other means of differentiating themselves so that they may be seen as emphatically designed to accommodate the Easter liturgies, it would be safer to assume that they really are simply tomb recesses and nothing else. It might be helpful to consider a few examples to illustrate this.

**Tomb Recesses in Bedfordshire**

1. **Arlesey, St Peter (Fig. 38)**
   
   This tomb recess is located at the western end of the north wall of the nave, and measures 36 inches to the peak of the arch, 73 inches in width and 13.5 inches in depth. Pevsner describes this tomb recess as being of the fourteenth century.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Pevsner 2002 (a), p.42.
Fig. 38

Tomb recess  [Arlesley, St Peter, Bedfordshire]
There is another recess in Arlesey (Fig. 39) which some have claimed might be an Easter sepulchre. Bonney, writing in his historical notices of churches, about 1820-1840, refers to both recesses:

"At the West End of the North Aisle is an ancient Tomb, under an Arch in the Wall, without any inscription or Armorial Bearing; and another, under a Compartiment at the East End of the same Aisle; and near to this, are two canopies for Statues."

Archdeacon Bonney, in his visitations of Bedfordshire churches in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was certainly aware of Easter sepulchres – but in the case of Arlesey, he did not suggest that either of the recesses illustrated might have been designed or used for that purpose.

However, in 1848, the Revd Henry Addington wrote this of Arlesey:

"The east end of the north aisle presents a curious combination of niches and brackets worthy of notice, with what is apparently an Easter sepulchre in the north wall, well worthy of notice."

Glynne, in 1855, also commented upon the recess at the east end of the north aisle:

"The East end of the North aisle forms the Chapel of St Mary ... In this chapel are several niches & brackets, worthy of notice. In the North wall a fine moulded niche cinquefoiled, with shafts & hood moulding which may have been an Easter Sepulchre."

The Victoria County History (VCH) series for Bedfordshire is hesitant about its definition:

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3 Pickford 1994, p.50.
4 For details of Bonney, see later in this thesis, chapter 10, pp.288-289.
5 Addington 1848, paragraph 104 (pages not numbered).
6 Pickford 1994, p.52.
Recess [Arlesey, St Peter, Bedfordshire]
... a square recess, perhaps sepulchral, with a filleted edge-roll round head and jambs, ending on moulded bases. The sill of the recess has a projecting edge, on which is a diaper pattern of fourteenth-century style.

St Peter’s, Arlesey, thus provides a complex challenge to the accepted theories surrounding Easter sepulchres – it has a fourteenth-century tomb recess in the west bay of the north nave wall, it has a recess in the east bay of the north nave wall and, in addition, it has a locker (see Chapter 5, page 113 - Fig.26) in the north wall of the chancel. All three could, if the usual definitions are applied, be described as an Easter sepulchre, and that, patently, is unlikely. Is it possible, therefore, to decide which, if any of them, might have functioned as an Easter sepulchre? If the Sarum liturgy is borne in mind, in which the burial of a host and a cross was central, than it is fairly clear that the chancel locker could not have provided a suitable receptacle. The north wall, west bay, tomb recess would seem to be liturgically too far distant from the central focus of the Mass at the high altar to have been useful. And thus we are left with the curious recess in the east bay of the north nave aisle wall (Fig.39). Its dimensions (36 inches high by 60 inches wide and 30 inches deep) give it a strong horizontal axis and so it would be capable of receiving a large cross (the head of a processional cross and the top part of the shaft). It has been given a design treatment which marks it out as being of some significance. It is not a multipurpose cupboard; it seems quite possible, therefore, that it might well be an Easter sepulchre, though the lack (the loss?) of any Easter iconographical detail could be evidence against such an attribution. The fact that the advowson of Arlesey was owned by Waltham Abbey in the thirteenth century, and that Waltham Abbey had a special devotion to the Holy Cross in the eleventh century, may add some weight in favour of this recess being an Easter sepulchre, on the grounds that the size of the recess indicates that it was capable of taking a large (and therefore significant) cross.

There is one other feature of this particular recess which may also be of significance: its dimensions. The width of this recess is 60 inches (approximately 153cm). This measurement is very similar to the dimension of the wooden Easter sepulchre of Cowthorpe (Fig.40); the width of that Easter sepulchre is

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Page 1908 (a), p.265.
Wooden, free standing, Easter sepulchre [Cowthorpe, St Michael, Yorkshire]
approximately 63.5 inches (161cm) and its depth is approximately 25.5 inches (65cm). The depth of the Arlesey recess is approximately 30 inches (approximately 76cm). The similarity of the measurements may be a matter of pure coincidence, but it may point to a distinctive feature in tomb recesses which might enable an Easter sepulchre to be distinguished from a 'normal' tomb recess.

2. Barton-le-Cley, St Nicholas (Fig. 41)

The chancel of St Nicholas, Barton-le-Cley, was largely rebuilt in the last decades of the nineteenth century by William Oswald Milne, pupil of Sir A. W. Blomfield, during the incumbency of the Revd Arthur Blomfield, Sir A. W. Blomfield's cousin. It is noticeable, however, that the tomb recess, which is 41 inches high by 83 inches wide by 13 inches in depth, was in existence before the Victorian restoration - that is, it is not an ecclesiological 'construction'. It was noted in the early nineteenth century by Archdeacon Bonney in his historical notices of churches:

In the North Wall of the Chancel is a low Arch over an Ancient Tomb, which has neither Inscription nor Ornament. It might possibly be designed for 'The Tomb', on which in the Romish Church the Effigy of our Saviour is laid, particularly for the Service of Good Friday.

The VCH for Bedfordshire refers to this tomb recess thus:

At the east end of the north wall is a tomb recess of the middle of the thirteenth century, with an elaborately moulded segmental head and double shafted jambs with moulded capitals and bases.

It does not define the recess as an Easter sepulchre, although Pevaner, himself does so:

Chancel late c13, see particularly the SEDILIA, PISCINA, and EASTER SEPULCHRE.

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8 See Pickford 1994, p.73; see also later in this thesis, chapter 10, pp.288-289.
9 Page 1908 (a), p.311.
10 Pevaner 2002 (a), p.45.
Fig. 41

Tomb recess  [Barton-Le-Cley, St Nicholas, Bedfordshire]
If it is safe to assume that the tomb recess, sedilia and piscina were all part of the thirteenth-century construction of the chancel and the nave (the arcades are Early English), then it seems more likely that the recess was the tomb of the founder/benefactor than that it was constructed especially for the Easter ceremonies. The dimensions of the recess (41 inches high, by 83 inches wide and 13 inches deep) seem to support this hypothesis.

The difficulty with assuming that tomb recesses of a normal adult tomb size were Easter sepulchres is that the scale of the construction is out of proportion to their posited liturgical use. There is simply no need to construct a large tomb recess at floor level when all that it had to accommodate was a pyx, and an altar or processional cross. If there was any evidence that life-sized effigies of a Christ figure were used in the English Easter ceremonies, then it would be reasonable to assume that tomb recesses could well have been constructed for the Easter rites, but I have been unable to find any surviving documentary or sculptural evidence for the existence of such effigies in England.

3. **Bletsoe, St Mary's (Figs. 42 and 43)**

Bonney, in his historical notices of churches referred to a

... *deep Monumental Arch*

in the north wall of the chancel but did not speculate, as he had done at Barton-le-Cley about whether it might have been an Easter sepulchre. The chancel itself (now disused; see Figs. 42 and 43) was restored in 1865-66, which perhaps explains why the VCH for Bedfordshire refers to the tomb recess in the north chancel wall as

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11 *See also* pages 147-148 in this chapter. In an unpublished paper on the Mercer's Hall Christ (*a paper delivered to the conference held 21-23 November 2003 on the* *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* *exhibition at the V & A Museum, London, 9 October 2003 - 18 January 2004*), Dr Kim Woods has argued that the Mercer's Hall Christ was possibly a cadaver-type effigy which might have formed part of an altar complex. It does not have any characteristics to suggest that it might have been part of an Easter sepulchre.

Fig. 42

Tomb recess  [Bletsoe, St Mary, Bedfordshire]
Tomb recess  [Bletsoe, St Mary, Bedfordshire]
... a poor modern imitation of 14th-century work.\(^\text{13}\)

Pevsner, in 1968, wrote:

> The chancel has Dec tomb recesses: with crocketed gable in the N wall, with rather bleak cusping in the S wall.\(^\text{14}\)

A pair of tomb recesses, each measuring 60 inches high by 84 inches long by 22 inches deep, either side of the chancel, would appear to suggest that there was no intention to create an Easter sepulchre; rather, these recesses should be regarded as providing appropriate space for high status tombs. The dimensions are within the normal range for burial recesses.\(^\text{15}\)

4. **Blunham, St Edmund (Fig. 44)**

The dimensions of this tomb recess at St Edmund's, Blunham, are 61 inches high by 80 inches wide by 30 inches deep, and the historiographical sequence of descriptions makes fascinating reading. The Lyson brothers, in 1806, wrote:

> In the north wall of the chancel in Blunham and Little Staughton churches are altar tombs under Gothic arches ornamented with quatrefoils.\(^\text{16}\)

Archdeacon Bonney, in his historical notices of churches (c. 1820-1840) expatiated at some length about the tomb:

> On the North side of the Chancel under an Ogee Arch, richly adorned, is a Tomb containing Nine Shields in as many Quatrefoils, on one of which

\(^{13}\) Page 1912 (a), p.42.

\(^{14}\) Pevsner 2002 (a), p.57.

\(^{15}\) There is one reference to an Easter sepulchre at Bletsoe, namely, the will of John Lane in 1505:

> to the sepulchre light 2s  [Bell 1966, p.74]

but that does not of itself prove that the Easter sepulchre at Bletsoe was of permanent architectural form; it is evidence only of the use of a sepulchre and as there is no iconographical or other evidence to suggest that either of the tomb recesses in Bletsoe was an Easter sepulchre, it is probably much wiser to assume that the Easter sepulchre in Bletsoe was, like most other parishes in England, a temporary construction.

\(^{16}\) Lysons 1806, p.33.
Fig. 44

Tomb recess [Blunham, St Edmund, Bedfordshire]
in 1823 was a spread Eagle. Subsequent to that time, the tomb has been repaired, and the Shield incautiously removed & replaced by a plain one. This Tomb is reputed to be to the Memory of a De Valence formerly Proprietor of the Manor and the circumstance of the Spread Eagle being found on one of the Shield [sic], which was one of their Bearings (see the Tomb of De Valence at Westminster) is in favour of the Supposition\(^\text{17}\). A few years later, in 1848, Addington simply said:

\textit{There is a fine tomb of the founder}\(^\text{18}\).

In 1852, someone using the initials W.A. wrote:

\textit{A fine altar tomb, unmutilated, save by whitewash, yet remains}\(^\text{19}\).

In 1912, the VCH for Bedfordshire described the tomb thus:

\ldots a richly-carved canopied recessed tomb, c. 1350, having a cinquefoil ed ogee arch and a crocketed label with a large foliate finial\(^\text{20}\).

And Pevsner, in 1968, wrote:

\textit{Dec cusped and subcusped tomb recess \ldots with a spreading ogee arch and crockets on it. Leaf spandrels}\(^\text{21}\).

In other churches in Bedfordshire, Pevsner, the VCH and Bonney posited other tomb recesses as Easter sepulchres – but none of them made a similar suggestion about this recess, in spite of it having a number of the ‘normal’ defining features of an Easter sepulchre, particularly its siting on the north side of the altar\(^\text{22}\).

\(^{17}\) Pickford 1994, p.136.

\(^{18}\) Addington 1848, paragraph 87 (pages not numbered).

\(^{19}\) Pickford 1994, p.137. For details of ‘W.A.,’ see later in this thesis, chapter 10, pp.292-293.


\(^{21}\) Pevsner 2002 (a), p.58.

\(^{22}\) There are a number of will references to Easter sepulchre lights at Blunham; for example, in 1526 Richard Colyer left 8d for the maintenance of the sepulchre [Footnote is continued on next page].

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It is possible that the recess was used as the locus for an Easter sepulchre, but there is no iconographical or other evidence to suggest that the recess was originally designed with the Easter ceremonies in mind.

5. **Dean, All Saints (Fig. 45)**

Whereas the tomb recess at Blunham was commented upon by most of Bedfordshire's architectural and ecclesiastical historians, the tomb recess at All Saints, Dean, has not been accorded the same scrutiny. In the nineteenth century Archdeacon Bonney, the Lysons brothers and 'W.A.' did not refer to it at all, although Addington did so in 1848:

> *In the N aisle is a cinquefoiled sepulchral recess.*

In 1912 the VCH for Bedfordshire merely noted the locker in the north wall of the chancel but described the tomb recess in some detail:

> *At the east end of the north aisle is a 14th-century canopied recess inclosing [sic] a tomb, ornamented with conquefoils between blank shields, and having on its Purbeck marble covering slab the remains of an inscription 'PRÆS FOR SA ALME DEU MER[CE]'*.

In 1968 Pevsner referred to the

> *Dec tomb recess in the N aisle. The tomb-chest has six quatrefoils. The recess is high, and cusped and sub-cusped. On the tomb-chest a c13 slab with inscription in Lombardic lettering.*

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23 Addington 1848, paragraph 87 (pages not numbered).
24 Page 1912 (a), p.135.
25 See Pevsner 2002 (a), p.75.
Fig. 45

Tomb recess  [Dean, All Hallows, Bedfordshire]
The tomb recess measures 84 inches high, by 80 inches wide and is 18 inches deep. In its proximity to the rood screen, although outside the chancel, it is possible to imagine that, in principle, it could have functioned as an Easter sepulchre – but its height and design suggest that this would have been very unlikely. It looks like what, in fact, it is – a fourteenth-century canopied tomb recess.

6. **Hockliffe, St Nicholas (Fig. 46)**

St Nicholas, Hockliffe, dates back to the thirteenth century, with additions and alterations in subsequent centuries. A fairly major restoration took place in 1859-1861 and the chancel was refurnished in 1877. An antiquarian who wrote under the pseudonym 'W.A.', on visiting Hockliffe prior to these restorations, reported that the mouldings of piscina, sedilia and niches were heavily encrusted with whitewash, and noted that

... a sepulchre on the north side, from the external appearance, appeared to remain, buried, in all probability, under lath and plaster.\(^{26}\)

The 1912 VCH for Bedfordshire referred to the

... 14th-century tomb recess under a low cinquefoiled arch.\(^{27}\)

Pevsner unequivocally, in 2002, describes the recess as an Easter sepulchre.\(^{28}\)

The recess measures 39 inches high, by 79 inches wide by 17 inches deep, and its size strongly suggests that it was designed to be the housing for a tomb. Such a tomb would be likely to have upon it an effigy, no longer extant, and if it did, then it would be singularly difficult to use it as an Easter sepulchre. Whilst its position, close to the altar, would have made it liturgically useful in the Easter ceremonies, there is no explicit iconographical or other evidence to indicate that this might have been its original purpose.

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\(^{26}\) Pickford 1998, p.361.

\(^{27}\) Page 1912 (a), p.385.

\(^{28}\) Pevsner 2002 (a), p.100:

*In the chancel C14 PISCINA and EASTER SEPULCHRE.*
7. **Luton, St Mary (Fig. 47)**

In the nineteenth century, neither Bonney, Lysons nor Addington make any reference to the recess in their work on St Mary's, Luton, though Glymne, without suggesting that it could have been an Easter sepulchre, describes it as

"... a mutilated niche with crocketed canopy & band of flowers."\(^{29}\)

However, in the early twentieth century, the VCH for Bedfordshire described it as

"... an early fourteenth-century tomb recess, with a well moulded ogee arch with crockets and a finial; its position suggests that it may have been used for the Easter sepulchre."\(^{30}\)

Its dimensions, namely 45 inches high by 52 inches wide by 7½ inches deep, do not immediately suggest that it was likely to have been designed as a tomb recess unless for a child or for a miniature effigy, and that seems highly unlikely. It would certainly be capable, however, of receiving a horizontal altar cross or processional cross, assuming that the rear wall was further away than is currently the case. Unfortunately, the chancel area of St Mary's and the Wenlock chapel on the north side of the chancel have been subject to so much restoration and repair, that it is impossible to have complete confidence that this 'tomb' recess might have been specifically designed for the Easter ceremonies.

8. **Milton Ernest, All Saints (Fig. 48)**

The chancel of Milton Ernest was built in the late eleventh century; the nave and aisle were later fourteenth-century additions. In the north aisle is what Pevsner describes as

"... a splendid tomb recess, with crocketing and large cusping and subcusping and big leaves in the cusps."\(^{31}\)

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\(^{29}\) See Pickford 1998, p.455.

\(^{30}\) Page 1908 (a), p.369.

\(^{31}\) Pevsner 2002 (a), p.126.
Fig. 47

Recess [Luton, St Mary, Bedfordshire]
Tomb recess  [Milton Ernest, All Saints, Bedfordshire]
Archdeacon Bonney also referred to

... a fine Decorated Monumental Arch, with Cusps, and crooked [sic] Moulding and a finial.

It was presumably this same tomb recess, measuring 86 inches to the highest point by 72 inches long by 8 inches deep, to which 'W.A.' referred when, in a particularly pungent piece of invective, he wrote:

On the monument of a benefactor is placed a cupboard containing the tattered remains of the children's books [he was referring to the use of the aisle as a Sunday School]. &. dirty green curtains hardly conceal this wanton irreverence. Can we wonder at the desecration of sepulchral memorials, when in their infancy children are taught to pay so little respect to them.

Again, it is notable that neither nineteenth nor twentieth-century architectural historians referred to this tomb recess as an Easter sepulchre. Whilst it would have been possible, liturgically, to have used this recess for the Easter ceremonies, the balance of probability means that it was unlikely to have been so used - it is simply too far away from the altar and, again, its dimensions and its lack of iconographical features suggest that it was simply a tomb recess, and nothing else.

9. Potsgrove, St Mary (Fig. 49)

The Church of St Mary's, Potsgrove, now redundant, was heavily restored by John Dando Sedding in the 1880s. In the north wall of the chancel is a tomb recess, measuring 38 inches high by 88 inches wide by 12 inches depth. As can be seen from the illustration, there are two lockers (each measuring 11½ inches by 12½ inches by 12 inches) on either side of the recess. Pevsner does not refer to the recess at all, and describes St Mary's, laconically, as being

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33 Ibid, p.512.
Fig. 49

Tomb recess [Potsgrove, St Mary, Bedfordshire]
... by J. D. Sedding, but with some old masonry\textsuperscript{34}

but Richard Marks, in a recent study, wrote:

\emph{At first sight it could be taken for a wholly Victorian building. Sedding, however, included elements of the original fabric and furnishings}\textsuperscript{35}.

Marks is clear, however, that Sedding certainly left his imprint upon the building:

\emph{None of the chancel roof is original and the internal fittings and furnishings he treated with a heavy hand ... the sedilia are entirely Sedding's work and so are almost all of the tomb recess and the nave stoups and piscine}\textsuperscript{36}.

It is noteworthy that neither Archdeacon Bonney in his historical notes, nor the antiquary 'W.A.' referred to the recess, though if this recess, with its striking and unusual arrangement of flanking lockers, had existed prior to Sedding's restoration, it would surely have elicited comment.

This particular recess, or at least its architectural treatment, might well represent, therefore, a late Victorian ecclesiological construct — an attempt to create an idealised medieval church.

\textbf{10 Swineshead, St Nicholas (Fig. 50)}

Whereas Pevsner was laconic about Potsgrove, he was positively effusive about Swineshead and the tomb recess, which measures 82 inches high by 76 inches wide by 6 inches deep:

\textsuperscript{34} Pevsner 2002 (a), p.135.
\textsuperscript{35} Marks 1993, p.39.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p. 39.
Fig. 50

Tomb recess  [Swineshead, St Nicholas, Bedfordshire]
In the N wall a sumptuous EASTER SEPULCHRE or tomb recess, cusped and subcusped, with much leaf. A tiny stair and passage connects it with the former vestry. What he would seem not to have known was that the tiny stair and passageway were a nineteenth-century construction made by the incumbent, the Reverend W. Airey, who did not hazard the suggestion that the tomb recess itself might have been an Easter sepulchre. It is interesting to note that neither Addington in 1848, nor the VCH for Bedfordshire in 1912 referred to the tomb recess as an Easter sepulchre. In fact the VCH makes its definition of its purpose very clear:

In the north wall is a fine 14th-century tomb recess with a moulded arch, the inner order cinquefoiled with feathered cusps and carved spandrels, and shafts in each jamb with foliate capitals; through the west end of the recess a shouldered doorway opens to a narrow passage running westward outside the chancel wall to the vestry at the east end of the north aisle.

What at first sight, therefore, appears to be a very unusual and exciting Easter sepulchre, turns out to be nothing of the sort.

Conclusions: Bedfordshire
The tomb recesses that have been illustrated represent 33.3% of the total of such recesses in Bedfordshire. It would appear that Arlesey and St Mary’s, Luton, might have some claim to be examples of permanent Easter sepulchres but, in both cases, heavy alterations to the interiors of the churches mean that a definite and unequivocal attribution cannot be made. The other two claimants, Potsgrove and Swineshead, have revealed in the one case a form of medievalism in its restoration and, in the other, a piece of mid-Victorian reconstruction. Neither of them has any claim to be an Easter sepulchre.

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38 See Airey 1851, pp.372-379; see also later in this thesis, chapter 10, pp.294-295.
This lack of positive identification in a county where, as will be shown in the following chapter, there was a higher than average devotion to the Easter sepulchre cult, suggests that the assumption that tomb recesses were also frequently Easter sepulchres is open to serious challenge.

**Tomb Recesses in Buckinghamshire**

1. **Ashendon, St Mary** *(Fig. 51)*

   Careful scrutiny of the effigy reveals a knight with an inordinately long neck. It is likely, therefore, that the effigy - as a notice near the tomb explains - had its head broken off, which was then later replaced. Robert Gibbs, writing in the *Buckinghamshire Miscellany*, describes the effigy thus:

   > ... the head of the statue having been broken, has been replaced on a new neck lengthened into hideous disproportion.\(^{40}\)

   The RCHM survey covering Buckinghamshire described this recess, which measures 27 inches high by 88 inches wide by 26 inches deep, thus:

   > In chancel - in recess on N. side, recumbent effigy of knight, possibly of the Cheynedtutt family, in chain mail, surcoat to knee, with sword, shiled bearing arms – a cheveron [sic] – legs crossed, feet on lion, of Purbeck marble, probably late 13th-century ... in N. wall of chancel, long, low, with chamfered depressed ogee arch, moulded label with foliated crockets and finial, 15th-century, carvings choked with whitewash.\(^{41}\)

   Pevsner, with considerable economy of style, says:

   > Effigy of a Knight, cross-legged, defaced, late c13.\(^{42}\)

   The length of the recess is fairly unusual, being 88 inches long, and whilst it is obvious to state that the thirteenth-century effigy could not have been designed for this fifteenth-century tomb, it is not at all clear that the recess might have

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\(^{40}\) Gibbs 1891, p.205.

\(^{41}\) Royal Commission 1912, p.15.

\(^{42}\) Pevsner 1960, p.52.
Fig. 51

Tomb recess  [Ashendon, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
been designed for an Easter sepulchre. As has been said in the previous comments on Bedfordshire recesses, there is no need for a recess of this length (7ft 4in) simply to house an altar cross and a pyx. It is wiser to assume that it was a tomb recess from which the original effigy must have been removed.

2. **Aylesbury, St Mary (Fig. 52)**

The restoration of St Mary's, Aylesbury, by Sir George Gilbert Scott began in 1849. Gibbs, in the *Buckinghamshire Miscellany*, condenses a paper originally published by 'Dr Lee of Lambeth' in 1889, in *The Building News*, in which occurred the following description:

> There is an aumbrey on the north side of the chancel sanctuary, an Easter sepulchre and a piscina.

The VCH for Buckinghamshire in 1908 described the recess as

> ... a late thirteenth-century tomb recess which may have served as an Easter sepulchre.

Pevsner was less reticent:

> ... recklessly restored by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1850-69 ... Only the N wall is genuine. It has three tall shafted lancet windows set in shafted arcading inside ... below the arcading an Easter Sepulchre. The arch is very depressed two-centred and starts with short vertical pieces on top of the short shafts l. and r.

The dimensions of the recess (47 inches high by 84 inches wide and 13 inches deep) would seem to suggest, for reasons already outlined, that it was designed to act as a tomb rather than as an Easter sepulchre. As can be seen from the illustration (Fig. 52) containing a nativity scene, it lends itself very well to staging.

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43 For further details of the restoration, see Brandwood 1992, pp.1-10.
44 Gibbs 1891, p.290.
46 Pevsner 1960, p.54.
Tomb recess  [Aylesbury, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
a tableau set, and whilst it is tempting to argue that it might, therefore, have been used for a similar tableau purpose during the Easter ceremonies, such evidence as exists for small-scale figures suggests that they were monstrances rather than tableau figures. The Christus figure in the accounts of the Rites of Durham is clearly designed to be a kind of monstrance:

... a marvelous beautifull Image of our Saviour representinge the resurrection with a crosse in his hand in the breast whereof was enclosed in bright Christall the holy sacrament of the altar.

and, as a monstrance, it would have been carried in procession, rather than have been used in a tableau.

It is possible, however, that at St Mary's, Redcliffe, Bristol, free-standing images were used for its Easter sepulchre:

Item iiij knyghtes Armed kepynge the Sepulchre with hes wepyns in hare handes that is to sey ij speris ij Axes with ij poryes.

These examples from Durham and Bristol come from very wealthy churches – but there is no evidence extant that poorer and more provincial churches had images of that quality, if they had any at all.

Aylesbury also has two further tomb recesses, each measuring 55 inches high by 84 inches wide by 16 inches deep (Fig. 53) in the north aisle:

... in N. wall of N. aisle chapel, two [recesses], each with elaborately moulded two-centred drop arch and label.

And in the north wall of the north transept, there is another tomb recess:

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47 Fowler 1903, p.12. This Christus figure was carried in procession in the Durham Easter ceremonies.
48 Sholingorn 1987, p.151.
49 Royal Commission 1912, p.27.
Tomb recesses  [Aylesbury, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
... low down, with two-centred cinquefoiled drop arch, elaborately moulded... contains effigy of knight\textsuperscript{10}.

In a church with four tomb recesses, where the only evidence put forward that one of them might have been an Easter sepulchre is that it is on the north side of the chancel, and where that factor has already been shown to be of less consequence than has been hitherto been claimed, the hard evidence to back the claim that this tomb recess is an actual Easter sepulchre, is very elusive.

3. **Ivinghoe, St Mary** *(Fig. 54)*

In 1847, Lipscomb wrote of the tomb recess at Ivinghoe:

_In the north wall, under a low pointed arch, with a plain moulding... is a stone statue of a man, in the habit of a monk\textsuperscript{31}._

Almost forty years later, the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society visited the church and spent some time looking at the effigy and the recess:

_An object that came in for a good deal of curious inspection was the ancient stone effigy which lies within a low trefoiled recess on the north chancel wall\textsuperscript{32}._

No one referred to the recess as an Easter sepulchre. However, when the society visited Ivinghoe again, in 1913, the concept of Easter sepulchres had become part of their observational toolkit:

... a low arched recess in the north wall may have been intended for an Easter sepulchre but has long contained a rude effigy of a priest, earlier than the arch... the arch itself is four-centred and its four cusps have each foil trefoiled; the outer order is a double ogee, thin inner a hollow chamfer. The large label is of a plain section fairly common in the

\textsuperscript{10} Royal Commission 1912, p.27.
\textsuperscript{31} Lipscomb 1847, vol 3, p.397.
\textsuperscript{32} Downs 1897, p.473.
Fig. 54

Tomb recess [Ivinghoe, St Mary the Virgin, Buckinghamshire]
fifteenth century ... the date of the recess is probably little, if at all, after 1400.\textsuperscript{53}

The suggestion that it might have been intended to be an Easter sepulchre was repeated by R. P. Hagerty in 1990:

\textit{The recess is in the usual position in the north wall of the chancel near the altar to house an Easter sepulchre and this was most probably its original purpose} \textsuperscript{54}.

The dimensions of this fifteenth-century recess are fairly standard for tomb recesses. In this case, the recess is 43 inches high by 84 inches long and 22 inches deep, but what has not been taken into account in the proposals by the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society or by Hagerty are the corbels on either side of the recess. Lipscomb described them as

\textit{...female and male, with very large and coarse features} \textsuperscript{55}.

From an iconographical point of view, these corbels simply do not fit the Easter story. It seems very unlikely that this tomb recess, therefore, when originally constructed, had any purpose in the Easter ceremonies.

4. Lillingstone Dayrell (Fig. 55)

When the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society visited Lillingstone Dayrell, they were given a talk about the church by the incumbent, the Revd R. Dayrell (sic). He said:

\textit{On the north side of the chancel, close to the communion rails, is a plain stone slab, coffin shaped, slightly raised under an arch, supposed to be the tomb of the Founder, whoever he might have been. It is supposed to

\textsuperscript{53} Gurney 1916, p.264. This paper was originally delivered in 1913.

\textsuperscript{54} Hagerty 1990, p.106.

\textsuperscript{55} Lipscomb 1847, vol.3, p.397.
Fig. 55

Tomb recess  [Lillingstone Dayrell, St Nicholas, Buckinghamshire]
have been used as an Easter sepulchre, and a similar one is to be seen at Northwold, in Cambridgeshire [sic].

Sixteen years later, in 1913, the RCHM for Buckinghamshire stated:

Easter Sepulchre: In chancel – in N. wall, recess with drop arch of one filleted and hollow-chamfered order, with similar ribs springing from a corbel-capital in the middle, shafted jambs, all of rough workmanship, similar to arcade on S. Wall, late 13th-century.

In 1927, the VCH for Buckinghamshire described the work as

... very rough, and the junction of the ribs with the main head is clumsy in the extreme.

The author speculated that the work might have been the result of unskilful rebuilding (the whole of the north wall of the chancel was probably rebuilt in the late fourteenth century). There is no reason to assume that this was designed originally as an Easter sepulchre; there are no iconographical markers, and the dimensions (80 inches high by 80 inches wide by 13 inches deep) suggest that it was a tomb recess.

Sheingorn suggests that this recess might have

... facilitated use of recess as depository for life-sized fig [sic] of Christ in Easter rites or for corpse in funeral services.

There are two difficulties with this assertion; firstly, there would appear to be no literary evidence for the use of a life-sized figure of Christ ever being used in

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18 Dayrell 1897, p.84.
19 Royal Commission 1913, p.169.
20 Page 1927, p.190.
21 Sheingorn 1987, pp.95-96.
English Easter ceremonies\(^6\), and certainly there are no references to such figures in either the Edwardian inventories or, for example, in the descriptions of William Dowsing's iconoclastic forays in the seventeenth century\(^1\). Secondly, the physical impracticality of manoeuvring a corpse into and out of an arched recess, such as this one at Lillingstone Dayrell, during a funeral service, suggests its use for this purpose would be highly unlikely.

5. **Oakley, St Mary** (Figs. 56 and 57)

Oakley has the distinction of having three tomb recesses. Two are in the north aisle wall and have the following dimensions: 52 inches high by 80 inches wide by 21 inches deep, and 48 inches high by 79 inches wide by 29 inches deep. On both, the tomb slabs are engraved with a cross - a tradition which began in the twelfth century\(^2\).

In the exterior wall of the south transept there is a large tomb recess (Fig. 57):

\[
\text{In S. transept - in S. wall, outside, niche for tomb, with cinquefoiled chamfered head, large stone slab in niche}\(^3\).
\]

The dimensions of this tomb are 60 inches high by 86 inches wide by 26 inches deep. As this recess, like others which will be examined shortly, is patently a recess for a tomb, its dimensions may be significant in providing a determining factor in trying to discern which recesses, internal to a church, might have had an Easter sepulchre use. It seems sensible to assume that recesses which are internal to a church and which have dimensions not radically dissimilar from those of external tomb recesses, should be assumed to be tombs and not Easter sepulchres.

\(^0\) For a fascinating description of life-sized wooden figures of an entombed Christ in Germany and Denmark, see Grinder-Hansen 2004, pp.235-239.

\(^1\) See Dowsing 1786; there are 'matter of fact' but brutal descriptions of the destruction of crosses, 'holy pictures' and images, but not once in his journal does Dowsing record the destruction of a life-sized figure of Christ.

\(^2\) See Hadley 2001, p.146:

\[
... \text{the elaborate grave covers of the Anglo-Saxon period gave way in the twelfth century to planer flat or coped grave slabs, usually decorated with a cross.}
\]

\(^3\) Royal Commission 1912, p.264.
Fig. 56

Tomb recesses  [Oakley, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
Tomb recess  [Oakley, St Mary, Buckinghamshire]
6. **Olney, St Peter and St Paul (Fig. 58)**

It would appear that this tomb recess (measuring 44 inches high by 86 inches wide by 8½ inches deep) was given its Easter sepulchre status in the early decades of the twentieth century. The VCH for Buckinghamshire in 1927, for example, described it thus:

*On the north, opposite the sedilia, is an original wide tomb recess, which was probably used as an Easter sepulchre*.

Fourteen years previously, in 1913, the RCHM had suggested that the recess might have been an Easter sepulchre:

*In chancel - partly under N.E. window, tomb recess, possibly used for Easter Sepulchre, with continuously moulded jambs and segmented pointed head; in recess shallow altar tomb, front carved with quatrefoils in square panels, styles and rails with small flowers; all of c.1330, much restored*.

The restoration was carried out by G. G. Scott in 1874.

A few yards to the east of this tomb recess is an aumbry – which raises an interesting question. Where the north wall of a chancel has an aumbry as well as a tomb recess, if being on the north side is the only distinguishing feature of a putative Easter sepulchre, which of the two recesses is to be chosen as the most likely Easter sepulchre? Phrasing the question in this form suggests that 'north-sidedness' is really a weak determining feature – and where, as in Olney, the dimensions of the tomb recess are very similar to those of other tomb recesses, does this not suggest that the simplest definition, namely 'tomb recess', is the most likely one? It is, of course, possible that the Olney tomb recess was used for the Easter ceremonies, though its depth (8½ inches) means that only a very, very, tiny cross would have been able to be accommodated – and that, in a church the size of Olney, seems inherently unlikely.

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64 Page 1927, p.437.
65 Royal Commission 1913, p.228.
Fig. 58

Tomb recess, restored [Olney, St Peter & St Paul, Buckinghamshire]
Conclusions: Buckinghamshire

The tomb recesses illustrated represent approximately 33.3% of all tomb recesses in Buckinghamshire. As has been shown, not one of them can make any explicit claim to have been an Easter sepulchre — and, in each case, the dimensions of the recesses (varying in width from 79 inches to 88 inches) seem to strongly suggest that the original purpose of these recesses was for burial.

It is also interesting to note that several of these churches were restored in the nineteenth century by ecclesiologically influenced architects. Sir G. G. Scott, for example, who restored St Mary's, Aylesbury, in 1849, is known to have been profoundly influenced by Pugin. He was a reader of the Ecclesiologist and was well acquainted with the Cambridge Camden Society. He is recorded as describing what was almost like a religious conversion, when he read Pugin's articles in The Dublin Review:

Pugin's articles excited me almost to a fury and I suddenly found myself awakened like a person from a long, feverish dream ... I cared for nothing, as regarded my art, but the revival of Gothic architecture.

The impact of mid- and late Victorian thinking upon the notion of Easter sepulchres will be examined later in Chapter 11, but what can be said, with some degree of certainty at this point, is that tomb recesses in Buckinghamshire do not, by their design or by their iconographical treatment, seem to have any features which would lead one to suppose that they were specifically designed as Easter sepulchres.

Tomb Recesses in Hertfordshire

1. Aldbury, St John the Baptist (Fig. 59)

Cussans, writing in the last decades of the nineteenth century, described this recess, which is sited 31½ inches above the floor, thus:

On the north side of the chancel is a recess, which appears to have been an Easter Sepulchre.

---

66 Clarke 1969, p.163.
67 Cussans 1879, p.32.
Fig. 59

Recess  [Aldbury, St John the Baptist, Hertfordshire]
The VCH for Hertfordshire, in the early twentieth century, did not describe it as an Easter sepulchre but said that it was

... a four centred recess, probably of the fifteenth century68

The RCHM inventory in 1910 for Hertfordshire did not refer to the recess at all, neither did Pevsner, though he argued that the chancel was

... the oldest part of the church, as proved by a small c13 lancet window in the N wall and a low-side lancet in the S wall69.

The church was restored in 1867, and the current pristine state of the stonework strongly suggests that the recess was part of that restoration – but if that had been the case, it seems odd that Cussans, writing only a few years after the restoration, did not spot its glaring newness.

Its dimensions (29½ inches high by 64 inches wide by 15 inches deep) and its lack of ornamentation suggest that it is unlikely to have been a tomb recess. Its shape and size would lend itself well to liturgical use as an Easter sepulchre. But it looks and feels like an ecclesiologist's version of what an Easter sepulchre should look like.

2. Ardeley, St Lawrence (Fig. 60)

In the East Herts Archaeological Transactions of 1907, H. P. Pollard provides a detailed description of the tomb recess (dimensions: 78 inches high by 66 inches wide by 38 inches depth - measured to apparent rear of original structure):

... a low and broad Early English arch, which originally covered a founder's tomb; the latter may have had a figure of the founder in armour, ... or a slab with an ornamental cross ... the tomb has now disappeared, and the arch has been cut through the wall to form a seat for the organist
Tomb recess  [Ardeley, St Lawrence, Hertfordshire]
... the greater part of the moulding under the arch on the west side is modern, and the small column at each side has been restored\textsuperscript{70}.

Pollard also quoted from a Visitation of Ardeley in 1297:

... found in the church of Erdele on the day of St Calixtus, the Pope ... One ordinal of the use of Sarum ... processional cross of enamel, another of wood ... An ivory pyx, silver-mounted, unfastened for the Eucharist\textsuperscript{71}.

The 1910 RCHM for Hertfordshire also referred to the

... 13th-century tomb recess with shafted jambs and dog-tooth ornament, may have been used as an Easter Sepulchre\textsuperscript{72}.

The description of the enamel processional cross and the wooden cross in the thirteenth century, plus an ivory pyx, brings the Easter ceremonies alive – but the existence of those articles, and the existence of a tomb recess, do not of themselves imply that the recess was designed to be an Easter sepulchre. Proximity and causality are not necessarily correlated.

3. \textit{Aspenden, St Mary (Fig.61)}

In 1851, A. P. Sanderson became the curate of Aspenden to the Hon Henry Yorke. In 1859, Sanderson became the Rector of the parish and he remained in post until 1905. In 1902, he gave a paper to the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society in which he referred to the recess:

\textit{In the north wall of the sanctuary there is an altar-tomb, or Easter sepulchre, the date of which is probably (about) 1400, or somewhat later}\textsuperscript{73}.

\textsuperscript{70} Pollard 1907, p.287.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, pp.288-289.

\textsuperscript{72} Royal Commission 1910, p.36.

\textsuperscript{73} Sanderson 1903, p.62.
Tomb recess (Aspenden, St Mary, Hertfordshire)
That same recess had been mentioned in a small booklet:

*Against the north wall by side [sic] the altar is an old arched and carved monument three parts hid by wainscoting*.

but nowhere in that booklet was the recess described as an Easter sepulchre.

In 1914 the VCH for Hertfordshire claimed that the recess

... may have been used as an Easter sepulchre.

Then in the *East Hertfordshire Archaeological Transactions* of 1928-33, Archibald Jackson wrote an article arguing that the Easter sepulchre, or altar tomb, might have been the altar tomb of the Fitz-Ralphs who, as

...Lords of Aspenden for two centuries to 1428 ... constructed the nave arcade and added the original south aisle c.1340-50.

The recess is positioned 26 inches above the ground and its dimensions are 70 inches high by 70 inches wide and 12 inches deep, and are thus within the range of normal tomb recess dimensions. The depth of 12 inches from the front of the tomb to the rear wall, whilst somewhat narrow, could, nevertheless, be used as the surface for an altar but would provide housing for only a small cross (say, 10 inches wide), if such a cross were 'buried' in the Easter ceremonies.

This recess could, therefore, have functioned liturgically as an Easter sepulchre, though its dimensions might argue against such a use.

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74 This was entitled *A Survey of the Present State of Aspeden Church, Herts. June 1793*; it was published in 1796, London, printed for Henry Chapman. [See Minet 1927].

75 Minet 1927, p.330.

76 Page 1914 (b), p.22.

77 Jackson 1934, pp.58-59.
Fig. 62

Tomb recesses  [Baldock, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
Tomb recess  [Baldock, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
Tomb recess  [Brent Pelham, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
4. **Baldock, St Mary the Virgin (Figs. 62 and 63)**

St Mary’s, Baldock, has three tomb recesses, each of them in the external walls of the church. Two of the recesses are identical (14 inches high by 62 inches wide by 6 inches deep) and one of them is much larger, measuring 36 inches high by 112 inches wide by 15 inches deep. That these recesses have a burial purpose cannot be denied – and it is obvious that none of them, liturgically, would have featured in the Easter sepulchre ceremonies.

The main phenomenon to note is the size of the twin recesses; 62 inches width is very little different from the internal recess at Aldbury (Hertfordshire) and at Arlesey (Bedfordshire) and, in both of those cases, their use as Easter sepulchres has been mooted on the grounds that their dimensions are close to those of the wooden Easter sepulchre of Cowthorpe (63½ inches wide). The question this raises about defining characteristics will be explored further in the conclusions at the end of this chapter.

5. **Brent Pelham, St Mary (Fig. 64)**

The nave and chancel of St Mary’s, Brent Pelham, were built c.1350 but were extensively restored in 1861 by E. Christian, architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

This tomb has the following dimensions: 42 inches from the ground, by 72 inches long by 14 inches deep. The RCHM inventory for Hertfordshire, in 1910, described the tomb as follows:

... in a recess in N. wall of nave, large black marble slab, late 13th-century, decorated in high relief with foliate cross, the symbols of the Evangelists, and other figures; an 18th-century inscription painted on the back of the recess ascribes it to Piers Shonks, 1086.

None of the many authors writing about Brent Pelham (Chauncy, Salmon, Clutterbuck, Cussans, A. Whitford Anderson) has suggested that this recess could

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78 See Cussans 1872, p.140.
79 Royal Commission 1910, p.70.
possibly have been intended for use as an Easter sepulchre - and, of course, the high-relief foliate cross on the upper surface of the tomb would make such a use impossible. This inevitably raises the question, where there are now recesses without effigies, whether in their original state, the form of those effigies would, in any case, have prevented their use for the Easter ceremonies.

6. **Bygrave, St Margaret of Antioch (Fig. 65)**

Bygrave suffers from the distinction of having a tomb recess, measuring 42 inches high by 72 inches wide by 12 inches deep, on the north side of the chancel wall, in the 'classic' position, yet not one single author has suggested its use as an Easter sepulchre.

Cussans was the first of the nineteenth-century antiquarians to refer to the recess:

*There was recently discovered in the north wall of the chancel, under an Early English arch, a stone coffin ... hollowed within with a circular head so as to exactly receive the body. This niche, the form of the chancel arch, and the arch and moulding over the piscina indicate with tolerable precision the first quarter of the fourteenth century to be the period of the building of the church.*\(^{10}\)

If the stone coffin and the arch are of the same period, such that it could be argued that the one was made for the other, it might provide evidence to indicate that many tomb recesses would originally have had stone coffins within them - and would, therefore, not have been designed primarily for Easter sepulchres. In the case of the stone coffin at Bygrave, it would seem that no dating of the coffin by experts has been attempted, and as head niches in stone coffins came into fashion in England between the ninth and the twelfth centuries\(^{31}\), no conclusions can be satisfactorily drawn about the original relationship between the coffin and the recess, though the foliate cross (?) might suggest a twelfth-century or thirteenth-century date.

\(^{10}\) Cussans 1873, p.52.

Tomb recess  [Bygrave, St Margaret, Hertfordshire]
7. **Hunsdon, St Dunstan (Fig. 66)**

None of the eighteenth or nineteenth-century antiquarian writers on Hertfordshire suggest that this tomb recess might have been an Easter sepulchre. That suggestion was first published by J. E. Morris in 1902, in a paper concerning Hunsdon which was delivered to the East Hertfordshire Archaeology Society:

> Mr Gerish says the recess in the north wall is probably an Easter sepulchre, and the inscription is of a later date than the tomb itself. This, however, is open to controversy. It consists of a single Tudor arched recess, the arch splayed and panelled, with Perpendicular tracery, surmounted by three shields bearing coats of arms. The tablet records in Latin that 'Francis Poynz, Knight, lies here. He was distinguished by letters, by friends, by favour of his King, and by piety.' The date is 1528... Sir Francis Poynz was Henry VIII's Ambassador to Germany.\(^2\)

Whilst the recess could undoubtedly have been used for the Easter ceremonies, and its dimensions (58 inches high by 58 inches wide by 15 inches deep) would have made this possible, there is no iconographical detail, in what is otherwise a very sculpted monument, which makes reference to Good Friday or Easter Day. In these circumstances, it seems wiser to treat it as a funerary monument, rather than as an Easter sepulchre.

8. **Much Hadham, St Andrew (Fig. 67)**

This tomb recess is situated on the north wall of the chancel. Chauncy (1632-1719) referred to Much Hadham in his *Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, which was first published in 1700, thus:

> Hadham Magna ... This was a Seat, which the Bishops of London did usually reserve for their own Habitation, and has been of great Esteem in the Opinion of some Princes.\(^3\)

In common with other Hertfordshire churches, as has already been noted, none of the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century antiquarians described the tomb recess as an

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\(^{2}\) Morris 1903, p.48.

\(^{3}\) Chauncy 1826, vol 1, p.315.
Fig. 66

Tomb recess/monument  [Hunsdon, St Dunstan. Hertfordshire]
Fig. 67

Tomb recess  [Much Hadham, St Andrew, Hertfordshire]
Easter sepulchre. It was in the first years of the twentieth century that that ascription came to be made. For example, the VCH for Hertfordshire in 1914 gave this assessment:

*Between the old doorway to the vestry and the doorway to the organ chamber is a recess, probably used as an Easter sepulchre, with continuously moulded arch and jambs and moulded label forming an ogee arch above, with a mutilated carved filial and stops with shields; it is of 15th-century date.*

The members of the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society had been told by R. S. Gregory in 1903 that it was an Easter sepulchre:

*Perhaps the most noticeable monument is an Easter sepulchre cut into the chancel wall on the north side.*

The RCHM described the tomb recess as 'possibly' used also as an Easter sepulchre. Although Pevsner did not mention this recess in the 1953 edition, the 1977 revision stated confidently:

*EASTER SEPULCHRE, also Dec.*

The dimensions, however (56 inches high by 68 inches wide by 9 inches deep), seem to suggest much more strongly that this recess should be interpreted as a tomb recess rather than as an Easter sepulchre - for all the reasons outlined previously concerning the size of a recess required for the burial of a cross and Host.

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84 Page 1914 (b), p.65.
85 Gregory 1903, p.137.
87 See Pevsner 1953, pp.172-173.
9. **St Albans, St Michael (Fig. 68)**
   This tomb recess, measuring 38 inches high by 84 inches wide by 15 inches deep, is on the exterior south wall of St Michael's church. As has been said of the tomb recesses on the exterior of church walls at Oakley (Buckinghamshire) and Baldock (Hertfordshire), it is obvious that such a recess was designed specifically for a tomb (the remains of the tomb slab are clearly visible in the illustration). The dimensions of this exterior tomb mirror the dimensions of a number of interior recesses - suggesting that the latter were designed originally to have a funerary, rather than an Easter liturgical, function.

10. **Ware, St Mary (Fig. 69)**
   This arched recess, with continuous mouldings, measures 60 inches high by 74 inches wide by 15 inches deep, and is situated in the north aisle. It is too far distant from the high altar to have been able to play a part in the Easter liturgies, and this, plus its dimensions and its lack of iconographical detail, all suggest that it was not intended to be an Easter sepulchre but was designed purposefully as a tomb recess.

**Conclusions: Hertfordshire**
In spite of the claims made by some Hertfordshire local historians in the early twentieth century, there is very little evidence, if any, that the recesses that have been commented upon and illustrated, had any Easter sepulchral purpose at all. They have followed the pattern that has been outlined in the comments made about tomb recesses in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, namely, that neither the dimensions, nor the architectural treatment, nor the iconography, have suggested an Easter sepulchre purpose in their original construction and design.

**Tomb Recesses - Conclusions**
In this chapter approximately 33.3% of all the tomb recesses in the three counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire have been commented upon and illustrated.

With the exception of Arlesey (Bedfordshire), St Mary's, Luton (Bedfordshire) and Aldbury (Hertfordshire), no evidence has been discovered to show that any of the tomb...
Fig. 68

Tomb recess [St Albans, St Michael, Hertfordshire]
Fig. 69

Tomb recess  [Ware, St Mary, Hertfordshire]
recesses are likely to have been designed originally with an Easter sepulchre purpose in mind. Their dimensions have suggested that their primary purpose was for burial. In the case of the three exceptions, the dimensions related to their width have led to the tentative possibility that they might have had an Easter sepulchre purpose but, in each case, Victorian or earlier restoration of the fabric has meant that certainty about their original use is unattainable. If 'probability' is allowed into the equation, however, and if their liturgical 'fitness for purpose' is taken into account, then an Easter sepulchre use cannot be entirely ruled out.

Such a very modest conclusion, added to the equally modest conclusion concerning lockers as Easter sepulchres, can only add to the growing evidence that permanent Easter sepulchres really are very elusive and extremely rare.
ENGLISH EASTER SEPULCHRES:
The History of an Idea

Volume 2 of 2

Christopher Herbert
# English Easter Sepulchres: The History of an Idea

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In the previous two chapters it has been shown that convincing evidence for the use of lockers and recesses as Easter sepulchres is very sparse indeed. But we now turn to a series of monuments on the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire borders which, at least since the eighteenth century, have been regarded as outstanding, not to say classic, examples of the genre. They include the Tomb of Christ at Lincoln Cathedral and Easter sepulchres at Heckington and Navenby (Lincolnshire) and Arnold, Hawton and Sibthorpe (Nottinghamshire). In her paper delivered to the British Archaeological Association, Veronica Sekules argued strongly and convincingly that these monuments probably combined several functions:

_They follow the tradition of medieval copies of the tomb of Christ in their association with ecclesiastical burials. In common with the Frieburg/Lincoln type of tomb, their sculpture makes explicit the reference to the events of the Easter period, but they introduce innovatory features stressing the presence in the monument of the living body of Christ_.

She claimed that it was

... _not without significance_

that these monuments were erected precisely at the time when the Corpus Christi ceremonies were taking hold in England, and concluded that it was

... _very likely that they were intended as sacrament shrines_.

In this chapter, some of the evidence for her conclusions will be reviewed, and further evidence will be provided which will support and extend her hypothesis.

---

1 Sekules 1986, p.124.
2 Ibid, p.124.
3 Ibid, p.124.
The Tomb of Christ at Lincoln Cathedral (Fig. 70)

Pevsner describes this monument, on the north side of the chancel (see Fig. 71), thus:

This charming piece is worth the closest study. It is of six bays. The three E ones are the sepulchre proper; the other three, in the conventional position for a founder's tomb, contain the slab recording Bishop Remigius, the builder of the early Norman cathedral. The sepulchre is the earliest example of the well-known group of C14 monuments erected in eastern England as permanent representations of the 'tomb of Christ'...

The canopy is continuous over the two tombs. It stands on arches with pointed cuspings. The small capitals of the shafts on which the arches stand have naturalistic foliage. Gables with crockets and finials, buttress-shafts with pinnacles. Inside, the two threes are divided by a cross wall, and this also and the E end walls have naturalistic leaves all over. Back wall with blank arches, two lights, trefoil-headed, a trefoil over, and an encircled trefoil in the tympanum. Finally the little vaults inside. They have lying ribs, the earliest on record, a little earlier than those of the ante-chapel to the Berkeley Chapel at Bristol Cathedral, which must be of c. 1305. The Easter Sepulchre, judging by its details, tallies with the cloisters, which were in course of erection in 1296. So 1300 might be its most likely date.

It is interesting to note that this description is carefully nuanced; it refers to the monument as an Easter sepulchre, but also as a 'tomb of Christ'. The ambiguity of the description reflects the ambiguity inherent in the structure itself. To the right-hand side and at low level there are three bays, in each of which is a sleeping soldier in low relief. The imagery is obvious; these are the soldiers who slept whilst Jesus rose from the dead. The niches above their heads, now empty, call out to be filled with free-standing sculptured images, such as are to be found, for example, in the entombment group at Freiburg im Breisgau (Figs. 72 and 73). The Freiburg grouping, dated to c. 1320-30, has been reconstructed in the south nave aisle and includes a Christus figure, in whose chest is a receptacle for a consecrated Host. The 'stage' of the Lincoln tomb of Christ and the

---

4 The 'Tomb of Christ' is marked on the floor plan (Fig. 71) at location number 12.
5 For details of the life of Remigius, see Bates 1992.
Tomb of Christ  [Lincoln Cathedral]
Fig. 71

Floor plan  [Lincoln Cathedral]
Entombment group  [Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany]
Fig. 73

Entombment group (detail) [Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany]
'stage' of the Freiburg im Breisgau entombment are strikingly similar (although the façade of the Freiburg tomb was not added until 1578) and it is difficult not to conclude that the Lincoln tomb must have functioned in exactly the same way. Unfortunately there really is no evidence that such entombment groups in permanent form ever existed in England – neither the Edwardian inventories nor the journals of William Dowsing mention any imagery of this kind. It is interesting to note that in Lincoln Cathedral there was, in addition to the tomb of Christ itself, a free-standing Easter sepulchre:

*Now remayning in the olde revestrie j alterstone (black) a sepulchre a ... a crosse for candelles called Judas crosse and other Furniture belonging to the same sepulchre, the pascall with the images in Fote belonging to the same sepulchre and a candlesitke of wodde*.

Further evidence for a free-standing sepulchre at Lincoln may be found in Miri Rubin's *Corpus Christi*:

*The Corpus Christi fraternity founded in 1350 at Lincoln ... provided thirteen square candles which were to be placed around the sepulchre*.

Presumably there were six candles either side of the sepulchre and one at the head – as a visual reminder of the Last Supper.

The free-standing Easter sepulchre at Lincoln would seem to rule out the categorisation of the tomb of Christ as an Easter sepulchre. It remains, however, a puzzling object and it may be helpful to ask how it might have functioned liturgically, theologically, spiritually and culturally.

**Liturg**

It is difficult to envisage how the tomb of Christ might have been used satisfactorily and convincingly for the 'burial' of the cross and the Host, as required in the Sarum rite. Maneouvring a cross between the shafts would be awkward, though the same could not

---

7 Sekules 1986, p.128, endnote 36.
8 See Rubin 1991.
9 Ibid, p.236.
be said of the deposition of the Host in the pyx, and with the 'stage' so dominated by three entrances/exits, the imbalance created by using only a portion of the structure might be a little jarring.

Unfortunately no documentary evidence concerning the rites used at the Lincoln tomb of Christ exists. Sekules points out\(^{10}\) that a thirteenth-century \textit{Bayeux} ordinal mentions processions to the Easter sepulchre at Matins, from the octave of Trinity until Advent, for the singing of the antiphon \textit{Surrexit Dominus}. Whether something similar happened at Lincoln is a matter for speculation.

It is conceivable, however, that the \textit{Lincoln} rite, itself, of which there are no longer any extant copies referring to the Holy Week ceremonies, might have had some variants which would account satisfactorily for the particular design\(^{11}\), though that does seem very unlikely.

The tomb of Christ in Lincoln Cathedral does not appear to fit in any way with what we know of English liturgical rites. The existence of a separate sepulchre in the 'revestrie' seems to provide evidence of an Easter practice involving a temporary structure, as was common in the rest of England.

\(^{10}\) Sekules 1986, p.128, endnote 37.

\(^{11}\) The use of \textit{Lincoln} has been defined as:

\begin{quote}
The liturgical usage adopted in the vast pre-Reformation diocese of Lincoln and referred to by T. Cranmer in the preface to the 1549 BCP. Among the few traces of it which have survived are three leaves of a 15th cent. MS. Missal 'secundum usum Lincoln', now among the Tanner MSS. in the Bodleian Library (MS. 9824) \cite{Cross 1963, p.810}.
\end{quote}

The BCP or \textit{Book of Common Prayer} was first issued as the \textit{Book of the Common Prayer} in 1549 in the reign of King Edward VI, and is thus commonly known as the first prayer book, or first book of common prayer, of King Edward VI.

W. H. Frere claimed:

\begin{quote}
If little is known as to the origin and history of the \textit{Use of Sarum}, it must be confessed that still less is known of the history of the other English secular \textit{Uses}. \textit{Lincoln} and \textit{Bangor} seem to have varied only slightly from \textit{Sarum}. \cite{Frere 1961, p.22}.
\end{quote}

It is interesting that amongst those working with Cranmer on the 1549 BCP was Henry Holbech (Randes), Bishop of Lincoln. \cite{Blunt 1892, p.14}. 

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Theology
The theology of the structure is equally difficult to envisage. It is necessary to ask who the audience of the structure might have been and how they might have 'read' it, theologically. The primary audience must have been those priests who officiated in the liturgies within the choir and chancel. Their eyes would inevitably see the structure as a tomb in which both Remigius and, as it were, Christ, were buried. It was a powerful visual, theological and political statement about their episcopal founder, as Sekules has indicated. But they would also have seen the structure in the context of the Mass, where the 'power' and 'risen-ness' of Christ were made present at the elevation of the Host.

The tomb in its ecclesiastical and theological setting was a part and a symbol of that compression of time past, time present and time future, contained within the structure of the Mass.

Spirituality
The clergy of Lincoln would have been aware of the development of affective spirituality encouraged by Anselm (1033-1109), Francis of Assisi (c.1181-1226) and others, who deepened people's awareness of the humanity and the suffering of Christ. They would have given much spiritual visual attention to the crucifixes in the Cathedral and yet would have in the tomb of Christ a powerful contrast. The suffering humanity of the figure of Christ on the cross was counterpointed by the glory and promise of the resurrection of which the tomb of Christ so eloquently spoke.

Culturally
There is, perhaps, another explanation for the tomb of Christ at Lincoln, although at present this, too, has to be based on surmise rather than firm evidence. Might it be possible that the Lincoln tomb of Christ functioned as a powerful visual symbol for those unable to travel on pilgrimage to Jerusalem itself? Jerusalem fell to Saladin in 1187:

Saladin had recovered the city in a spirit of 'jihad', and the restoration and extension of the [Muslim] faith was central to his intentions.12

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The Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque were recovered, purified and then restored for Muslim worship. Some churches were almost completely destroyed, and others were taken over; for example, St Anne's Church was turned into a madrasa.

The Holy Sepulchre itself was not taken over, though the main control over it switched from the Latin to the Greek Orthodox clergy. It is possible that these changes meant that only those pilgrims who were willing to pay a considerable sum of money would have had access to the Holy Sepulchre. In any case, the numbers of pilgrims fell dramatically once Jerusalem fell to Saladin. It was simply too dangerous or too difficult for many western pilgrims to get there.

The church [of the Holy Sepulchre] became essentially a private chapel for small and privileged groups of clergy, with only pilgrim access on special occasions.

This prevention of major pilgrimages to Jerusalem, combined with the flooding of the West with relics when Constantinople was sacked in the early thirteenth century meant that a theological and spiritual shift took place in the West. There was much anguished speculation about why God might have allowed Jerusalem to fall into Muslim hands, the general view being that it was because the West had become so sinful. New liturgies came into being:

There were already some opportunities in Western liturgy for commemorating the Holy Land in special or 'votive' masses, but these were now widely extended. The process began at once: a 'clamor pro Terra Sancta' seems to have been started at London in 1188 ... Provisions for this new type of service were extended throughout Europe by papal authority.

In addition, as new relics came to the West, notably the Crown of Thorns, for which the Sainte Chapelle, Paris, was specifically built (1239-1248), a new series of ideas began to take shape which suggested that parts of the West were somehow the 'new Israel'. In

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16 Ibid, p.266.
Constanz, in the late thirteenth century, for example, a Holy Sepulchre chapel was rebuilt. Might the tomb of Christ at Lincoln have been seen as something similar - a translation, as it were, of the Holy Sepulchre to the cathedral at Lincoln? Until substantial evidence for this is discovered, such an idea must remain entirely hypothetical.

Conclusion
It is difficult to understand the ways in which the tomb of Christ in Lincoln Cathedral might have functioned in the early fourteenth century, not least because its very structure seems to be like a stage waiting for the main actors to arrive. It would function extremely effectively as the locus for a free-standing entombment group, but, as has been said, the evidence for such figures in England is extremely sparse.

Colin Morris argues that 'many' Easter sepulchres

... contained statues relating to the resurrection, such as the guards, the women and the angels ... famous English examples are those in Lincoln Cathedral, Hackington [sic], Lincs and Patrington (Yorks) 18.

However he does not provide evidence that there were in fact 'many'. Unfortunately, therefore, until and unless major evidence emerges for the existence of English entombment groups, it is safer to view the tomb, as Sekules has argued, as conveying 'sanctity' on the tomb of Remigius. In spite of the iconography, therefore, it seems appropriate to conclude that the Lincoln structure was not designed primarily for the Easter ceremonies - but that it had a more overt theological and political purpose which needed to be expressed not on an annual but on a daily basis. It was a visual reminder, close to the locus of sanctity, the high altar, of the importance and significance of Remigius.

17 In correspondence with Prof. Robert Swanson of the University of Birmingham, he wrote that he had researched all the indulgences entered in the Lincoln episcopal registers for 1300-1350 but did not find any relating to the Lincoln 'tomb of Christ'. This does not preclude the possibility of the tomb being a pilgrimage focus - but without any indulgences, its use for 'replica' pilgrimages seems unlikely.

This theme, linking high-status tombs with the 'tomb of Christ' is one which is found in other parish churches nearby.

**Heckington, St Andrew (Fig. 74)**

It was in 1796 that Richard Gough made the connection between Francis Blomefield's hypothesis that there was an Easter sepulchre in Northwold, and the structure in Heckington, itself:

*In the north wall of this church is the finest Holy Sepulchre I ever saw*.

This was followed in 1852 by George Gordon Place's paper (which he read to a public meeting of the Lincolnshire Architectural Society, in Sleaford, on 17 June 1852), in which a more substantial connection was made between the Heckington monument and other Easter sepulchres in England:

*Up to the time of King Henry VIII., almost every chancel had a sepulchre; some were of stone, and some of wood. The use of this piece of furniture belonged to certain ceremonies, which were discontinued at that time.*

George Place continued his paper with a description of the *Rites of Durham* and interjected a plea for ecclesiastical correctness:

*To speak in terms sufficiently high of the design and detail of this sepulchre would be a matter impossible ... Another use of the sepulchre was, as a credence table, and it was no doubt retained for this use in the time of Henry VIII., and therefore ought to be used as such now.*

He then got fully into his ideological stride:

*How was it that such magnificent and costly temples were erected for the divine services?*  
*How is it that at this day we find their condition so neglected and decayed?*

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19 Gough 1796, p.305.  
21 Ibid, p.117.
'Easter Sepulchre' [Heckington, St Andrew, Lincolnshire]
And is it not a trust which has fallen to us, to restore and maintain them, and in building anew to follow them as patterns?22

Then, with a rousing rhetorical flourish, he concluded:

It was indeed God's good pleasure ... to bring to perfection, in the days of King Edward III., that Christian architecture which is alone fitted for divine worship in the services of the Catholic church23.

It is not surprising, given the tone and style of Place's encomium, that a plaster cast of the Easter sepulchre at Heckington was exhibited in the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace. (The relationship between nationalism and mid-Victorian ecclesiological activity will be explored in Chapter 11 of this thesis).

It was also in 1852 that Stephen Lewin produced his study of Heckington24:

From the days of Gough and Rickman, Heckington church has been celebrated amongst most archaeologists as an edifice whose noble proportions render it one of the most worthy and interesting of our village churches25.

He referred to the Easter sepulchre and relied upon Gough for his description of the uses to which an Easter sepulchre was put, and then drew on evidence from the Russian Orthodox Church about Easter ceremonies.

Eleven years later, following a visit in 1863, Edward Trollope wrote about Heckington in Notes on Sleaford, and Other Churches in its Vicinity26:

Nearly opposite [the sedilia] is one of the finest, if not the finest, Easter Sepulchre remaining in England. Below are sculptured the sleeping Roman guard, clothed in the armour and bearing the shields of soldiers of the fourteenth century. In the

22 Place 1852-53, p.119.
23 Ibid, p.120.
24 Lewin 1852.
26 Trollope 1863.
centre above is the recess, in which the Host was solemnly deposited on Good Friday, where it remained until an early hour on Easter Day.  

(It is to be noted that in his description of the liturgy, Trollope does not mention the burial of a cross). He continued with his description:

... On either side of the aperture are carved the guardian angel, and the three Marys; above is the figure of our Lord freshly risen, together with censing angels.

One of the insights which Trollope brought to his interpretation of the sepulchre (notwithstanding his inaccuracy about the liturgy) was that the sepulchre, itself, was part of an ensemble. He referred to the sedilia and described it in some detail:

[It contains] figures of our Lord and the Virgin, and on either side of these, others, both of which apparently represent St. Barbara with the heavenly suggested tower. On the right is a figure of St. Catherine with the wheel, on the left, one of St. Margaret with the Dragon.

But Trollope was distinctly uneasy about the 'grotesques' (Fig.75) which he also noticed on the sedilia:

... the admixture of grotesques with the other legitimate figures and enrichments does not accord with our present taste, although prevalent generally during the 14th century.

He expressed similar unease about the grotesques on the Easter sepulchre itself:

... here, as in the case of the sedilia opposite, some grotesque figures have been unmeaningly introduced, together with some heads on a larger scale than the other ornaments, with very questionable taste.

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27 Trollope 1863, p.18.
28 Ibid, p.18.
29 Ibid, p.17.
[Footnotes continue overleaf]
Sedilia (detail)  [Heckington, St Andrew, Lincolnshire]
Later writers on Heckington, for example, H. T. Sumners in 1912\textsuperscript{32}, drew explicitly on Trollope’s work. D. C. Speedy, in 1964, continued the inaccuracy concerning the liturgical use of the sepulchre:

\begin{quote}
The purpose of the sepulchre was to serve as a tomb for the consecrated Host between Good Friday and the vigil of Easter Eve\textsuperscript{33}.
\end{quote}

Speedy, however, put forward a new idea about the actual construction of the sepulchre:

\begin{quote}
It seems that it was made in a ‘factory’ and brought to the church in parts. It is of different stone from the rest of the church fabric\textsuperscript{34}.
\end{quote}

In 1989, Pevsner and Harris describe St Andrew’s, Heckington, as:

\begin{quote}
... one of the dozen or so grandest churches of Lincolnshire\textsuperscript{35}.
\end{quote}

They comment on the ensemble of piscina, sedilia, Easter sepulchre and tomb recess:

\begin{quote}
All have the most exuberant ogee and crocket work, plenty of knobbly foliation, buttress-shafts, gables and finials ... The Easter Sepulchre is a show front around a simple triangle-headed recess no larger than 2ft high. Below, as in Lincoln Cathedral, a base like the front of a tomb-chest, and against this in relief the seated soldiers\textsuperscript{36}.
\end{quote}

The description continues by detailing the buttresses and buttress shafts, the horizontal cornice, etc, and as well as describing the main characters, the three Marys, the angel and the risen Christ, it points out the drolleries at the very top of the monument, including a mermaid, a piper and a bagpiper.

\textsuperscript{31} Trollope 1863, p.18.
\textsuperscript{32} See Sumners 1912.
\textsuperscript{33} Speedy 1964, p.8.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, p.8.
\textsuperscript{35} Pevsner 1989, p.375.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p.377.
The descriptions, as exuberant as the structure itself, do not, however, begin to tackle the major questions which arise from a close study of the Easter sepulchre - questions such as: 'What was the intended audience?' and 'What is the relationship between the five major items: piscina, sedilia, tomb, doorway and Easter sepulchre?' It is to these questions that we now turn.

The audience

It needs to be said at the outset that to abstract the Easter sepulchre, and look at it in isolation, is to do a significant injustice to the entire ensemble. These structures were clearly meant to relate to each other; they are all of a piece. The tomb, sedilia, doorway, piscina and Easter sepulchre are primarily visual in their impact. They are, as it were, the sumptuous stage furnishings which fulfil their primary visual purpose when the drama itself begins. To attempt to 'read' and understand them without paying attention to the drama to which they provide the backdrop, is like trying to understand, say, King Lear only and exclusively through a careful study of the stage set.

In the case of Heckington, as of other fourteenth-century churches, the main drama was the Mass - and the structures in Heckington should, therefore, be 'read' not so much through the intellectually challenging theology of the Mass, itself, but through the part they played in the drama, along with the incense, the bells and the flickering candles. Paradoxically, the prime audience, however (and this is where the theatre metaphor may begin to collapse) consisted of the participants: the priest, deacon and subdeacon at the Mass. When they sat in the sedilia (above their heads the carved images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, St Barbara, St Margaret and St Catherine), visually their sightlines would have been dominated by the sepulchre. They looked across at the tomb of Christ, the accompanying angels, the three Marys and the risen Christ himself (Fig. 76). Theologically, they gazed at the tomb of Christ, before moving to the high altar where the priest, at the very heart of the Mass, elevated the Host and displayed to the onlookers the risen Christ in the transubstantiated bread. The incense of the angels on the tomb (Fig. 77) would have mingled, as it were, with the incense being wafted in prayer at the altar.

The second audience, unable from their vantage position in the nave to see the detail on the sedilia and the sepulchre, would have been the parishioners. Their function was
Fig. 76

Detail showing the Risen Christ. [Heckington, St Andrew, Lincolnshire]
Fig. 77

Detail showing base of Risen Christ. [Heckington, St Andrew, Lincolnshire]
certainly to gaze at the elevated Host, but it seems likely that they would have recognised, in the proximity of the founder’s tomb (Fig. 78) to the tomb of Christ, that it was their duty to pray for the founder’s soul. It may be that their ‘reading’ or understanding of the sanctuary furnishings had much to do with thoughts of death and judgment, purgatory and salvation, but may also have been concerned with status and worth. In a society in which the actual locus of burial was frequently related to social standing, they might have wondered about the juxtaposition and significance of this one intramural grave, compared with the countless others in their unnamed, unmarked plots, in the churchyard.

The third audience at this liturgical drama would have been, so to speak, both absent and present: the original patron who had commissioned this extravagant and beautiful entombment group, Richard de Potesgrave. Edward Trollope had done some research on de Potesgrave in 1863:

... there is actual evidence to prove that a former vicar, Richard de Potesgrave, erected the chancel, but probably by the aid of Sir Henry de Beaumont.

Twenty-nine years later, when Trollope had become Bishop of Nottingham, he wrote to the parishioners of Heckington and corrected his original hypothesis. He provided evidence to show that de Potesgrave was an influential and important figure at the courts of King Edward II and Edward III. The quotation which follows is provided in full because it is not only informative, but is also a delightful period piece:

No doubt you greatly value your grand old parish church and all that belongs to it; so that anything that will add to your information respecting it, I gladly contribute - this being more about Richard de Potesgrave, whose grave is marked by his tomb and effigy placed upon it so long ago as the reign of Edward the III.

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37 For further comment on the relationship between a founder and intercessory, post-mortem, prayer, see Luxford 2005, pp.78-81.
38 See Binski 1996.
39 Trollope 1863, p.15.
Founder's tomb.  [Heckington, St Andrew, Lincolnshire]
Long was his name forgotten, and long ago the base act of slicing off the whole of his face was cruelly done, so that we cannot see even any part of a copy of his features. We know that he was presented to the vicarage of Heckington by Edward I, and that he was the builder of the lovely chancel there, but the wonder was how he could have acquired the means of effecting such a grand purpose.

It was suggested that this was done by Henry de Beaumont, lord of the manor, or by the inmates of Bardney Abbey, but at last I discovered he was not only a chaplain of Edward II, and Edward III, but also their trusted officer, employed in important duties for them so that, no doubt Potesgrave was materially assisted by Edward III.

What 'one' was I have now ascertained, and I feel sure it will prove of interest to many connected with Heckington, and I hope to others also.

In the year 1321 the siege of Leeds Castle, near Maidstone, by Queen Isabella, wife of Edward II occurred. She was either on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, or more probably wished to gain possession of the castle, before which she appeared with a large company demanding admittance for the night. Walter Colepeper, the then castellan of Lord Badlesmere, one of the hostile barons and at that time absent from the castle, firmly refused to allow her to enter without his Lord's orders, and when she tried to enter by force a fight ensued, and she was repulsed with loss of some of her people, and was glad to take shelter for the night in a neighbouring village - either Leeds or Broomfield.

Upon this King Edward assembled a considerable force to besiege the Castle in person, whilst a hostile party on the side of the rebellious barons were preparing to come to the aid of the defenders from Kingston, but eventually feeling that they were unable to cope with the King, retreated, and the castle garrison in consequence surrendered at discretion, when thirteen of them were executed, and their possessions forfeited to the King. Then strange to say Potesgrave's name appeared in the transaction, for he was appointed by the King to hold this confiscated property during the royal pleasure, and also the lands of Thomas Colepeper, clearly showing how important a man he was, being what we now might call a minister to Edward II and Edward III, as well as confessor to both. Although Potesgrave has so long passed away, the chalice, which no doubt he often used himself, is now advisedly exhibited above his grave and carefully protected.
This addition to the history of Richard de Potesgrave will, I think, be worthy of note, and certainly is so to myself, from my intimate knowledge of Leeds Castle, as having been for many years the residence of my sister, the wife of the owner of that grand old royal castle.

+ E Nottingham
Dec 14th, 1892

De Potesgrave himself, then, the third but absent audience of the chancel drama, had been a man of considerable influence and power. He first appears in the Calendar of the Patent Rolls of 1308 as having been presented to the Church of St Mellion (or ecclesia Sancti Melani), in the diocese of Exeter and, in the same year, he is noted as King’s Chaplain and parson of the Church of Byfleet, Surrey, in the diocese of Winchester. A few months later, in March 1309, he was presented to the Church of Hekyngton [sic] in the diocese of Lincoln:

... in the King’s gift by reason of the voidance of the abbacy of Bardeneye.

In 1315 in the Calendar of Close Rolls, it is recorded that he had letters to the Bishop of Salisbury to receive the yearly pension due to him as one of the King’s clerks. In 1323 he is mentioned as:

... keeper of the lands of certain rebels in Kent.

Then, in 1326, he was given the grant for life of the wardenship of the hospital of St Mary Magdalene, Newenton in Holdreness (now known as Newton Garth, Hedon). It is very interesting to note that Hedon is a parish adjacent to Patrington, where there is also an Easter sepulchre (see pages 188-189). There was a hospital for lepers in Hedon, known as the Hospital of St Sepulchre.

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44 Calendar of the Close Rolls, 9 Edward II, 6 Oct, 1315, p.313.
46 Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 19 Edward II, Part 2, 10 May, 1326, p.269.
It has not been possible to find further documentary evidence linking de Potesgrave, Heckington and Patrington, but the coincidence is very striking.

There is a further connection to be made - and that is the connection between de Potesgrave and Thomas de Sibthorpe. Both were King's clerks and both appeared together on a list entitled 'Protection with clause notunnus for one year'\(^47\). These connections, between King’s clerks and Easter sepulchres, will be explored further in the pages which follow.

It is clear, as far as Heckington is concerned, that Richard de Potesgrave was a significant player at the royal court of Edward II. He walked with kings on earth and had so designed his own tomb that it was close to the 'tomb' of the 'king of heaven'. He had also founded a chantry at Heckington in 1328 which, if it were like other chantry chapels, was, no doubt, so endowed that prayers were offered at it constantly for the repose of his soul. Clearly, heaven and proximity to the heavenly court must have been of great importance for him.

The fourth audience, it could be said, was that unseen but ubiquitous heavenly court - amongst whose citizens were the Virgin Mary, St Catherine, St Margaret and St Barbara: presumably saints with whom de Potesgrave felt he had a special and close relationship.

If the chancel furnishings are 'read' in the light of their four audiences, then it seems reasonable to conclude that this Easter sepulchre, whilst entirely capable of being used only and specifically for the Holy Week and Easter rites, might have had a daily or weekly function, rather than a brief annual one. In other words, notwithstanding the argument of Gregory Dix that the pyx was the chief means of reservation of the sacrament, this particular structure, in this particular place, might have functioned as a 'sacrament house' for daily use\(^48\) - and then, at Easter time, have been used as the 'tomb'.


\(^48\) This is also Sekules' conclusion; see Sekules 2001, caption note of Fig.35, p.100:

_In eastern England a small group of parish churches housed permanent monuments celebrating the Resurrection of Christ, which probably acted as proto-sacrament shrines for the permanent reservation of the Host._
Further evidence for this hypothesis is provided by the internal structure of the sepulchre, because to the left of the entrance is an additional small recess which could have been used for the 'burial' of the Host, thus leaving the main shrine (measuring 24 inches high by 32 inches wide by 31 inches deep) to be used for the 'burial' of a cross in a horizontal position, wrapped in linen and lying on a cushion.

It may be seen that this particular hypothesis about the sepulchre at Heckington is based upon three premises; firstly that like the Remigius structure at Lincoln, this too has the primary function of locating the donor/patron next to the iconographically explicit 'tomb of Christ'. Secondly, the structure had a memory-jogging function: it was to remind the onlookers to pray for the soul of de Potesgrave. Thirdly, that to be effective as a memory jogger, it needed to be the centre of attention on a daily basis - as it would have been if, as part of its design, it had the capacity to be a sacrament house. Its use for the Easter ceremonies themselves, would then have had a further powerfully commemorative, and theologically energising, effect.

Perhaps all that can be concluded at this stage, with any degree of assurance, is that this is a structure whose meanings are densely layered and tightly interwoven, but the claim that the sepulchre at Heckington is essentially and primarily a tomb of Christ/sacrament house is borne out by evidence from nearby Navenby, and from Arnold, Hawton and Sibthorpe.

Navenby, St Peter (Fig. 79)

Veronica Sekules wrote:

*The tomb of Christ at Navenby was made by the same masons who made the furnishings at Heckington*[^49].

It, too, is part of an ensemble - of piscina and sedilia, and possibly a north-sided doorway. However, according to Sekules, the founder's tomb is of a slightly different style from the sepulchre and other parts of the ensemble and may, therefore, postdate their construction. She also suggests that the so-called founder's tomb is that of John de

[^49]: Sekules 1986, endnote 46, p.130.
Fenton, rather than that of William de Herlaston who, in 1325, as Chancellor and Keeper of the Privy Seal under King Edward II, was presented by the King to the living.

Navenby itself was one of the places in Lincolnshire at which Letters Patent were issued by the King. Somerton Castle, Navenby, had been built in 1281-82 and was used by King Edward II and Isabella on their royal progresses. They stayed there in early 1316.

William de Herlaston was, like de Potesgrave and de Sibthorpe, a King's clerk, described in the Calendar of the Patent Rolls as

... constantly attendant on the King's service.

In 1325 he was named as a witness when Henry de Clyf swore on oath faithfully to care for the Chancery Rolls committed to him by the King and in August of that same year, de Herlaston travelled overseas with the King and the Earl of Leicester. In 1326 he was granted the Archdeaconry of Norfolk and he also in that year witnessed the confirmation of a quitclaim by Thomas de Sibthorpe of lands in Essex.

The links between the King's clerks and the existence of Easter sepulchres, in a small geographical area, is very striking.

De Herlaston was probably responsible for the building of the chancel in Navenby church before he was appointed as a Canon of Llandaff. John de Fenton, his successor, was also closely associated with the court and in 1329 travelled to France with the Bishop of Norwich on behalf of King Edward III.

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51 See Weir 2006, p.106.


57 Sekules 1986, endnote 46, p.130.
If Sekules is correct in her hypothesis, then it seems very likely that Navenby represents the first in the series of these Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire sacrament shrines. This might account for the fact that iconographically and theologically Navenby is quite simple. There are three soldiers, dressed in military uniform (Fig. 80). The damage to the bas reliefs is fairly considerable which makes dating of the uniform quite difficult. It would be safe to say, however, that the uniforms are pre-1340. One of the details, that of the lion’s head (Fig. 81) on the shield of one of the soldiers is very similar to such a ‘caricature’ on the shield of one of the Sibthorpe soldiers. The design has no heraldic significance but is probably intended to symbolise the grotesque wickedness of the soldiers and others involved in the crucifixion.

On the sepulchre itself there are only four major figures (Fig. 82), the three Marys and an angel, swinging a censer, but there is no figure of Christ.

The sedilia is similarly simple. Unlike Heckington there is no ‘familia’ of saints at the topmost register of the structure, only exuberant crockets and finials; and there are no figures as at Heckington, stroking cats or having domestic arguments. The overall impression is of decoration rather than wit, notwithstanding the tiny and almost imperceptible ‘grotesques’ which are to be found on the shafts.

If questions about the original audience are asked, then it is possible to surmise that, again, the primary audience would have been the priest, deacon and subdeacon who, seated opposite the tomb of Christ, would have been constantly reminded of Christ’s death and resurrection. Did de Herlaston have a particular devotion to the sepulchre or to Corpus Christi? Was this devotion prompted by the loss of Acre only a few years previously, in 1291, when any hope of recovering the holy places of Jerusalem was effectively abandoned? The questions, inevitably, are speculative and unanswerable.

There is a significant problem in trying to interpret this particular structure as an Easter sepulchre. The problem relates to the shape and size of the recess. It is 35 inches high.

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58 From conversation in November 2006 with Claude Blair, CVO OBE MA LittD FSA.
59 For a comparison of the devil with a lion, see 1 Peter 5:8.
Fig. 80

Detail of base showing three soldiers [Navenby, St Peter, Lincolnshire]
Fig. 81

Detail showing lion's head on soldier's shield  
[Navenby, St Peter, Lincolnshire]
Fig. 82

'Easter sepulchre' (detail of 3 Marys and angel)  [Navenby, St Peter, Lincolnshire]
by 20 inches wide by 28½ inches deep - and seems designed along a vertical, rather than a horizontal, axis. In terms of the liturgy, if the Sarum rite was used at Navenby (and if that rite was followed in detail), then it is difficult to imagine how the recess could naturally convey the metaphor of burial.

However, it does make liturgical sense to think of it being designed for, and used as, a sacrament house. Metaphorically, the design is more about resurrection than it is about burial and it could, therefore, be used daily at the Mass. It really does seem inherently unlikely that, in this case, where the founder’s tomb may have been created after the Easter sepulchre, so much care would have been lavished on a structure which would only come into its own during the season of Holy Week and Easter.

Arnold, St Mary (Fig. 83)

Whereas the Easter sepulchres at Heckington and Navenby are, relatively speaking, fairly intact, the Easter sepulchre at Arnold (Nottinghamshire) has suffered considerable damage. There are no soldiers, there are no angels and there are no Marys. The locker itself (measuring 30½ inches high by 19 inches wide by 18½ inches deep) is designed on a vertical, rather than horizontal, axis which, like Navenby, suggests that it may have had, as its primary function, that of a sacrament house.

What it has in common with Heckington and Hawton is that it was designed from the very beginning as part of an ensemble. Directly opposite the Easter sepulchre is the sedilia (very damaged) and a double piscina, and to the west, a founder’s tomb. It is claimed locally that this tomb is that of John de la Launde, the founder of the church. The inscription on the tomb cover says:

Perpetuis Annis Habitant Hic Ossa Johannis
(Here for perpetuity reside the bones of John)

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69 Robert Thoroton (1623-1678), the Nottinghamshire antiquarian, described the village of ‘Arnall, Ernehale’ but did not make any reference to the church (see Thoroton 1790, vol.2, pp.231-234). John Throsby (1740-1803), in making additional notes to Thoroton’s work, did visit the church and wrote (Thoroton 1790, vol.2, p.234):

The Church is dedicated to St. Mary, has a tower with five bells, a nave and side aisles.

He did not mention the Easter sepulchre.
'Easter Sepulchre' (detail) [Arnold, St Mary, Nottinghamshire]
On the tomb cover is also an incised carving of a canon regular, holding in his left hand a staff and in his right hand a casket, presenting them to the patron saint, Mary, who holds the Christ child in her arms.

John de la Launde is mentioned in the *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*:

*Presentation of John de la Launde, parson of the church of Arnale, in the diocese of York, to the vicarage of the church of St Mary, Notyngham, in the same diocese, in the king’s gift by reason of the priory of Lenton being in his hands, on account of the war with France; on an exchange of benefices with John Cosyn*.

John Cosyn had been Vicar of St Mary’s, Nottingham, from 12 March 1322/3 to 1347.

It may be pure coincidence that a John Cosyn was also chaplain and keeper of the chapel at St Mary, Sibthorpe, and was obviously known to Thomas de Sibthorpe. He appeared before Thomas de Sibthorpe on 19 June 1349 in a case concerning an indenture. Again, the interrelationship of the clerks and clergy of this part of the Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire area, and their relationship with Easter sepulchres, is noteworthy.

The Arnold Easter sepulchre, carved out of Mansfield sandstone, looks like a simplified and somewhat coarser version of the Heckington type. However, the damage to the Easter sepulchre is not so complete that its relationship with other major church buildings in the vicinity is indecipherable. Pevsner states:

*The plain surfaces are partly adorned by diapering, patterns of square flowers, as we find them on the Southwell pulpitum and that at Lincoln*.

The same diapering pattern is also found on the tomb chest which, itself, is set in a recess which has an ogee arch with double cuspings. In addition, Pevsner states that the head

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62 Information obtained from www.stmarysnottinham.org - the church website.
63 *Calendar of the Close Rolls*, 12 Edward III, Part 2, 10 Jun,1338, p.510.
64 Pevsner 1979, p.57.
brackets for statues to the left and right of the east window are by the same mason-
sculptor.

The question of audience needs to be raised concerning the ensemble at Arnold and
although, owing to the iconoclastic damage, it is not possible to speculate about the
specific theological and liturgical concepts available to the original viewer, it is not
unreasonable to conclude that all four pieces (founder’s tomb, sepulchre, piscina and
sedilia) were centred on the Mass. The chancel at Arnold, like the chancels of
Heckington and Navenby, was so constructed visually that death, Mass and the afterlife
were woven together in a complex theological pattern in which past events were not
simply remembered but were re-presented (that is, made present) to, and by, the
participants. In such a theological milieu it would seem very likely that the ‘Easter
sepulchre’ would have been designed for, and used as, a sacrament house - and thus
would have played its full visual rôle in the daily celebration of the Mass.

Hawton, All Saints (Nottinghamshire) (Fig. 84)
The destruction of the imagery of the chancel furnishings at Arnold means that its
detailed language cannot be read; only the broadest outlines are discernible. At Hawton,
however, although there has been some destruction, the amount of iconographical detail
remaining is very remarkable.

Again, Hawton, in broad terms, shares the same features as the others that have been
described. The Easter sepulchre is part of an ensemble consisting of founder’s tomb,

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65 Pevsner 1979, p.57.
66 Hawton is described as:

... another small village of about 12 dwellings [Thoroton 1790, vol.1, p.357]

and the church as follows:

The church which is dedicated to All Saints, has a light tower with 4 bells ... The stalls,
in the chancel, are exceedingly rich in decoration: flowers, birds, &c. are figured therein
in a good stile. The north side of the chancel, also, is pleasingly ornamented, and the

It can be seen that the ‘pleasingly ornamented’ north side of the chancel is not described as an
Easter sepulchre. Marble slabs and brasses were noted but little else except:

By the wall Side in the Chancel an old cross-legg’d Monument, with a Shield not
ordinary. [Ibid, vol.1, p.357].

181
'Easter sepulchre' (detail of upper part)  [Hawton, All Saints, Nottinghamshire]
doorway, piscina and sedilia (Figs. 85, 86). The range and substance of the iconography suggest that the question of 'audience' may be answered here in ways which are very similar to previous comments on Heckington (see pages 171-176). For example, the priest, deacon and subdeacon sat in their sumptuous sedilia gazing across at the tomb of Christ. Above their heads, in the topmost register, was the 'familia' of saints: in this case, St Anne, with her emblem, the lily, and to the east, nearest the high altar, St Catherine, St Peter and St Clement, identified by an anchor (both saints are wearing papal tiaras), and St Mary Magdalene and St Margaret of Antioch. It is tempting to speculate about this particular set of saints - and to 'decode' their meanings. It may or may not be relevant, therefore, that a number of nearby churches, for example, at Sibthorpe and at Farndon, are dedicated to St Peter, as was the Augustinian priory at Thurgarton; the parish church of Newark was dedicated to St Mary Magdalene; there is a legend attached to St Catherine's well in the old parish of Hawton; St Clement could be a reference to Pope Clement V who disbanded the Knights Templar in 1307-14 (the advowson of Sibthorpe was originally in the hands of the Knights Templar before being passed on to the Knights Hospitaller and then to Thomas de Sibthorpe). It has to be admitted that the dedication of a college chapel at Sibthorpe in 1336, which included not only the Blessed Virgin Mary, St John the Baptist and St Thomas à Becket, but also saints Anne, Catherine, Margaret and Mary Magdalene, lends weight to John Quarrell's hypothesis that in fact Hawton church was really the Sibthorpe college chapel, and that Thomas de Sibthorpe was the fons et origo of the remarkable Hawton ensemble. As a King's clerk, Quarrell argues, de Sibthorpe would have had not only the financial muscle required to create such an exuberant work as the chancel at Hawton but, for political reasons, de Sibthorpe would have wanted to place royal references within the chancel. These can be found in the statue of St Edmund, king and martyr, on the sedilia, and in the drip stones of royal heads either side of the east window.

Thomas de Sibthorpe first appears in the records in 1317 as a King's clerk. Five years later, in 1322, he is charged with the task of examining and putting in order

... the charters, writings, and other muniments in the castles of Pontefract, Tuttebury and Tonnebrigge, as also those which newly came into and are in the

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67 See Quarrell 1994, pp.60-61.

68 Calendar of the Close Rolls, 10 Edward II, 17 Apr, 1317, p.463.
Fig. 85

Founder's tomb and 'Easter sepulchre' [Hawton, All Saints, Nottinghamshire]
Sedilia  [Hawton, All Saints, Nottinghamshire]
custody of the keeper of the Tower of London, and all those which are in the house of the Friars Preachers within the City of London. In that same year he received presentation to the church of Heton in the diocese of York. In 1324 de Sibthorpe was granted a licence for... the alienation in mortmain... of a messuage, a toft, 50 acres of land and 5 acres of meadows in Hokesworth and Aslacton to a chaplain to celebrate divine service daily in a chapel to be built by the same Thomas in honour of St Mary the Virgin, John the Baptist and Thomas the Martyr on the north side of the church of St Peter, Sibethorpe, for the souls of himself, his father, mother, brothers, sisters and ancestors.

Also in 1324 he was presented to the living of Shenle [present-day Shenley ?], diocese of Lincoln. The following year he was granted custody of the hospital of the Holy Innocents-without-Lincoln and, in addition, the manor of Flauflore... and all the lands belonging to it in the counties of Lincoln and Nottingham.

It was also in 1325 that he was granted the chapel of Iselhampstede Botetourt. Clearly de Sibthorpe was in the King's favour and was rapidly increasing in wealth and influence. Further lands and grants came to him in 1327 and a few years later, in 1334, he was one of those given the task of collecting money from the priories of Lincolnshire to assist King Edward III in his war against the Scots and, in 1335, he collected...
lands and places of the Prior of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England, beyond Trent, to wit, the lands which belonged to the Templars, and which came into the King's hands by the annulling of that order.\textsuperscript{77}

The weakness of Quarrell's hypothesis lies in two facts, the one geographical, the other documentary. It does seem inherently improbable that de Sibthorpe would have set up a college chapel several miles from his original foundation at Sibthorpe. The documentary evidence, whilst on the face of it appearing slightly ambiguous, on a careful reading seems to suggest that Sibthorpe's foundation really was at Sibthorpe itself and not at Hawton. Thus, for example, the phrase in the Patent Rolls of 1324 about a chapel to be built by Thomas:

\textit{... on the north side of the church of St Peter, Sibthorpe}\textsuperscript{78}

seems to be very clear. Moreover, this chapel of St Mary, founded by Thomas, is described three years later as

\textit{... annexed to the church of Sibthorpe}\textsuperscript{79}.

Also in the Close Rolls of 1327 appears the following:

\textit{... certain chaplains ... to celebrate divine service daily in a chapel of St Mary in the town of Sibthorpe, newly constructed by Thomas} \textsuperscript{80}.

Given the attention to detail in each of these legal descriptions, it appears very unlikely that a new chapel, some miles away in Hawton, was being referred to.

The strength of Quarrell's case, however, lies in its recognition that the person behind the design of the ensemble obviously combined considerable wealth and theological learning. What kind of person might that have been? It could be argued that such a person would need certain characteristics to commission the Hawton Easter sepulchre.

\textsuperscript{77} Calendar of the Close Rolls, 9 Edward III, 24 Aug, 1335, p.521.
\textsuperscript{78} Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 18 Edward II, Part 1, 5 Nov, 1324, p.38.
\textsuperscript{79} Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1 Edward III, Part 1, 18 Apr, 1327, p.108.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 1 Edward III, Part 2, 6 Jul, 1327, p.205.
They would need to have the legal and cultural right to impose their monument in the chancel, thus they would need to be the parish priest, the lord of the manor or to be of national significance - for example, an archbishop or senior member of the royal court. They would need not only status but also wealth, and the self confidence to use their status and wealth in this particular way. Because of the close stylistic connection between Hawton and Heckington, it is conceivable that they were trying to make a more resplendent memorial than that of de Potesgrave. They, or their master mason, would have been theologically vivacious and well-read - all those saints and figures on the sedilia are evidence for that - and they would have had the artistic bravura required to study the designs of all the other local Easter sepulchres and to develop the design much further.

The kind of person who might fit all these criteria, if he were not de Sibthorpe himself, would be likely to have been a senior and wealthy King's clerk or, at the very least, to have had close connections with that courtly circle. It should not be overlooked that at Heckington and Navenby there is firm evidence that the Easter sepulchres there were related very closely to particular King's clerks. There was a King's clerk named Richard de Hoton who was the Vicar of the Church of Little Markham, Nottinghamshire. His connection with Hawton, however, is not proven.

One of the things, however, that is very clear about the Easter sepulchre itself at Hawton is that the aperture at the north-west end of the recess is only capable of being used for the 'burial' of a Host. Its dimensions are 17 inches high by 8½ inches wide by 9 inches deep, and four inches from the front of the recess there is evidence of a rebate for an inner door. Such an aperture could not be used for the burial of a cross, as was required by the Sarum rite - which strongly suggests that this particular structure was primarily intended to be a sacrament house. Theologically, the symbolism of the sepulchre is clear: at the floor level, the sleeping soldiers and the tomb are a reminder of the 'body of Christ' entombed; the aperture, surrounded by images of the resurrection, is meant to represent that moment when the entombed body becomes the sacred, transubstantiated Body at the Mass, and the ascended Christ (whose footprints have left their mark on the

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*Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 6 Edward II, Part 1, 4 Feb, 1313, p.526.*
Rock of the Ascension) represents the heaven-ward dimension and trajectory of the
Mass.

The wit and variety of the images in the Hawton ensemble are striking. On the sedilia,
for example, is a bird feeding its young from the blood of its own breast (Fig. 87) - a
strong eucharistic symbol. The bird, a pelican, is generally represented in medieval
architectural ornaments and monumental sculptures as an eagle. On the tomb, by
contrast, the soldiers are entirely comic creations (Figs. 88 and 89) carrying shields,
whose devices are caricatures - note especially those on the right-hand side (Fig. 89).

Like Heckington, Hawton is a complex and densely layered theological and political
structure. Politically it is about a number of things: the status of the founder and his
proximity to 'Christ's tomb' - and thus, by implication his importance and status within
society. It is about the status of priesthood - those who are close enough to the structure
to be able to 'read' it in detail. It is about the societal divide - between the priesthood as
an educated elite, and the lay people gathered in the nave and generally excluded from
the most holy parts of the building. It is about having sufficient wealth and influence to
position yourself and your grave in the most significant place. Theologically, it is about
the centrality of the Mass, about the church and the sanctuary as a place where time past,
present and future coalesce (the saints, as it were, are 'alive' in that place to which those
on earth can aspire and they are agents of ensuring a smooth and gracious transition from
earth to heaven), and about a close relationship between sanctified authority and
temporal power.

The meaning of the ensemble derives from topography, that is, the actual locations of the
individual pieces reflect and create the hierarchies of significance within the building
which, roughly speaking, can be graded according to proximity to the altar. The
meaning also derives from implicit and explicit theological understandings of social
status, in which priesthood is held to be of greater significance than lay status. The
meaning derives also from theological beliefs about death and the afterlife, and about the
Mass itself.
Sedilia (detail)  [Hawton, All Saints, Nottinghamshire]
Fig. 88

Detail showing right-hand side of base  [Hawton, All Saints, Nottinghamshire]
Fig. 89

Detail showing left-hand side of base  [Hawton, All Saints, Nottinghamshire]
Sibthorpe, St Peter (Fig. 90)
The simplicity of the Sibthorpe sepulchre, compared with the complex and beautiful Hawton sepulchre, is striking. It consists of a small recess (it is 20 inches high but only 12¼ inches wide) which clearly could not accept an altar cross or processional-cross head; it could not be a permanent Easter sepulchre because it is too small.

It is tempting to read the Sibthorpe sepulchre as a poor, if colourful, relation of Hawton, Heckington and Navenby. However, if it is read as the key example of a sacrament house - and other Easter sepulchres are seen in its light, rather than the other way round - the liturgical functions of the larger examples fall into place. They are, as it were, elaborations of the Sibthorpe type: large and impressive sacrament houses.

The iconography of Sibthorpe is interesting. The soldiers are almost comical creations. They have, like the soldiers of Navenby and Hawton, shields on which there are caricature devices, including a lion. The armour they wear appears to be articulated plate armour, which suggests that the sculptor was working post-1320. The earliest date for Sibthorpe can thus be established. However, it needs to be remembered that the sculptor might also have been basing his figures on older models of armour, in order to convey a sense of antiquity. Whilst it may not be possible, therefore, to date the 'Easter sepulchre' with entire precision, what is very clear from the iconography and the design, is that the images of soldiers are being used as a dramatic and effective way of signifying that the 'tomb of Christ' is now the place from which the 'risen' Christ is received in the form of a consecrated Host.

The design may have within it elements of comedy but is, in fact, theologically sophisticated. It suggests that the designer or the person who commissioned the piece had an astute theological awareness.

The sacrament house sits above a tomb recess which was revealed in a nineteenth-century restoration.

Robert Thoroton did not make any mention of the 'Easter sepulchre' in his piece on Sibthorpe, but his successor, John Throsby, wrote:
'Easter Sepulchre' [Sibthorpe, St Peter, Nottinghamshire]
Behind this monument [he is referring to a large monument to the west of the Easter sepulchre] is seen a portion of an arch in the wall (the other part being covered by the monument) under which is part of the form of an old tomb, I imagine that of the founder of the church; over which, also in the wall, is a niche adorned with rude short figures of warriors. The upper part of the niche is decorated with many devices and two praying angels. Our Saviour appears to be represented in the centre, holding a cross in one hand. At his feet are two figures seemingly intended for supporters.

He does not suggest that the niche might have been an Easter sepulchre.

Some sixty years later, in 1854, G H Smyttan wrote an article entitled On the Church and College of Sibthorpe in Nottinghamshire. In it, he wrote as follows:

On the north side is an Easter sepulchre, with an Early English flat-pointed arch, having the appropriate mouldings of the period. Above the apex of the arch is a small aumbrey with a four-centred arch, surmounted by a spiral crocketed canopy, which is filled in with a figure of the risen Christ at the top, holding in one hand a bannered cross, and having the other hand in the attitude of blessing... The carving is rude, but bold and effective. The arch [of the tomb recess]... is at present filled up with masonry, and what Thoroton calls the 'fair tomb of alabaster, made for Edward Burnell, 1590', blocks out the western half of it. It is very much desired that this should at once be removed, and the whole sepulchre exposed and cleaned.

The plea for ecclesiological correctness and propriety shines through every word.

Patrington, St Patrick (Fig.91)
The 'Easter sepulchre' in Patrington church, Holderness, East Yorkshire, has received much less antiquarian attention than the Lincolnshire/Nottingham group, though it would appear to be an 'outlier' of them. Sekules argues that it is

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82 Thoroton 1790, vol.1, pp.332-333.
83 Smyttan 1854.
84 Ibid, pp.86-87.
Fig. 91

'Easter sepulchre'  [Patrington, St Patrick, E Yorkshire]
...likely to have been commissioned by Michael de Wath, presented by the King in 1335.\footnote{See Sekules 1986, p.130, endnote 46.}

He, too, was a King's clerk.

In 1886, J.T. Micklethwaite in his article on Patrington church, simply noted its existence\footnote{See Micklethwaite 1886, pp.99-104.}; Sir Stephen Glynne, in 1898, described it as

...a great curiosity, of which but few specimens exist and co-eval with the church.\footnote{Glynne 1898, p.182.}

Interestingly, he suggested that the lower of the two recesses might have been a credence.

Conclusions

One of the themes running through this chapter has been that of the difficulty of definition, of categorisation. What are the features which any object needs, such that it can be accurately described as an Easter sepulchre? One of the arguments in this thesis has been that liturgical fitness-for-purpose is a useful defining feature – and that the recess of an Easter sepulchre, if the Sarum rite is followed, should therefore be capable of receiving a cross at 'burial' as well as a consecrated Host in a pyx. If this liturgical test is taken seriously, then it has to be acknowledged that neither the recess at Sibthorpe nor the recess at Hawton could be used in that way, because their dimensions are too small. A further implicit argument has been that for the 'burial' metaphor, so powerful within the Sarum rite, to be given plastic form, any aperture in an Easter sepulchre should be on a horizontal axis. If this argument is accepted, then the so-called Easter sepulchres at Arnold and Navenby fail the test.

If these liturgical tests were the only ones to be employed, then the hypothesis, whilst interesting, might not be considered strong enough to withstand a critique based upon the overt and explicit resurrection iconography found at each site. However, it has been
demonstrated in this chapter that in virtually every case (Heckington, Arnold, Hawton and Sibthorpe) there is explicit use of resurrection motifs (for example, the soldiers) but there is also a major implicit theme which is not about Easter sepulchres but about proximity to the 'tomb of Christ'. This is Sekules' hypothesis. More, however, has been added to strengthen this hypothesis, notably the emphasis which has been placed upon the 'Easter sepulchre' being part of an ensemble, an ensemble which derives its meaning not from a once-a-year liturgical event, but from the daily celebration of Mass. Pamela Sheingorn argues that the creation of these ensembles owed much to stylistic developments in which the introduction in the late thirteenth century of the Decorated style led to all the isolated units in the chancel - sedilia, piscina, doorways, tombs and Easter sepulchre - being gathered into one grand ornamental composition. This does not account, however, for the paucity of permanent Easter sepulchres in England, nor does it account for the remarkable concentration of the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire group of monuments in such a limited geographical area.

If the arguments of this thesis are accepted, then Sekules' hypothesis about these structures being primarily and essentially sacrament houses is upheld and strengthened.

There are some further comments which also need to be made. Whilst these five 'Easter sepulchres' appear to have much in common (they share, in broad brush terms, an iconography which signals that they are to be read as 'tombs of Christ'), it has to be said that there are some significant iconographical differences between them, for instance in the iconographical treatment of the soldiers. At Navenby there are three soldiers, standing; at Hawton and Heckington there are four soldiers, seated and asleep, comic creations; at Sibthorpe there are also four soldiers, similar to those at Hawton, but they are not carved in relief on a tomb.

Just as the soldiers vary in style from place to place, so does the central image of Christ. At Heckington the figure of Christ is dressed in a knee-length tunic; at Navenby there is no figure of Christ at all; at Hawton the figure of Christ is shown in a stage-set recess, emerging from the tomb; at Sibthorpe the Christ figure wears a skirted loincloth, the wound in his chest is visible, his right hand is raised in blessing and in his left hand he

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carries a staff. If these figures are considered to be part of a theological narrative, then Navenby is the least explicit of all (there is no figure of Christ), whereas Hawton has a tumultuously explicit and dynamic narrative flow: from death, via resurrection, to ascension.

The sedilia, too, as has been shown, have received a wide variety of iconographical treatments from simple crockets and finials at Navenby, to Hawton where the sedilia is a riot of figurative and witty sculpture.

Where there is similarity of overall theme but a wide and fascinating variety of treatment, it may be concluded that particular individuals (that is, those patrons for whom these ensembles were created in the first place) must have had a considerable say in specifying the particular features they wanted in their structures. It is not difficult to imagine the bartering and negotiating that would have taken place between the patron and the master mason to achieve the final result.

But perhaps the most striking and significant feature of these five Easter sepulchres is how bounded they are by geography and by time. Here is a group of chancel furnishings created within a small geographical area (the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire borders) and within a very brief period of time (at the most, thirty years). Trying to discover the specific causes of such a remarkable phenomenon is not at all easy – but it is possible to hazard a guess that the patrons may have known each other well (two or three of them at least were King's clerks) and that, therefore, competitive fashion may have played a part. Furthermore, the proximity of masons (the so-called Lincoln/Southwell/York 'school') meant that a local fashion could be given brilliant treatment. It was possibly the fortuitous coincidence of fashion, skill and power, which enabled such remarkable and beautiful structures to come into being.

The question is, why did such a development not spread further? Why did it only take root in this particular form in one small area of the country? Further research is needed to begin to tease out answers to these questions, but it is possible to imagine that if the Black Death took a severe toll of the craftsmen and of the economic wellbeing of the
country, then neither the skills nor the money were available to continue the tradition elsewhere.

The final question, however, has to be whether or not these particular structures were designed specifically to meet the liturgical needs of the Holy Week rites. The balance of probability, in the light of the evidence presented and the arguments deployed, is that this was not really their function; to be complex, multi-layered, sacrament houses – yes, Easter sepulchres - no.

It would seem that the categorisation of them as permanent Easter sepulchres derived directly from antiquarian interest in the late eighteenth century, which then fed into the newer and more radical ecclesiological activities of the mid-nineteenth century. This will be explored in the final chapters of this thesis. Meanwhile, it is important to explore 'classic' Easter sepulchres in other parts of the country to see whether or not the analysis of the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire group may also apply to them.

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89 For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the Black Death and English art, see Lindley 1996, and see Platt 1996.
St Andrew's, Northwold (Fig. 92), Norfolk, has a structure at the north-east corner of the chancel which, since the time of Francis Blomefield (1705-1752) has been described as an Easter sepulchre. In the first volume of his *Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* Blomefield described Northwold thus:

> Against the East-End of the North Wall of the Chancel, is a large and lofty Pile of Clunch or Chalk-Stone, the upper Part is of curious wrought Spire-Work, with arch'd Canopies, adorned with many Nitches, and in them little Pedestals for Images, on the Body or lower Part, are the Effigies of three Men in Armour, and three Trees, a Tree between each Man, all in a declining falling Posture; this is as I conceive, what was before the Reformation called, 'The Sepulchre of our Lord', the Posture of the Men, alluding to what the Scripture observes of the Guard or Keepers of the Sepulchre: 'And for fear of him the Keepers did shake and became as dead Men, and the Earth did quake and the Rocks rent ...' These Sepulchres were erected always (as I take it) on the North-Side of the Chancel near to the Altar¹.

Blomefield continues his description by citing the will of Thomas Fiennes, Lord Dacre of Herstmonceux, and the will of Sir Henry Colet (more of this later), but it is interesting that in his description of Northwold, Blomefield miscounts the soldiers (there are four - not, as he says, three) and he does not mention the small aumbry-like aperture at the easternmost end of he structure. It was McGill, in 1855, who drew attention to it:

> The next compartment above the soldiers shows a plain ledge, on which, probably, the figures of saints were formerly placed. It is divided into three very richly ornamented parts. In that nearest the East is an orifice, with arched top, tre-foiled and cusped, in which, probably, the pyx, with the host, was placed on Good Friday, and there left till the morning of Easter-day. This opening is blocked up, except for a few inches at the entrance².

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¹ Blomefield 1739, p.517.
² McGill 1855, p.122.
'Easter sepulchre' [Northwold, St Andrew, Norfolk]
McGill follows his description of the Northwold structure with details of late medieval liturgies associated with the Holy Week ceremonies and then surmises that the Easter sepulchres may have come into being as a result of dramatic elements incorporated in the liturgy:

> It is not unreasonable to suppose, that these structures owe their importance, in some degree at least, to the dramatic element which was infused into almost every religious service in the middle ages.

He also suggests, however, that Easter sepulchres might have had symbolic importance as a local version of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem:

> It was in contending for the Sepulchre of Christ, that Godfrey of Bouillon, and the most heroic of the English kings, Cœur de Lion, gained that imperishable renown which has immortalized their names; and no one can be surprised that that sacred emblem, which drew so many warriors from distant lands to fight for its preservation, should have had its counterpart erected on our own island, and placed by the side of our own altars. Some crusader, perhaps, returned from the shores of Palestine, may have been the first to build such a structure, to remind him of that which was far away; or perhaps some widow or bereaved children might have introduced it, as a sad memorial of a husband or a father fallen in the East, fighting for the tomb of Him who, for our sakes, was crucified, dead, and buried.

McGill’s hypothesis of a relationship between the Jerusalem Holy Sepulchre and the Northwold Easter sepulchre will have to remain speculative until clearer evidence is found, either for substantiating or disposing of his idea. It may not be entirely coincidental that at Thetford, only a few miles south south-east of Northwold, there was a Priory of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been founded by William of Warenne, third Earl of Warenne and Surrey, circa 1140. The priory was awarded two annual fairs, one on 3 May (the Invention of the Holy Cross) and one on 14 September (the Exaltation of

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4. Ibid, pp.131-132. For a detailed and fascinating history of the influence of the Jerusalem Holy Sepulchre on religious practice in western Europe, see Morris 2005.
the Holy Cross). The thirteenth-century seal\footnote{5} (Fig.93) of the priory is described in the VCH for Norfolk as having:

... under a pinnacled canopy Our Lord rising from the sepulchre, at the head of which is an angel, with two sleeping soldiers in base\footnote{6}.

There are a number of difficulties in assuming that the Northwold 'Easter sepulchre' was designed simply and solely for the Easter ceremonies. Firstly, it is a most elaborate and exquisitely sculptured construction for a liturgy which only took place once each year. Secondly, the height of the 'shelf' from the ground (about 58 inches) means that the metaphor of burial becomes absurd. Thirdly, whilst it would be possible to place a cross horizontally on the plinth, the depth of that plinth (about 10 inches) would mean that the cross used would have to be relatively small - and perhaps such a cross would not be of sufficient size and status for a church on the scale of St Andrew's.

The iconography of the piece, of course, seems at first sight to have an Easter sepulchre meaning - those four sleeping soldiers - but above the plinth in the first register there are twelve niches, perhaps for small statues of the apostles, who were not witnesses of the resurrection. They would, however, be an entirely appropriate ensemble to enhance the structure if it were to be regarded not as an Easter sepulchre but as a sacrament shrine.

The aperture at the eastern end of the structure is too small (about 4½ inches wide by 8 inches tall by 6 inches deep) to house a cross - but could easily accommodate a pyx enclosing a Host. Whilst the aperture is not given the centrality that is found in, for example, Heckington, its particular placement means that it is easily accessible from the high altar.

If the structure is 'read' as a sacrament shrine, then it can be seen to be much more liturgically fit-for-purpose than if it is read as an Easter sepulchre. Nevertheless, it

\footnote{5}{See Birch 1887, pp.770-771:

4161 [13th century] Sulph. cast from imperfect impression. About 2 x 1¼ in. when perfect [lxix.48].

Pointed oval: Our Lord, with nimbus, rising from the sepulchre, lifting up the right hand in benediction, in the left hand a long cross. Overhead a trefoiled arch, pinnacled and crocketed. In base, two sleeping soldiers; at the head of the sepulchre an angel.}

\footnote{6}{Page 1906, p.393.}
Fig. 93

The Risen Christ  [Thetford Priory Seal, held by the Dept. of Seals and Manuscripts, British Library]

Thetford Priory seal is produced by permission of the British Library SEAL lxix 48 © The British Library. All Rights Reserved.
continues to be an intriguing object which warrants further study. Unfortunately, the
structure is so badly damaged that certainty about its meaning and its use may be
unattainable. But it may be much more appropriate to describe it as a sumptuous
sacrament house than to suggest that it is an Easter sepulchre. However, there is a
further issue which needs more research. As Fig. 92 illustrates, the 'Easter sepulchre' is
on the north side of the chancel wall. Yet careful inspection of the wall to the rear of the
sepulchre (Fig. 94) shows that there was once a doorway (?) into the chancel. This
indicates that the 'Easter sepulchre' might have been moved from somewhere else in the
church to its current position - and this repositioning might account for its curiously
dilapidated state. If it really did begin its life somewhere other then its present position
in the church, its function as an Easter sepulchre is seriously called into question. The
fact that the 'aumbry' (Fig. 95) is very shallow might also be accounted for by the entire
structure having been moved from its original location.

The dating of the structure varies from H. M. Cautley who says it is probably fourteenth
century (the soldiers depicted on it wear late fourteenth-century armour), to McGill who
suggests that it is late Perpendicular, c. 1480, and Pevsner who posits late fifteenth
century. If Pevsner and McGill are correct, then does not that make McGill's hypothesis
about a Crusading connection less, rather than more, likely?

A significant and important question relating to the purpose of the Northwold structure
and, by implication, those of the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire group, arises from the
fragments of an alleged Easter sepulchre to be found at Fledborough, Nottinghamshire.
Sheingorn describes the fragments thus:

4 fragments of ESp now built into N wall of chancel near E end; largest found
turned upside down & in use as doorstep at back door of rectory; original ESp

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7 Cautley 1949, p.224:
   *It is probably fourteenth century but unfortunately much mutilated.*
Claude Blair, in private correspondence with me, dates the knights' armour to c.1380-1400:
   *All have the wasp-waisted shape and wear the hour-glass gauntlet characteristic of
armour of the last quarter of the fourteenth century.*

8 McGill 1855, p.132.
9 Pevsner 1962, p.276.
Fig. 94

Doorway behind 'Easter sepulchre' [Northwold, St Andrew, Norfolk]
Fig. 95

Detail showing 'aumbry' [Northwold, St Andrew, Norfolk]
smaller & probably simpler version of Heckington-Hawton type; one fragment seems to be top part of rectangular panel with Resurrection; it shows upper half of frontal fig of Christ, haloed, both arms raised, L presumably blessing & R, with drapery over it, holding cross-staff ... another panel has 3 ogee niches, trefoiled and crocketed, each containing sleeping soldier in chain-mail ... ?14c.10.

The iconography would appear to be unequivocal. This must surely be a permanent Easter sepulchre. And yet, in the will of 15 June 1522 of Sir Richard Bassett of Fledborough, can be found the following:

*If I dye within x d. myles of Fledburgh, my body to be beriede at the north ende of the hy-altar in the churche of Fledburgh, where the sepulcre is usid to be sett of Good Fridaye*11.

That seems to imply that there was not a permanent, but a temporary structure, placed in position on Good Friday. This might mean that the fragments from the Fledborough structure are the remains of a permanent sacrament shrine and that, in front of it, a temporary Easter sepulchre was created.

Whereas Northwold's Easter sepulchre is damaged and decayed, the Easter sepulchre at East Raynham, Norfolk (Fig.96) is described by Pevsner as sumptuous, though over-restored12:

*In the church a very big and sumptuous Easter Sepulchre. This was made by the will of Sir Roger Townshend's widow to commemorate him and herself. The will was made in November 1499. She left the money for the monument and 'cunningly graven a Sepulchre for Easter Day'*13.

It was, no doubt, from the following extract of Blomefield's work that Pevsner obtained the details of the will of Roger Townshend's widow, Eleanore:

11 Ibid, p.286.
Fig. 96

'Easter sepulchre' [East Raynham, St Mary, Norfolk]
... her will is dated November 9, 1499, and proved October 8, 1500. She orders her body to be buried by the high altar, before our blessed Lady, in the chancel of Rainham, St. Mary, and a new tomb to be made for her husband's and her bones; upon which tomb to be cunningly graven a sepulchre for Easter-Day, if a chapel be not made at her decease; and if a chapel be made, then she would be buried in the same, and her husband's bones to be had home into the same chapel, and the tomb to be made there.\footnote{Blomefield 1745, p.816. Blomefield's An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk (in 5 volumes), was continued following his death, from p.678 in volume 3, by C. Parkin, who then produced volumes 4 and 5.}

Whilst the wording of the will is clear and includes the mention of an Easter sepulchre, its emphasis, it must be said, is not upon the Easter sepulchre itself but upon the location of the proposed Townshend tomb - either in the chancel or in a chapel - and if in a chapel, then the Easter sepulchre, it must be presumed, was not to be part of the outcome. This appears to suggest strongly that the Townshend tomb, now commonly described as an Easter sepulchre, was originally intended to house a temporary Easter sepulchre, rather than to be the Easter sepulchre itself.

Close examination reveals no iconographical detail which might be interpreted as having reference to its use as an Easter sepulchre. On the front of the chest tomb are heraldic shields (Fig.97) with the coats of arms of the Townshend and Lunsford families. At the base of the tomb is an early twentieth-century addition, created in 1916, which asks for prayers for the souls of John Townshend, Roger Townshend and Elianore (sic) Townshend. The creator of this piece, J. A. Durham, was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

On the rear wall above the chest tomb are five pedestals, on which fragments of statues are now placed. Two of the statues may be the donors (they appear to be kneeling) and the third statue, which is headless, is so damaged that it is difficult to decipher (Fig.98). The arrangement of the pedestals would lend itself to a central figure, either of the Virgin Mary or of Christ, with accompanying saints and angels, but the usual Easter sequence of three Marys, soldiers and a risen Christ would not be accommodated by this current...
Fig. 97

Detail showing heraldic shields  [East Raynham, St Mary, Norfolk]
Fig. 98

Detail showing pedestals with statues  [East Raynham, St Mary, Norfolk]
pedestal structure. The marble slab on top of the chest tomb is quite worn but there is no evidence of the provision of matrices for brasses or any other commemorative devices.

The ruling metaphor of the ensemble is not 'Resurrection' or 'Easter sepulchre', but commemoration of the family in close proximity to the high altar. Its structure lends itself perfectly to the creation of a temporary Easter sepulchre, using timber and textiles, with all the accompanying theology of the Townshend family 'supporting' the 'buried' cross and Host, but there is nothing to suggest that the structure should be read as a permanent Easter sepulchre.

Blythburgh, Holy Trinity, is a church in which some have claimed that the Hopton tomb on the north side of the chancel (Fig. 99) served as an Easter sepulchre. However, whilst the tomb might well have provided a shelf on which to place the temporary Easter sepulchre, there is nothing in its iconography to suggest that it was a permanent Easter sepulchre. Is there an alternative explanation for its design? In the will of Sir Edmund Jenney, written in 1522, there is the following instruction:

... to be buried in the church of Knodishall under or by the wall dividing the chancel and the vestry, that in that wall be made an arch and a little tomb covered with a marble stone or some other stone under the arch that through that arch may be a sight of the altar out of the said arch for they that will be in the said vestry to lean upon the said tomb looking to the alter [sic] ...

This tomb would seem to have been designed, not as an Easter sepulchre, though later antiquarians would probably have described it as such, but to provide sightlines towards the high altar. Might this not also explain the design of the so-called Easter sepulchre at Blythburgh?

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15 Middleton-Stewart 2001, p.272:

... John Hopton, lord of Blythburgh manor, who died in 1478. He wished to be interred ‘...on the north side of the chancel of Blythburgh under a tomb of marble set in an arch of the chancel of the parish church on the north side by him lately edified and built’. The tomb occupies the premier position between the Hopton chantry chapel to the north and the chancel to the south, and would have served as the Easter Sepulchre ...

Hopton tomb  \[\text{Blythburgh, Holy Trinity, Suffolk}\]
There is an example, involving documentary evidence from a will, in which it can be seen that the tomb really was specifically designed to provide a base or shelf for the temporary Easter sepulchre. Blomefield, in describing Northwold, as has been seen, drew upon the will of Sir Thomas Fenys of Herstmonceux in order to help him with his categorisation of Northwold as an Easter sepulchre. It is important to quote Thomas Fenys' will in some detail, as follows:

In the name of god Amen. This is the last wille and testament of me Thomas Fenys Knight, Lord Dacre, made and declared the first day of September in the yere of our lord god 1531 and in the 23rd yere of the reigne of our soureyn Lord King Henry VIII as well for the welthe of my soule paym ant of my detts and for the farthing of my servants and such persons as my mynde and conscence [sic] moveth me to doo ... First, I bequeath and recomende my Soule to almighty god my maker and my Redemer and to the glorious virgin our blessed lady his moder and to all the holy saynts of hevyn. And my body to be buried in the pishe [i.e. parish] church of Herstmonceux in the North side of the high awter there where the sepulcre is used to be made. And one Tombe there to be made and ordened convenient for the making and setting of the said sepulcre. And apparell to be made and bought for the said sepulcre at my cost and charge in the honour of the most blessed sacrament and my savior Jesu Crist. And I will that myn executors geve towarde the light of the said sepulcre oon hundred pounds of wax to be made in Tapers of tenne pounds oon pece to bren abought the said sepulcre after the maner as the custome is nowe used to bren aboute the same.17

The details of this will are taken from an essay by John Ray. The essay is a model of its kind, painstaking and careful. He concludes that the tomb as it currently exists (Fig.100) consists of a tomb which was originally freestanding in the Dacre chapel, having its own canopy. It was moved, he believes, to become the tomb of Thomas Fynes, Lord Dacre, in accordance with the will of 1531 and placed between the chapel and the chancel. The figures lying upon the tomb he concludes are not those of Lord Dacre and his son, Gregory, but are members of the Hoo family:

17 Ray 1916, p.51.
Dacre tomb  *Herstmonceux, All Saints, East Sussex*
The original tomb ... cannot be that of Thomas 2nd Lord Dacre, as evidenced both by the architecture and the shields of arms upon it, although it may be that of some earlier members of that family. The effigies also certainly do not appear to be those of any members of the Dacre family, and are almost as certainly those of the Hoo family.\footnote{Ray 1916, p.50.}

But it is John Ray's ringing critique of those who regard the Dacre tomb as a permanent Easter sepulchre which is of particular pertinence in the present context:

*Now there are one or two questions which arise on the reading of these wills which require to be considered ... [He outlines the will of Joan Dacre, 1485, the grandmother of Thomas Fynes, second Lord Dacre] ... In the first place, in reference to the Easter Sepulchre, a piece of Church furniture which has been very much misunderstood. The place directed to be made for the sepulchre does not refer to the sepulchre itself; any more than an organ chamber is the organ itself. The Easter sepulchre itself was in nearly all cases a moveable structure of wood, which was set up on the north side of the altar yearly before Good Friday and removed on Easter Day.*

*It is to this moveable wooden erection that Thomas Fynes refers when he mentions the place where the sepulchre was used to be made, and this is where it was usual to place the moveable sepulchre every year. Where there was a table tomb or recess in a convenient position it was often utilised to place the portable sepulchre upon it.*

*But I want to make it quite clear that this tomb was not 'the Easter Sepulchre' as so often stated, as is quite plain from the words of the will, directing one tomb to be made there convenient for making and setting the sepulchre, i.e., placing the sepulchre upon it.*\footnote{Ibid, pp.53-54.}

If Ray's critique were not enough to make the point, it can be seen from the will itself that Thomas Fynes arranged for 'apparel' to be purchased, which is presumably a reference to the textiles used in the creation of temporary Easter sepulchres. If the will of Thomas Fynes, Lord Dacre, is thus so explicit, it seems reasonable to conclude that
other wills (including that of Eleanor Townshend of East Raynham) which mention tombs and Easter sepulchres are based on the premise that the tomb was to be the place on which the temporary Easter sepulchre was to be constructed, and that the testators did not think that they were creating permanent Easter sepulchres.

There are a number of other examples. Robert Morley of Glynde, Sussex, in 1514 gave instructions in his will as follows:

*My body to be buried within the quere there, on the north syde, where as the Sepulcre is accustomed to stande, in the wiche place I wyll a Tombe of marble to be made, with my picture and myn armes garnisshid theron, with a vawte ryng up by the wall, comyng over the same stone of marble, so that at Easter tyme the Sepulcre maye be there sett to thonour of allmyghty god*.

Edward Markewyk of St Peter's, Hamsey, Sussex, in 1534, left instructions about the creation of a tomb which could serve as the base for an Easter sepulchre:

*... my body to be buried in the Parishe Church of Hampsey before the Image of Saint Peter in the Chancell there ... I will that my executours shall ordeyn and make one Tombe of Stone to be leyde uppon me with an Image and scripture there graven, whereappon the Sepulcre may be sett.*  

In Kent, in 1535, Lady Joan Norton of Faversham, in her will, said:

*I will that myn executours shall fynyshe upp my tombe in ffaversham churche according to the bargeyn that I have made with oon Alen a mason of Bersted in Kent. And it to be used for a sepulcre place in the same churche to the honour of God and the blessed Sacrement.*

It really does seem that these structures were meant to house a temporary Easter sepulchre rather than to be the sepulchre itself.

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20 Sheingorn 1987, p.332. (The church of St Mary the Virgin was rebuilt in 1763).
21 Ibid, p.332.
22 Ibid, p.179.
In case such examples are not sufficient (that is, that the tombs were not constructed as Easter sepultures but were only to be the place where the temporary Easter sepulchre might be placed), the famous example from Long Melford, Suffolk, should settle the matter. Matthew Bloxam provides the detail:

_In a manuscript relating to Melford Church, Suffolk, by Roger Martin, Esquire, of Melford Place, who lived at the time of the Reformation, the following particulars are given respecting the Easter sepulchre:_

_In the quire, there was a fair painted frame of timber, to be set up about Maunday Thursday, with holes for a number of fair tapers to stand in before the sepulchre, and to be lighted in service time. Sometimes it was set overthwart the quire before the high altar, the sepulchre being always placed, and finely garnished, at the north end of the high altar; between that and Mr. Clopton's little chappel there, in a vacant place of the wall, I think upon a tomb of one of his ancestors, the said frame with the tapers was set near to the steps going up to the said altar._

_The tomb thus noticed is a rich canopied tomb between the quire and the Clopton Chapel, and is the tomb of John Clopton, Esquire, of Kentwell Hall, Sheriff of the County of Suffolk, in 1451, and who died in 1497_.

In brief, the Easter sepulchre in Long Melford was a temporary and not a permanent structure, and the tomb simply provided a convenient 'shelf' on which to place it.

It does need to be recognised, however, that there are also tombs which might have been used as the base for a temporary Easter sepulchre and which have all the appropriate characteristics, for example, a flat surface, on the north side of the chancel, near the high altar, but which, in fact, were never specified in wills as being for that purpose. Two examples may suffice.

In the parish church of Cople, Bedfordshire, there is a chest tomb on the north side of the high altar (Fig.101). It is the tomb of Sir Walter Luke, who died in 1543. Archdeacon Bonney gives the inscription on the tomb as follows:

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23 Bloxam 1871, p.71.
Fig. 101

Chest tomb  [Cople, All Saints, Bedfordshire]
Here lyeth Sir Walter Luke Knight one of the Justices of the Plees holden before the Most Excellent Prynce King Henry the Eight: and Dame Anne his wyfe [blank] unto his said Majesty & one of the daughters and heir of John Launcelyn Esqre, which said Sir Walter deceysyd the XXI day of July in the XXXVI year of the reign of our sayd Sovereign Lord, and the sayd Dame Anne deceysyd the IX day of September in the XXX yer of the reign of the sayd most gracyus Sovereyne Lord, on whose Soule God have Mercy.

It is fortunate that the will of Sir Walter Luke is still in existence; in that will the only instructions he gives about his burial are these:

... my boddy to be buryed in the churche of Conpull aforesaide where it shall to my executour seme mete and convenyent.

He does not suggest that his burial should be the occasion for the creation of a tomb on which the Easter sepulchre could be placed. He did, however, express his religious wishes with some clarity:

So that the churchwardynes for the tyme beyng with all the parishe cause the viccar for the time being to saye yereley the same daye that the maie is kepte De Profundis for my soule and the soule of Anne my wife deceased and all the parryshe to saye a Peter noster.

It will be recalled that Alfred Heales had argued that tombs of this kind on the north side of the chancel were most likely to have been designed with an Easter sepulchre use in mind. In the case of the tomb of Sir Walter Luke, it is clear that this was not so. It is, of course, possible that his executors designed the tomb so that it could be the base for a temporary Easter sepulchre.

A further example of a similar lack of intention may be helpful. In the parish church of Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, on the north side of the chancel, is the tomb of Sir William

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25 National Archives 'DocumentsOnline'; catalogue ref: prob/11/30.
26 National Archives 'DocumentsOnline'; catalogue ref: prob/11/30.
27 See Chapter 1, page 15, of this thesis.
Saye (Fig. 102). It fits the Heales/Sheingorn categories of being a potential Easter sepulchre. However, in his will of 8 November, 1529, no mention is made by Sir William of an Easter sepulchre. His will states

... my wretchid body to be buryed in the parrishe churche of Broxbourne in the countie off Hertford wherein the late bodyes of my father & mother bye buryed whose soules Jehu pardone in the Northe side of the same churche in the new chapell whiche I lately now edyfied and buylded at my propre coostes and charge

Item I will that myne executours underwrytton as sone as it may conveniently to be done after my deceas shal provide a marble stone to lay uppon my body flutt on the grounde without eny tombe and to be spent aboute the same £6 13s 4d. Except except [sic] it shalhappen me to provide otherwise fo the same in my life tyme. In the which stone I wold have my picture my ii wifes my ii sonnes and my daughters with a scripture to the same to pray fo the soule of me the said Sir William Saye 28.

These two examples, from Cople, Bedfordshire, and Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, are sufficient to cast doubt on the suggestion that all such chest tombs might have had Easter sepulchre connections or have been specifically designed with such a purpose in mind, although it is clear from the tomb of Sir William Saye that his executors did not carry out Sir William's instructions in detail, they may have had it in mind that his tomb could be used as the base for a temporary Easter sepulchre. There is, however, no documentary evidence to support this supposition.

The evidence that has been presented in this chapter seems to point inexorably in one direction: that to describe tombs on the north side of the chancel as Easter sepulchres is to make a mistake in categorisation. There can be no doubt that at the end of the fifteenth century and in the early decades of the sixteenth century, some wealthy, high-status individuals gave instructions that their tombs were to be so designed that they could be used as the base upon which temporary Easter sepulchres could be constructed; but it is entirely inappropriate to leap from that fact to the claim that those tombs were, therefore, permanent Easter sepulchres.

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28 National Archives 'DocumentsOnline'; catalogue ref: prob/11/24 [will]; prob/11/29 [codicil].
Chest tomb [Broxbourne, St Augustine, Hertfordshire]
What can be said, with some confidence, is that some monuments continue to exist (and some are known from documentary sources) which were intended to be the bases on which temporary Easter sepulchres could be constructed. The testators hoped to benefit from the proximity of Christ's body at Easter; it was also a powerful symbol of bodily resurrection. Sometime the function is explicit and sometimes it can be inferred. There are other cases, however, where such a use would have been unlikely.

What remains puzzling is the apparent gap between the Easter sepulchres of Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire of the first half of the fourteenth century, in which proximity to the 'tomb of Christ' was made explicit, and the monuments referred to in this chapter of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

How the concept of permanent Easter sepulchres entered the cultural thinking of later historians will be examined later in Chapters 10 and 11 but, for the moment, in order to try to assess the significance that Easter sepulchres might have had in the lives of pre-Reformation English men and women, it is necessary to examine fifteenth-century documentary evidence. It is to that evidence that we now turn.
Until the late fifteenth century, documentary evidence for the existence of Easter sepulchres is confined almost entirely to the liturgy, but from the last decades of the fifteenth century and on into the sixteenth century, non-liturgical documentary evidence increases dramatically. It falls into three broad categories: inventories of church goods (most of which were created in the mid-sixteenth century), wills and churchwardens' accounts. It will be helpful to look in particular at late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century inventories and wills. However, we shall begin with Edwardian inventories.

Edwardian inventories for Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire

The principle of the Crown looking to ecclesiastical institutions to shore up its own financial position had begun with Henry VIII and the Act of 1536 which led to the dissolution of the monasteries. Whilst some of the money from the dissolution was used to provide pensions for former monks and dowries for former nuns, and some of it was used for the creation of new dioceses (Westminster, Chester, Bristol, Gloucester, Peterborough and Oxford) and new schools and colleges, the Crown, itself, gained considerably.\(^1\)

Edward VII developed the policy of extracting money further by turning to the churches. In 1547 enquiries were made of bishops as to the goods of parishes, and injunctions were issued against the use of rosaries and processions, etc. In 1549 a commission for making inventories was issued to sheriffs and JPs; and then, on 3 March 1551, it was ordered by the Privy Council:

\[
...{\text{that for as muche as the Kinge's Majestie had neede presently of a masse of mooney, therfore Commissions shulde be addressed into all shires of Engelande to take into the Kingses [sic] handes suche churche plate as remaigneth, to be emploied unto his highnes use.}}\]

\(^1\) See Chadwick 1964, p.108.
\(^2\) Eeles 1905, p.iii.
In May 1552, a commission to make inventories was issued and on 16 January, 1553, a further commission was issued, directing the seizure of all the valuables, only the barest necessities being left for each church. The plate was sent to the Tower of London and melted down; some vestments and the less precious metals were sold locally and the money given to the poor.

The inventories thus provide an interesting insight into the possessions of parish churches – though it has to be recognised that as some embezzlement at a local level had also taken place, the inventories are not necessarily a complete and absolute record.

There are inventories in existence for 268 churches in the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. However, through the exigencies of history, there are only fourteen inventories extant for Bedfordshire. They represent the following parishes, namely; Battlesden, Cranfield, Eaton Socon, Eversholt, Farndish, Harlington, Houghton Regis, Hulcote, Husborne Crawley, Salford, Stagsden, Tilsworth, Tinteloth and Westoning.

The map of Bedfordshire (Fig. 103) makes clear that these inventories are from rural parishes scattered across the county. There are no inventories from the medieval towns of Bedfordshire. Such a small sample, when analysed, could be misleading if the figures were to be used to make assumptions about other parishes in the county. However, the following statistics, even though only from a very small sample (it is usually estimated that Bedfordshire in the late medieval period had approximately 125 parishes), when compared with statistics from the inventories of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, may have some significance. Thus we find in Bedfordshire the following:

- copes: 36 ie 2.5 per church
- crosses (silver): 1 ie 7% of the church database
- crosses (latten): 6 ie 43% " "
- crosses (copper): 5 ie 36% " "
- cross cloths: 8 ie 57% " 

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1 See Duffy 1992, p.476.
2 See Eeles 1905.
3 Ibid, p.ix.
Map of Bedfordshire
pyx (copper): 2  ie 14% of the church database
pyx (latten): 1  ie 7%  "  "

There are no references in the Bedfordshire inventories to any objects relating to Easter sepulchres and although it might be argued that with the banning of Easter sepulchres in 1548, it would be unreasonable to assume that objects from Easter sepulchres would be extant from then onwards, nevertheless, as will be seen later in this chapter, in some counties at least, notwithstanding the 1548 ban, Easter sepulchre objects were indeed still in existence a few years later when the inventories were made.

In seven of the fourteen churches cross cloths (small banners which were attached to processional crosses) are mentioned. Eeles claims

... they were not allowed according to strict Salisbury use, and in that diocese they do not seem to have been employed⁶.

Of the ten Bedfordshire examples, four are green, one is red and the colour of the other five is not specified.

It needs to be noted that whilst the Edwardian inventories give the appearance of accuracy, the fact remains that they do not specify all that the churches possessed:

They give everything on which money could be raised, and usually a few valueless things besides, but ... the commissioners were not particular to record every thing that was of no value⁷.

It is highly likely that the inventories omit

... many things which must have existed, but which had been safely hidden or successfully embezzled. For example, at Westoning we find a cross cloth mentioned, but no cross to hang it on ... So with pixes; every church was bound to have one, but only three out of these fourteen inventories mention them⁸.

⁶ Eeles 1905, p.xvii.
⁷ Ibid, p.xvii.
⁸ Ibid, p.xviii.
Whilst there is not a single reference to Easter sepulchres in the Edwardian inventories for Bedfordshire, wills from just before this period mention Easter sepulchre lights in five of the fourteen churches, namely

1. Farndish
   a) The will of John Reynold, 1526:\(^9\)
   \[ \textit{to the sepulchre 'yeld' half a quarter of barley.} \]
   b) The will of William Eleot, 1529\(^10\), left to:
   \[ \textit{to the sepulchre yield in Farnedesh 6s 8d.} \]

2. Husborne Crawley
   The will of Rich. Maleherbe, 1499\(^11\)
   \[ \textit{to the sepulchre light 1lb. of wax.} \]

3. Stagsden
   a) The will of John Cok, 1522:\(^12\):
   \[ \textit{to the repair of the rood left 40s} \]
   \[ \textit{to the sepulchre light 3s 4d} \]
   \[ \textit{to an honest priest to sing a trental for me 10s} \]
   \[ \textit{to a priest to sing 5 masses of the Five Wounds 20d} \]
   b) The will of John Compton, 1528\(^13\):
   \[ \textit{to the sepulchre light 2 bushels of barley.} \]

\[^9\]Bell 1997, p.127.
\[^10\]Ibid, p.146.
\[^11\]Bell 1966, p.84
\[^12\]Bell 1997, p.16.
\[^13\]Ibid, p.129.
4. Tilsworth

The will of Wm Huett, 1500:\(^{14}\)

*to the sepulchre light one measure of barley.*

5. Tingrith

The will of Roger Bunker, 1515:\(^{15}\)

*to the sepulchre light a pound of wax.*

It is interesting to note that in Farndish, the will references are to the 'yeld' (presumably meaning 'guild') and that in Stagsden, whilst the Easter sepulchre receives a bequest of three shillings and fourpence for the sepulchre light, this is only one twelfth of the amount left by the same testator (John Cole) to the repair of the rood loft (two pounds).

A comparison of the statistics for the fourteen inventories in Bedfordshire with those from Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire would seem to suggest that, in spite of the smallness of the Bedfordshire sample (fourteen parishes) it is surprisingly representative of the bigger picture. For example, in Bedfordshire there are 36 copes, i.e. 2.5 per church, in Hertfordshire there are 300 copes recorded, i.e. 2.27 per church, and in Buckinghamshire the 239 copes recorded represent 2 per church. Similarly, where the one silver cross in Bedfordshire represents a figure of 7\%, in Hertfordshire, where eight silver crosses are recorded, this represents 6\% (in Buckinghamshire there are four silver crosses recorded which represents 3.2\%). It is also interesting to note that cross cloths in Bedfordshire (of which there are eight) represent a figure of 57\%; in Buckinghamshire 61 cross cloths are recorded, representing a figure of 50\%. In brief, whilst the Bedfordshire sample is indeed very small, and whilst the very smallness of the sample can skew the figures, the fact that many of the quantities of objects recorded are roughly comparable with those of the neighbouring counties suggests that they may be more statistically reliable than they at first sight might appear. The non-existence of inventory


\(^{15}\) Cirket 1957, p.47.
references to Easter sepulchres in Bedfordshire may thus not be the result of the sample size.

Buckinghamshire, by contrast with Bedfordshire, has inventories for 170 churches. One group (A) was taken under the commission of 16 May 1552; there are 142 in this group relating to 126 churches. The other sixteen are duplicates - and for three of the parishes (Wendover, Saunderton and Fingest) only a preamble or a fragment remains, and Wooburn also has only a fraction of a reference. The database for the purpose of this research is therefore 122 churches. A second group of inventories (B) represents a collection of notes concerning the bells, plate and linen left for each parish after the rest had been taken for the King.

Of the 122 churches, almost all are in the southern three-quarters of the county. The north-east and north-west of the county have hardly any representation. Aylesbury itself is also entirely missing from the records.

Buckinghamshire was part of the diocese of Lincoln but, as Eeles says:

*We need not, therefore, look for the influence in Buckinghamshire of any great church, with well defined and strongly specialised liturgical usages, and in this inland county, remote from the influence of foreign trade, we naturally do not find anything else than a conservative following of the general English use* \(^{16}\).

The inventories of 1552 were made in the summer or autumn of that year; and it was

*About the beginning of May in the next year, 1553, the actual seizure of the goods took place. The commissioners caused the churchwardens of the various local churches to appear before them at a convenient centre* \(^{17}\).

Aylesbury was the collection point for the middle of the county.

As is the case in the Bedfordshire inventories, it is clear that only those objects which had monetary value were recorded, but

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\(^{16}\) Eeles 1908, p.xiv.
Much private embezzlement had been going on in spite of the vigorous efforts that were made to check it.\(^{19}\)

There is in the Bedfordshire inventories an account of a remarkable and rancorous embezzlement allegation concerning one Thomas Stringer of the village of Meppershall:

*Ornamentes belongyng to the churche of Mepersale ... solde and deteyned ... Eyrste one chalesse parcell gylte solde unto Leonard Daye for xx crownes ... Item the same Thomas detayneth the veile the coveringe for the roode and the canapye of clothe frenged with sylke ... And when the pore demaunde the same he revileth them and calcth them begarlye knaves and evill entreteth them.\(^{19}\)*

Thomas Stringer (or Strynger) was summoned to Westminster for a court appearance on the first day of the Trinity term 1556. Stringer's account was that he and his fellow churchwarden, Gowther Parker, now deceased, were commanded by the King's Commissioners to appear at Luton with an inventory; later they appeared also at Clifton (Bedfordshire) and provided an inventory which declares

... *one chales with a patent a blacke velvett cope.\(^{20}\)*

He then reluctantly (?) accused a fellow parishioner, John Leventhorpe, of embezzling a quantity of church goods. Stringer was ordered to provide a new canopy of sarcenet or satin of Bridges [Bruges] and paid £2 14s 8d into the hands of the Commissioners as the value of the cope and chalice which he had sold.\(^{21}\)

This kind of story was no doubt being repeated in other parishes up and down the land - but in Meppershall's case it is important to realise that again there are no references to any textiles or objects which could be associated with an Easter sepulchre. It is a useful reminder, nevertheless, that Edwardian inventories are not necessarily as complete as we would wish.

\(^{17}\) Eeles 1908, p.xvi.
\(^{18}\) Ibid, p.xviii.
\(^{19}\) Eeles 1905, p.17.
\(^{20}\) Ibid, p.19.
\(^{21}\) Ibid, p.xix.
In the Buckinghamshire inventories, chalices are recorded in 120 of the 122 churches - and nearly all of the chalices were of silver. Some of the parishes had more than one. Chesham, for example, had five chalices; Amersham and High Wycombe had four each; twelve churches had three, forty-one had two and sixty-four had only one. It seems reasonably safe to assume that those churches with three or more chalices were amongst the wealthiest in the county.

Cross cloths were to be found in 61 of the 122 churches (eleven were green, four were red, one violet and one 'painted'; the colour of the remainder is not specified). As Eeles has pointed out, there were regional variations in the use of such cloths - in Surrey, for example, of 117 churches, 56 had cross cloths (i.e., 47% of the total), a figure roughly comparable with Bedfordshire (57%) and very close to Buckinghamshire (50%), whereas in Dorset there is only one cross cloth recorded within 266 churches.

In Buckinghamshire 239 copes are recorded (i.e., 2 per church), there were four silver crosses (3.2%), 53 crosses made of copper or copper gilt (43.4%) and 59 crosses made of latten. There were seven silver pyxes (Bedfordshire had none), six made of copper (5%) and twenty-five made of latten (20%).

As far as Easter sepulchres are concerned, there are only seven references, namely:

1. Amersham:
   
   *Item a covyryng of silke for the sepulture a valens of silke / a linen clothe to the sepulture / a valens for the same of peynted clothe* 22.

2. Chalfont St Giles:
   
   *...a olde [baner?] clothe of sylke for the sepulker* 23.

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22 Eeles 1908, p.51.

23 Ibid, p.47.

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3. Kingsey:

... *a sepulcre cloth*\(^{24}\).

4. Monks Risborough:

... *i j p[aynted] clothes for the sepulcher*\(^{25}\).

5. Swanbourne:

... *a sepolchre solde to the reparacon of the seytes*\(^{26}\).

6. Wexham:

... *a sepolker clothe of lenande*\(^{27}\).

7. Wycombe - an inventory of 1475:

*A staynid clothe of gold powderid with gold & sylver for the sepulcur w' a lynnyð clothe therto. A sepulcur of Tymbør w' a stole therto*\(^{28}\).

In an inventory for the same church, in 1503, there is recorded:

... *ij sepolcr' clothys leyd w' gold & sylver*\(^{29}\).

There is no record of the 'sepulcur of Tymber'. In the inventory of 1518 the sepulchre is not mentioned either, nor is the 'staynid clothe of gold powderid with gold & sylver'. There is, however, an altar described as the:

*Resurreccoñ aulter*\(^{30}\).

\(^{24}\) Eoles 1908, p.2.

\(^{25}\) Ibid, p.104.

\(^{26}\) Ibid, p.83.

\(^{27}\) Ibid, p.57.

\(^{28}\) Ibid, p.132.

\(^{29}\) Ibid, p.135.

\(^{30}\) Ibid, p.140.
It is interesting to note that of the seven references to an Easter sepulchre (out of a database of 122 churches), six record a sepulchre cloth, one - Swanbourne - would seem to imply that the timber Easter sepulchre was of a reasonable size, as it was sold and the proceeds used for the repair of seats, and the only other reference to the actual structure of a sepulchre is that at Wycombe, which refers to it as being made of timber. There is no suggestion in any of these references that the churches had a permanent architectural feature, for example, a tomb recess, which might have been used as an Easter sepulchre. And even the wealthiest churches, Amersham and Wycombe, record only the existence of a sepulchre and, as has been noted in Wycombe’s case, a timber structure.

It is worth looking at each of the churches claiming to have a sepulchre cloth or a timber sepulchre, to see if it is possible to deduce anything from their inventories which might provide further evidence for their liturgical use of such sepulchres.

1. **Amersham**

Amersham was a wealthy church. It had four silver chalices. In spite of the use of a cross in the Easter sepulchre liturgies, in the 1552/3 inventory, no cross is recorded. There is also no mention of a pyx but there is a record of:

\[... a litell box of silver for the consecrate hoost^{31}\]

That Amersham had a sepulchre cannot be denied; the reference to ‘a covyryng of silke for the sepulture’ provides the evidence. That the covering for the sepulchre was valuable also cannot be denied - it appears in the inventory, a sign in itself of value, and the fact that it was made of silk also suggests that it was of some significance.

One might expect that a church of Amersham’s wealth would have had a sepulchre constructed in a high status way, for example, an especially constructed recess such as are reputedly found elsewhere, but the fact remains that it would appear not to have done so. It would seem more likely that it had a sepulchre of timber, perhaps similar to that other wealthy Buckinghamshire church, Wycombe.

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^{31} Edes 1908, p.50.
2. Chalfont St Giles

It will be recalled that according to the inventory, the church had:

... a olde [baner?] clothe of sylke for the sepulker.\(^{32}\)

The inventory indicates that the church also had:

... a crosse with a staffe and foote coper and gylted.\(^{33}\)

plus:

... a pyxe of sylver and gylte and byrral.\(^{34}\)

and two additional pyxes, one constructed from

... sylver parcell gylt.\(^{35}\)

and the other

... coper gylted.\(^{36}\).

This list raises a question about the Easter sepulchre liturgy, that is, what kind of cross might have been used in the adoratio, depositio and elevatio? In the case of Chalfont, it may be inferred that the cross would have been a processional cross in which the head could be detached from the staff. At the 'deposition', the head of the processional cross would have acted as the symbolic 'body' of the dead Christ; and perhaps rather than having that cross carried to a separate north-side chapel altar, as the Sarum liturgy recommended, on Easter Day, it may simply have been reconnected to its shaft and then have featured in the Easter Day processions.

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\(^{32}\) Eales 1908, p.47.

\(^{33}\) Ibid, p.47.

\(^{34}\) Ibid, p.47.

\(^{35}\) Ibid, p.47.

\(^{36}\) Ibid, p.47.
The Chalfont example raises a further question. The description ('a crosse with a staffe and foote coper and glyted') could imply that the cross was composed of three elements, that is, the head, the 'staffe' for use in processions, and the 'foote' for when it was placed on the altar. And if the latter is the case, then it might imply that it was placed on the altar on Easter Day. The inventory does not suggest that the cross was in any way remarkable, nor does it suggest that it contained a reliquary. In fact, in all the inventory records for Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire there is no instance of a cross being described as containing a reliquary.

3. Kingsey, Buckinghamshire
The reference to the Easter sepulchre is simply to a 'sepullcre clothe' \(^{37}\); the inventory records that there was a cross made of copper and adds:

\[\ldots with Marye and John^{18}\]

and also notes that there was a cross of wood. There is no mention of a pyx.

In Kingsey, it would be reasonable to assume that the cross used in the *depositio* and *elevatio* was made of wood, simply because it would be incongruous to bury a cross of which Mary and John were integral parts.

4. Monks Risborough, Buckinghamshire
The inventory says:

*Item if p[rayented] clothes for the sepulcher* \(^{39}\).

It is interesting to compare this with the high status textile at Wycombe (powdered with gold and silver) although at Wycombe, the use of the verb 'staynid' suggests that a woven cloth had been painted or dyed in some way or other.

The cross at Monks Risborough is described thus:

\(^{37}\) Eles 1908, p.2.

\(^{38}\) Ibid, p.2.

\(^{39}\) Ibid, p.104.
... a crosse with a foot of copper or latten\textsuperscript{40}

and there is, in addition:

\textit{Item a crosse stafe \textit{di} covered with laten}\textsuperscript{41}.

The question raised in relation to the cross at Chalfont applies equally here; i.e. it looks as if the cross consisted of three elements, the head, the foot and the staff. How these elements were used liturgically in each church can only be a matter of speculation. The fact that a pyx is not mentioned in the inventory when one would have been necessary for the \textit{depositio} is a useful reminder that it is unwise to build too many theories upon what is or is not recorded in the inventories.

5. \textbf{Swanbourne, Buckinghamshire}

The inventory notes that the sepulchre had been sold and the proceeds used for the

\textit{reparacon of the seytes in the churche} \textsuperscript{42}.

This is the only reference in the three counties being surveyed of a sepulchre being sold. The value of the sepulchre is not mentioned.

In Lincolnshire a Commissioner certificate, dated 20\textsuperscript{th} August 1552, listing the goods sold by the mayor and burgesses of Boston, includes:

\textit{Item a Sepulchre with the appurtenances \textit{xxvis. viijd}}\textsuperscript{43}.

It can be assumed that a sepulchre of that value (26s 8d or just over three times the cost of an intramural burial) would have been of some considerable size, for in many instances where the cost of the making of the sepulchre is known, it was relatively inexpensive, for example, at Leverton, Lincolnshire:

\textsuperscript{40} Eales 1908, p.104.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, p.104.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p.83.
\textsuperscript{43} Sheingorn 1987, p.201.
... for maykkyng of the sepulkkure howyse iiijd

and at Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, it cost 6s 8d. What is not clear from the Leverton figure is whether 3d represents the cost of temporarily erecting the sepulchre structure or whether it represents the cost of an original. The former seems more likely, especially as at Bishop's Stortford the cost for the setting up and taking down of the sepulchre was 5d in 1505 and 4d in 1547.

6. Wexham, Buckinghamshire
The inventory records:

a sepolker clothe of lenande [and] a crose of copere and gelte.

It may be safe to assume that the linen sepulchre cloth was a relatively simple and unpainted textile. There is no mention of a pyx; it is not clear whether the cross was an altar or processional cross.

7. Wycombe, Buckinghamshire
There are three inventories extant, of 1475, 1503 and 1518. The 1475 inventory includes the following:

A staynid clothe of gold powderid with gold & sylver for the sepulcur w' a lynnyh clothe thereto. A sepulcur of Tymber w' a stole therto.

The implication of the above is that the timber Easter sepulchre was draped with the 'staynid clothe of gold', rather like a hearse cloth. It is possible that the 'lynnyh' cloth might be a reference to the cloth in which the cross was wrapped at the depositio.

Wycombe in 1475 had a pyx:

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44 Sheingorn 1987, p.208.
47 Eeles 1908, p.57.
48 Ibid, p.132.
It is likely that the consecrated Host would firstly have been enclosed in the ivory box which then, in turn, would have been encapsulated by the latten pyx. There are also references in the inventory to reliquaries:

... a lyttel box of sylv' with dyv'se reliquis therin a box of Copur & gylt & enamild w' reliquis therin.\(^{50}\)

In addition, a number of crosses are recorded:

\begin{align*}
A & \text{Crosse of sylv' & gylt that weyth lxiiij [ounces]} & \text{a fote of a Crosse w' a penacull of sylv' & gylt that weyth lxj [ounces]} \\
A & \text{Crosse of Copur and gylt another crosse of Copur & gylt w' liij stony} \\
A & \text{Crosse of lateh another of tree}\(^{51}\).
\end{align*}

The inventory of 1503 (compiled twenty-eight years after the first) continues to refer to:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{ij sepulcr' clothis leyd w' gold & sylves}\(^{52}\)
\end{itemize}

but there is no record of the timber structure. The crosses remain the same but there are some additional items, namely:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Item a pyxe of sylv' & gylde w' a pece of sylv' theryn} \\
  \item \textit{Item a pyxbox of silv' & gyld} \\
  \item \textit{Item a boxe of Ivery garnesched w' sylv'} \\
  \item \textit{Item a sepulcr' boxe wyth certen relykes}\(^{53}\).
\end{itemize}

The inventory of 1518 continues to refer to the silver and gilt cross and its foot, and there also remain the two silver and gilt pyxes, the three copper crosses and the ivory box, but there is no record of sepulchre cloths nor of any timber frame.

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\(^{49}\) Eeles 1908, p.132.

\(^{50}\) Ibid, p.133.

\(^{51}\) Ibid, p.133.

\(^{52}\) Ibid, p.135.

\(^{53}\) Ibid, p.137.
It is simply not possible to deduce from this list which cross or which pyx might have been used in the Easter sepulchre liturgies, although perhaps one can surmise that the most expensive cross would have been used and thus, encased within the cloth of gold drape, would have represented the glory of the event commemorated.

What the three inventories of Wycombe do reveal is that certainly in wealthy churches new items were being added on a fairly frequent basis, and thus it is not safe to assume that the inventories represent what had always existed. There is evidence from Morebath, Devon, that priest and parishioners in the fifteenth century spent much effort purchasing new images, of the Virgin Mary for example, and in purchasing new vestments. The same is revealed in fifteenth-century wills from St Albans (as will be seen later); for example, individuals left bequests for the creation of a new rood loft in the parish church of St Andrew, attached to St Albans Abbey.

It can be seen that the Buckinghamshire inventories, relating to Easter sepulchres, raise a number of unanswerable questions; but what is very clear is that the money expended on Easter sepulchres is unlikely, with one or two exceptions, Wycombe for example, to have been very great. An incontrovertible fact is that the seven references to Easter sepulchres which exist in the inventories, represent less than 6% of the churches. It would seem possible to conclude, therefore, that whilst no doubt the Easter liturgy took place in every church, the Easter sepulchre itself, as a physical object, was not considered to be of much monetary value. It is also possible, of course, that these particular objects were the merest remnant of a much greater quantity of Easter sepulchres which had been destroyed in 1548 prior to the Commissioners visits' of 1552. In places such as Amersham and Wycombe, it was accorded some degree of dignity (if the expenditure of money on the Easter sepulchre can be used as an indicator of such things) but its spatial and symbolic significance was accorded not permanent, but temporary, status.

The story in Hertfordshire is very similar. Here there are inventories for 132 churches drawn up at the request of King Edward VI in 1553. The purpose of these inventories

was simple; it was, as has been said, to record all the valuables of the churches and then to take them for the king's use. The king received the 'ready money'\textsuperscript{55}; the jewels and the plate were:

\[
...'\text{to be delivered likewise by Indenture to our use' to thandes of the maister of our Juell house for the tyme being}^{56}.
\]

The churches were allowed to keep

\begin{quote}
\textit{honest and comely furnyture of coverynge for the commynyon table and surples or surplesses for the mynyster or mynysters}^{57}.
\end{quote}

The residue of the linens were to be distributed to the poor of the parish;

\begin{quote}
\textit{all and singuler copes vestments Aulter clothes and other ornaments whatsoever remaynyng}^{58}
\end{quote}

were to be sold for the king's use, and all metal by weight was to be sold except

\begin{quote}
\textit{the mettall of greatt bell [and] sawnse bells in every of the said churches}^{59}.
\end{quote}

It was a radical, rapacious act which took from the parishes and their communities gifts which had been given by the clergy and parishioners themselves.

In Hertfordshire, the inventories record that the 132 parish churches possessed 300 copes (ie 2.27 per church), 8 silver crosses (6% of the total), 28 crosses made of latten (21%) and 48 crosses made of copper (36%). 47 cross cloths were noted (36%), compared with 61 (50%) in Buckinghamshire. There were 5 pyxes made of silver (3%), 8 of copper and 5 of latten; again, a low figure when it was known that each church had to have a pyx.

\textsuperscript{55} Cussans 1873 (b), p.4.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p.4.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, p.5.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, p.5.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, p.5.
Like Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire was part of the diocese of Lincoln, but sitting at its heart was the huge Benedictine abbey in St Albans, and in towns such as Hitchin and Royston, there had formerly been significant priories. Its proximity to London, to the south, meant that one might also assume some influence spreading out from the capital. St Paul’s Cathedral, for example, farmed a number of livings in the county.

In spite of all these potential influences - monasteries and city wealth - the references to Easter sepulchres in the inventories of Hertfordshire are very small. There are only two, Hunsdon and Sarratt, i.e. only 1.5% of the churches recorded. The Hunsdon reference is short and to the point:

... a sepulcre clothe of white & red satten of burgis\(^60\).

The Sarratt reference provides little more:

... a Clothe for the Sepulcre of yallow silke popingoy\(^61\).

As in the case in Buckinghamshire, there are no explicit references to the structure of the Easter sepulchre - clearly the only objects related to the Easter sepulchre thought to be of monetary value were the textiles. Again, it is worth noting the other items in the inventories for Hunsdon and Sarrat to see if they can throw any light on the status or use of Easter sepulchres in their parishes.

**Hunsdon**

Apart from the reference to the Easter sepulchre cloth

... of white & red satten of burgis\(^52\)

there is only a single cross mentioned:

... a crosse of lattyne\(^63\)

\(^{60}\) Cussans 1873 (b), p.115.


\(^{62}\) Ibid, p.115.

\(^{63}\) Ibid, p.115.
which, it may be safe to assume, was probably the cross used for the adoratio, depositio
and elevatio ceremonies of Holy Week. As latten was not a precious metal, it was not of
itself - as a work of art - of great significance. Such significance as it carried would have
been that given to it by the worshippers.

The inventory reads like that of a poor country church - and yet, next door to the church,
is Hunsdon House. This had been one of Henry VIII's country seats. It might have been
expected that Hunsdon church, with its powerful royal connections, would have been
more lavishly equipped - but the inventory gives no indication at all of this.

Sarratt
The inventory at Sarratt, by contrast with Hunsdon, suggests a church of some wealth
and significance. Amongst its furnishings were:

... a Crosse and a Crosse Staff of Coppar and guilte
... a lyttyll crosse of coppar and guilte
... ij pixes one of theim of coppar and guilte thother of lattine
... a coppe of yallow sylke popinge
... a Clothe for the Sepulcre of yallow silke popinge
... a Canopye Clothe of yallow sylk popinge.

The Easter sepulchre cloth, as can be seen, was of 'yallow sylk popinge' and thus
presumably the canopy cloth and cope of the same material and colour were used during
the Holy Week ceremonies. It suggests some attention to aesthetic detail in relating the
vestments and canopy cloth to the Easter sepulchre cloth. Again, it needs to be noted
that, in spite of such apparent careful staging of the liturgy, there is no suggestion in the
inventory of the actual structure of the Easter sepulchre itself.

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The main focus of this chapter on the Easter sepulchre in pre-Reformation England is the
three counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. In trying to use the
Edwardian inventories for those counties as the database for Easter sepulchres, the

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64 Cussans 1873 (b), pp.23-24.
results have indicated that Easter sepulchres seem not to have had great significance. It may be worth recapitulating some of the statistics at this point.

The Bedfordshire inventories record 14 churches.
The Buckinghamshire inventories record 122 churches.
The Hertfordshire inventories record 132 churches.

Of these 268 church records, there are references in only nine of them to objects which are related to Easter sepulchres, that is 3.3% of the total. And of those nine references, seven are to Easter sepulchre textiles; there is one reference (Wycombe) to the timber structure of the sepulchre, and in one (Swansbourne) it is possible to deduce that the structure of the sepulchre was probably of timber.

In order to check whether the three counties are somehow, by a statistical fluke, unrepresentative of a bigger picture, the Edwardian inventories for Oxfordshire have also been studied - and they reveal a similar picture. There are 93 records extant of parishes in the south and east of the county of Oxfordshire. (Those of the north and west of the county are missing and inventories for most of the towns have disappeared.) There are only four references to Easter sepulchres, namely:

1. Dorchester:
   
   Item 2 pawlys and a sepulcre cloth\textsuperscript{65}.

2. Thame:

   Item the hangynges of the sepulcre of sylk\textsuperscript{66}.

3. Horsepath:

   Item a peynted lyen cloth for the sepulcre and an other whyte of dyaper\textsuperscript{67}.

\textsuperscript{65} Graham 1920, p.101.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, p.116.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, p.64.
4. Cuddesdon:

Item 3 paynted clothes for the sepulchre. 68

An earlier inventory

... taken and made the 19th day of May in the 37 yere of the reigne of our
sovereigne lorde Henry theight. 69

of the Cathedral Church of Christ at Oseney, refers to:

A cloth for the sepulcre 3s 4d. 70

plus

... a sepulcre of woode and a dexte of woode for the gospeller. 71

The Edwardian inventories for Oxfordshire show, therefore, that only 4.3% of the
parishes had an object associated with an Easter sepulchre which was thought worth
recording. The earlier inventory for Christ Church Cathedral reveals that the sepulchre
was made of wood. None of the references in the Edwardian inventories gives any
indication of what the structure of an Easter sepulchre might have been like.

If the Oxfordshire figures are added to those of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and
Hertfordshire, it can be seen that of the 361 churches recorded in the inventories, only
thirteen (3.8%) refer to Easter sepulchres - and in all but two of those references
(Wycombe and Swansbourne) the objects recorded are textiles rather than temporary or
physical structures. If it is possible within such a small sample - thirteen - to discern any
trend, it is that expensive textiles used to cover the Easter sepulchres, which themselves
seem to have been of wood, are found only in the wealthiest churches.

68 Graham 1920, p.65.
69 Ibid, p.135.
70 Ibid, p.135
Edwardian Inventories: the City of London

When the inventories of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire are compared with those from the City of London, the differences are dramatic. It will be recalled that in Hertfordshire 300 copes were recorded, that is, 2.27 per church. In London, St Paul’s Cathedral alone had over 300 copes - more than the entire collection of copes in Hertfordshire. In fact, in the City of London, the average number of copes per church was 9.5 - approximately four times the Hertfordshire average. Some City churches even had special copes for children; for example, the churchwardens of St Benet Fink sold to William Baker

... a cope of fustian for a child, 2s. 10d.; a cope of bishop Nicholas, 3s. 4d.;
a cope of blue bawdekin for a child, Is.72.

It may be the wealth of the City churches which accounts for another dramatic contrast. Whereas in the inventories for Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire (representing 361 churches) there are only 13 references to Easter sepulchres, in the City there are 42 references - that is, 3.8% of churches in the shire counties, compared with 43% in the City. The differences between the counties and the City probably reflects the greater monetary value of the textiles used for the Easter sepulchres - a value which could then be realised when they were sold.

The references to Easter sepulchres in the City inventories are dominated by descriptions of the textiles; for example, at St Dunstan-in-the-East, there was

... a Sepulture Cloth of Cloth of golde73.

This, interestingly, was accompanied by

... a greate Coffyn of Cloth of golde74.

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72 Walters 1939, p.186.
73 Ibid, p.251.
74 Ibid, p.251.
St Martin, Ludgate, also had

... a clothe of gold that was about the Sepulcre.\(^75\)

St Dionis Backchurch also had a cloth of gold for the sepulchre; its dimensions are recorded: it contained

... \(ij\) yarde quarter and halfe at xvi\(^3\) iii\(^4\) yarde.\(^76\)

It was

... sore dropyd with wax.\(^77\)

- which provides further evidence, if such were needed, of the use of sepulchre candles. St Mary Abchurch, it would appear, had a much larger sepulchre cloth:

... \(v\) yarde di. of red tartran for the sepulcre.\(^78\)

The colours for the sepulchre were not limited to gold or red; St Lawrence Jewry, for example, had

One cloth of blew veluet that went about the sepulcer.\(^79\)

St Margaret Moses had

... four green curtains for the sepulchre.\(^80\)

St Albans, Wood Street had

\(^{75}\) Walters 1939, p.375.
\(^{76}\) Ibid, p.242.
\(^{77}\) Ibid, p.242.
\(^{78}\) Ibid, p.411.
\(^{79}\) Ibid, p.327.
\(^{80}\) Ibid, p.357.
... *ij cloathes of purple and tawney taffata lyned with blue Canwys*[^1].

And St Margaret, Fish Street, had

... *a sepulchre cloth of red and green Bruges satin with fringe of silk*[^2].

plus a pair of matching curtains[^3].

It is possible to deduce the form of the sepulchre, not only from the descriptions of the size and type of the textiles used, but also from the descriptions of its accoutrements: valences and fringes were much in evidence; for example St Alban, Wood Street had

... *ij vallances for the Sepulchre*[^4].

St Botolph, Billingsgate had a

... *valence of buckeram aboute the Sepulchre*[^5].

St Margaret Pattens had a

... *blak valance that servyd for the Sepulcre*[^6].

St Peter, West Cheap had

... *ij frenges for the sepulcre of blak bokeram paynted*[^7].

In order for a sepulchre to have valences and fringes, it would most likely have been a free-standing structure — and not a permanent architectural feature such as a tomb recess. The fact that St Alban, Wood Street, had three valences might suggest that its sepulchre

[^1]: Walters 1939, p.132.
[^4]: Ibid, p.132.
[^7]: Ibid, p.566.
was placed against a wall, and thus only the front and two sides needed decorative textile hangings. Further evidence in support of the 'free-standing' sepulchre is provided by the descriptions of the textiles, in which the phrase 'about the sepulchre' is used with such frequency; for example, at St Mary at Hill:

... a stayned clothe that went about the Sepulture 88.

And at St Lawrence, Jewry:

... one cloth of blew veluet that went abowt the sepulcer 89.

It can also be deduced that these valuable textiles were stored from one year to the next; St Mary, Aldermary, had

... one grett payntyd cloth with the sepulker [which, it was said, was stored in] the grett chyste 90.

St Mary, Woolnoth, had

... a Shryne for the Sepulture coverid with cloth of tyssue [which was kept] in the presse in the vestry 91.

The sepulchres themselves seem to have been largely constructed of timber; at All Hallows, Lombard Street, one 'Henrie ffisher' paid three shillings and fourpence for

... iiij pillars of carved worke which were of the Sepulker 92.

At St Benet Fink, the timber of the sepulchre was sold for five shillings to John Wilcocks 93. At St Martin, Outwich,

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88 Walters 1939, p.450.
89 Ibid, p.327.
91 Ibid, p.468.
92 Ibid, p.112.
93 Ibid, p.186.
... ij peses of tymbre that belonged to the sepulcre\textsuperscript{94} were sold to James Chapman for sixpence.

At St Olave, Silver Street, four shillings was obtained for

... \textit{ij paynted postes and a ledg [sic] with holes for the Sepulchre}\textsuperscript{95}.

At All Hallows the Great, a

... \textit{sepulchre Chest that stode in the Quere}\textsuperscript{96} was sold for twenty shillings.

Whilst virtually all the references, therefore, are to the wooden frame of the sepulchre, there is one exception; St Mary, Colechurch, had

\textit{A frame of Iffon for the sepulker}\textsuperscript{97}.

It may be possible from all of these descriptions to imagine the Easter sepulchre in City of London churches as consisting of a wooden frame, probably free-standing or placed against a wall, covered in rich and very beautiful fabrics, surrounded by candle stands or 'pillars'. St Dunstan in the East had four statues, painted in red, which were part of the stage-set\textsuperscript{98}; and, in some instances, notably St Paul's Cathedral and St Peter, Cornhill, the textiles had scenes from the Easter story painted upon them. For example, St Peter, Cornhill had

\textit{Item a stayned cloth with the Image of Christ peter [sic] James and John with a scripture 'surrexit dominus vere'}\textsuperscript{99}.

\textsuperscript{94} Walters 1939, p.393.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, p.558.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p.96.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, p.447.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, p.251.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, p.580.
St Nicholas, Cole Abbey, also had

... a Sepulcher clothe stayned with the resurrecyon and on' fruntlet wyth aungeltes 100.

The sepulchre may also have had a sheet of linen in which to enfold the buried cross and Host. St Olave, Old Jewry, had

... a owlde shette belongyng to the sepulker 101.

In one case, at St Michael, Queenhithe, the sepulchre had a

Dore of blew velvets 102.

It is also possible that some sepulchres were surrounded by painted banners; St Mary, Aldermary, had

... a Banar cloth of the sepolker 103.

St George, Botolph Lane, had

... sertyne olde canvas which was wonte to be abowte the sepulchre with iiiij banar staves 104.

In brief, therefore, it would seem that in London the Easter sepulchre was part of a sumptuous liturgical stage-set, its textiles glittering in the candlelight, surrounded by clouds of incense.

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the theatricality of Easter sepulchres in the City of London churches comes from St Peter, Cornhill. One of the wealthiest of the City churches (it possessed forty-eight copes, plus large numbers of vestments and at least

100 Walters 1939, p.532.
102 Ibid, p.503.
seven chalices, one of which had an image of Christ seated on a rainbow), its
descriptions of 'clothes for the sepulchre' is remarkable and needs to be quoted in full:

In primit a palle of red damaske for the sacrament upon corpus xpi day frenged
about with venice golde and red silke and ij painted staves their to belonging
Item a steyned cloth with a crucyfix, mary and John with mary magdalyn and St.
James Item a steyned cloth with the Image of Christ peter James and John with a
scripture 'surrexit dominus vere' Item a steyned white cloth with a crucifix mary
and John spotted with bloude with the holy gost over his hed Item a steyned
clothe with ij Aungelles and twoo scriptures Item a white clothie imbrodered with
divers armes Item a steyned clothe of the burying of our lorde with Image of
three maryes Item ij red frontelles steyned with armes of golde with frenge of
silke Item if crosse staves of tymbre thone guilt with golde the other with sylver
Item an Image upon a crosse for good friday Item a myter of white silke
garnished Item a standerd of Tree painted with a crowne of golde for the Pascall
Item iiiij chests in the vestry ij gret and iiij smalle Item a crosse of Tymbre with a
staffe for lent Item a clothe of ray silke of dyvers colours for the crysmatory Item
a crosse staff of copper and guilt Item a newe Paynted clothie of the resurrection
Item a stayned clothie to S' vrsele Item ij quishens of red saye lyned with red
lether Item xij Pillowes corted with silke.

It is unlikely that all of these objects would have been used during Holy Week and Easter
- but the fact that they were incorporated by those drawing up the inventory under the
subheading 'clothes for the sepulchre', suggests that their liturgical use was associated
with Lent, Passion, Baptism and Easter Day. Four of the 'steyned' cloths were painted
with scenes from the crucifixion, the burial and the resurrection, and this suggests that
perhaps they were used in sequence as a visual reminder for each day in the Holy Week
and Easter drama. The same events may also have been commemorated in the range of
liturgical silverware which St Peter, Cornhill, owned; amongst the 'churche Jewelles'
were:

Walters 1939, pp.579-580.
... a monster [monstrance] all guilt with mary [sic] and John and a crosse in the toppe

and a chalice

... all guilt with a crucifyx at the foote with Mary and John and a vernycle on the patton.

There are two other objects which also deserve attention for the part they may have played in the Easter ceremonies. It is significant that under the 'clothes for the sepulchre' subheading, is

... an Image vpon a crosse of tree for good friday

- presumably this was used for the adoratio sequence. Then, under the 'church Jewelles' subheading, is found:

...Item a picture for the resurrection on ester day with an owche of siluer and guilt in the brest.

It seems safe to assume that this was an image of the risen Christ, containing a crystal jewel, behind which would have been placed the consecrated Host. St Martin, Ludgate, also had something similar:

It'm Solde to John lacye and Robert shankes ... A broche which stode vpon y's Image brest that was borne about vpon Easter daye.

It is important, whilst giving attention to these two examples, not to overlook the fact that these are indeed the only two in the City churches. If they had been common within any of the other churches, they would have been commented upon. There is simply no evidence which could lead to the conclusion that resurrection monstrances were common

106 Walters 1939, p.577.
in all churches. Their very rarity makes them noteworthy; even a church as wealthy as St Paul's Cathedral does not seem to have had such an image in its possession.\textsuperscript{111}

What conclusions, then, can be drawn from this brief resumé of Easter sepulchres in the City of London churches in the sixteenth century? It is with some confidence that it can be claimed that in City churches the Easter sepulchre was not a permanent architectural feature. St Peter, Cornhill, with its long list of liturgical furnishings, provides the final detailed piece of evidence for buttressing this claim:

\textbf{Item a psalter boke cheyned vnder the sepulchre}\textsuperscript{112}.

- it would not be possible to chain a psalter under a tomb slab. It might make greater sense to picture the psalter attached to a temporary structure.

The evidence, then, suggests that temporary structures were the norm, decorated and furnished with sumptuous textiles - those same textiles being stored, when not in use, in chests in the vestry or elsewhere. If temporary, though beautiful, structures were to be found in the wealthiest churches in the country - and if it is reasonable to assume that churches close to London, in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, were more likely than not to ape their rich neighbour - then to argue for permanent Easter sepulchres in the country, when they seem not to have existed in London, is curiously counterintuitive.

\textsuperscript{111} In an inventory of 1536 of the shrine of St Hugh of Lincoln, there was recorded:

\textit{... an image of our saviour silver and gilt standing upon six lions, void in the breast for sacrament for Easter day, weighing 37 ounces. [See Aston 1988, p.230, note 28].}

Whilst it is possible that such resurrection monstrances fell foul of the 1547 injunctions of Edward VI to destroy images, the careful inventories of the City churches, many of which recorded all things sold between 1548 and 1552, do not record any such sales, except that of St Martin, Ludgate. The St Peter, Cornhill, 'owche' was recorded in a copy of the 'counterpayne' of the inventory of goods made for Bishop Bonner in 1548. There is no record of sale of this object between 1548 and 1552, though the churchwardens seem to have been fairly assiduous in recording details of other sales during this period.

\textsuperscript{112} Walters 1939, p.574.
The disparity in the recording of Easter sepulchres between the shire counties and the City of London can best be accounted for not by positing a more overtly religious capital, but by recognising that the value of the fabrics and ornamentation used in London would have been much greater than that used in the countryside. Nevertheless, it needs also to be recognised that even in the wealthy City of London, Easter sepulchres were not mentioned in 57% of its churches.

These conclusions, however, must be accompanied by a caveat. The tightening of royal and ecclesiastical central control on worship since the issue of the 1538 injunctions had, over the years, increased in severity. The 1547 injunctions, as Duffy says:

... looked like a somewhat expanded reissue of those in 1538: in reality they were a charter for revolution.\(^{13}\)

Rosaries were banned, as were processions, and the new injunctions

... ordered the destruction not only of all abused statues and shrines, but even of such images in stained glass windows, an advance towards an absolute ban on imagery almost without parallel in protestant Europe.\(^{14}\)

Candles which had been allowed to surround the Easter sepulchre were forbidden (only two candles were allowed to remain - on the high altar). The means the parishes had used to retain their lights, and repair their churches, were also brought to an end; thus there were no longer, for example, to be church ales. This left the wardens with a major problem: how to finance the upkeep of the churches, and this, coupled with the new liturgies, was leaving its mark upon English churches.

... many of the most distinctive features of Catholic cult were being suppressed, including the solemn veneration of the Easter Sepulchre ... From Easter Sunday, which in 1548 fell on 1 April, a new 'Order of Communion' was ordered to be

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\(^{13}\) Duffy 2001, p.118.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, p.118.
inserted into the Mass after the end of the canon, containing long English devotions derived from continental Protestant sources\textsuperscript{115}.

The combination of the 1547 Chantries Act with these liturgical changes meant that the whole Easter liturgy was demolished - and the churchwardens, to make ends meet, began to sell off the furniture and fittings that were no longer needed. Duffy paints a poignant picture of Lucy Scely, the remaining high warden at Morebath, disposing of various items:

There were also the usual round of minor repairs and maintenance of bells and roofing lead, and the parish's continuing liability for the costs of regional defence, such as its payments for the fire-beacon. To meet all these demands, Lucy decided to dispose of the liturgical equipment recently made redundant by the Archbishop's directives and by the actions of the Commissioners. Sometime before the end of September 1548 she sold off the Lent cloth, the painted hangings for the Easter Sepulchre, the frontals for the high altar and St Sidwell's altar, the painted cloth which veiled the High Cross in Holy Week ...\textsuperscript{116}

It is a sad and lonely picture which Duffy paints. How far such a picture can be used to describe the whole of England is another matter. In the churchwardens' accounts from Wing in Buckinghamshire, for example, seven years after Lucy Scely in Morebath had sold the sepulchre, the churchwardens, at the accession of Queen Mary, began to pay out sums of money\textsuperscript{117} related to the sepulchre:

1553:

\begin{quote}
Item payde to Edwarde Warde for makynge of the frame about the sepulcre \textit{xd}
\end{quote}

1554:

\begin{quote}
Receyved of Thomas Bennet for the sepulcre ale for the last yere \textit{xxiis}
Item payde for makynge of the sepulcre \textit{xd}\textsuperscript{118}.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{115} Duffy 2001, p.122.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, p.124.

\textsuperscript{117} Sheingorn 1987, pp.97-98.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, p.98.
If one takes Morebath as typical, then the Edwardian inventories in the shire counties could be read as representing the remnants of the Easter sepulchre liturgies - and thus the figure of thirteen parishes out of a total of 361 has little meaning other than to indicate that the wardens of those parishes may have been under less financial pressure than Lucy Scely in Morebath. However, if the situation at Morebath is untypical and if, in any case, the Easter sepulchre objects had little monetary value, except in the City of London churches, then the thirteen out of 361 figure for the shire counties would seem to show how little real status was attached to the Easter sepulchre structures in late medieval England.

The wills for Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire may shed some extra light on the question of the status and importance accorded to Easter sepulchres.

**Bedfordshire Wills**

The second documentary source for Easter sepulchres is to be found in wills of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. What Bedfordshire lacks in Edwardian inventories, it more than makes up for in its wills. Due to the diligent and painstaking work of a number of Bedfordshire historians, in particular Alan F. Cirket and Patricia Bell, there are almost seven hundred wills published for this period. The earliest of them date from 1480; they continue until 1533 and represent wills proved in the court of the archdeaconry of Bedford.

> Only those people with at least a little property made a will, and so ... local probate records relate to the more prosperous husbandmen, yeomen and tradesmen and their widows, and also to the parish clergy and some minor gentry.\(^{119}\)

People of a higher rank used the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

The wills of Bedfordshire follow a standard pattern: having commended their souls to the mercy of God, the testators usually then began their specific bequests by making a donation to 'the mother church of Lincoln'. Thus, for example, William Cobbe of Schernebroke [Sharnbrook] on 14 October 1522:

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or Johan Butler, a widow of Temmysford [Tempsford], in 1525:

*to the mother church of Lincoln* 6d

or Robert Laurence of Shitlyngton [Shillington] in 1522/3:

*to the mother church of Lincoln* 2d

Of one hundred 1484-1533 wills surveyed by Bell, the claim was made that all of them contained instructions for a bequest to be given to Lincoln Cathedral, though it was only possible to verify that 75% made explicit mention of such a bequest.

Having made that bequest clear (was it a traditional, but not legally binding, custom of the Archdeacon's court that Lincoln Cathedral should receive a portion of the total sum being bequeathed?), there then usually followed a bequest to the high altar of the church of the parish in which the testator lived - 'for tithes forgotten'. The same William Cobbe of Shambrook left to the high altar of the parish church two shillings for tithes forgotten. 86% of those 1484-1533 wills surveyed by Bell record donations given to the high altars of parish churches. From that point on, the wills began to vary a little, although the place of burial was also specified. 71% of the sample expressed a wish to be buried in the churchyard; 25% expressed a wish to be buried in the church, sometimes with a particular place in mind. For example, Edmond Cosyn of Felmersham in 1527/8 asked to be buried in the parish church ...

*by fore the Trinite*
whereas Robert Coole of Potton in 1524 asked to be buried

... within the porch of the south side.\textsuperscript{127}

For the purposes of this thesis it is important to recognise that in the 687 Bedfordshire wills that have been analysed, there is not a single reference to being buried at or near the Easter sepulchre. The testators were perhaps less insistent than might be imagined about a Mass being said for them after their death - only 51\%\textsuperscript{128} requested that. 47\% of them wanted to make a donation to the bells of the church, 44\% left money for torches and 35\% for image lights - for example, in 1501 John Edward left to the church in Henlow, two quarters of malt to the sepulchre light and other lights\textsuperscript{129}.

John Crawe of Colmworth in 1500 left sixpence to

*the light of St. Mary*\textsuperscript{130}

Bartholomew Atkyn in 1500 left 40d (3s 4d) to the torches at Potton and 6s 8d to the bells\textsuperscript{131}. Occasionally such wills also indicate new building activities in a church; the same Bartholomew Atkyn left 4 marks to

*the fabric on the north part of the church*\textsuperscript{132}

and his fellow townsman, Thomas Bryche, also in 1500, not only left 20d (1s 8d) to repair the wall of the churchyard but also 5 marks to

*the new fabric on the north of the church*\textsuperscript{133}.

\textsuperscript{127} Bell 1997, p.53.
\textsuperscript{128} See Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Bell 1966, p.5.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, p.7.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, p.11.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, p.11.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, p.9.
Sir William Howson, the Vicar of Litlington, left money in his will of 1517 for an image:

> to painting the image of All Hallows and of Our Lady 40s

and also specified gifts for other image lights in his church:

> to the All Hallows light 3s 4d
> to Our Lady light in the chancel 20d
> to the light of Our Lady of Pity 20d
> to the rood light 3s 4d

Very occasionally a testator left money for a book for a church; Robert Cooper of Tempsford in 1522/3 left a considerable sum of money - £6 13s 4d - towards buying a

vestment, 2 tunicles, a cope and a written massbook for Temmysford church.

It was a gift not without conditions attached:

> ... so that by Writying set uppon the vestmentes aforesayd my sowle be prayd for.

Occasionally the importance of a fraternity or guild in a particular parish is revealed; Robert Laurence of Shillington in 1522/3 left a quarter of barley to the brotherhood of Jesus. Not long after this, in 1523, Matthew Arnold, also of Shillington, left 3s 4d to the same brotherhood. Bartholomew Atkyn of Potton, in 1500, left 4 marks to the fraternity of that church and to

sir [sic] Richard the priest of the fraternity 10s.
In fact the Bedfordshire wills of 1480 to 1519, surveyed by Bell, mention a number of fraternities, namely Bedford, Holy Trinity; Blunham, Holy Trinity; Dunstable, St John the Baptist; Eaton Socon, Corpus Christi; Kimbolton, St Mary; Luton, Holy Trinity; Pertenhall, Resurrection; Potton, St Anne and Holy Trinity; Riseley, Holy Trinity; Shillington, Jesus; Tempsford, St Katherine; and Yelden, Sepulchre.

Sometimes there are references which are suggestive of unusual images in churches, for example, Richard Trayte of Milton Ernest in 1501 left 6s 8d to

*the picture of the Twelve Apostles before the crucifix*\(^{141}\).

At other times, part of a story which features in an entirely different context is brought to life, as in Meppershall when, in his will of 1500, William Strynger left to the cathedral church at Lincoln 4d, to the high altar of Meppershall 16d, and to the church itself, 13s 4d, and 20d apiece was left to the bells, the crucifix light and the sepulchre light\(^{142}\). An executor to this will was his son, Thomas Stringer\(^{143}\) - perhaps the father of the Thomas Strynger who, in 1553, was accused by the parishioners of ill-treating them.

It is in the light of these varied references to Lincoln, to the guilds, to church repairs and bequests for vestments that the numerous references to the Easter sepulchre need to be seen. Those references are of a fairly standard pattern: William Lecher in 1522/3 left 4d to the sepulchre light in Carleton\(^{144}\); John Stevyngton in 1522/3 left 12d to the sepulchre light in Turvey\(^{145}\); Alys Cooke in 1521 left to the sepulchre light of Eaton Bray, 4d\(^{146}\); and her fellow parishioner with the memorable name of Cuthbert Cutlatt, also in 1521, left 12d to the upkeep of the sepulchre light\(^{147}\).


\(^{142}\) Ibid, p.15.

\(^{143}\) Ibid, p.16.

\(^{144}\) Bell 1997, p.8.

\(^{145}\) Ibid, p.29.

\(^{146}\) Ibid, p.59.

\(^{147}\) Ibid, p.64.
Approximately 24% of the references to Easter sepulchre lights in the Bedfordshire wills of 1484 to 1533, as recorded by Bell in 1997, do not refer to money but instead bequeath corn, livestock or malt to Easter sepulchre lights. Thus we find that Sir William Howson, Vicar of Litlington, in 1517 left to the sepulchre light tens pounds of wax; Richard Bechnar of Wootton in 1518 left to the sepulchre light a bushel of barley; his fellow parishioner, Nicholas Wolhed in 1517 left a bushel of malt; Simond Stratton of Houghton Conquest in 1527 left one sheep to the sepulchre light, whilst John Lord of Millbrook in 1499 left to the sepulchre light a cow.

There are occasional references to money being left to a guild named after the sepulchre; for example, in 1501 Thomas Erle of Yelden left to the fraternity of the Sepulchre two measures of barley.

Farndish also appeared to have a similarly named fraternity; John Reynold of Farndish in 1526 left to the sepulchre 'yeld' half a quarter of barley; William Eleot of the same parish in 1529 left to the sepulchre yield 6s 8d.

And then there are very infrequent references to the making of the sepulchre. Johan Harper of Biddenham in 1521 left 6s 8d to the making of the sepulchre.

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148 Bell 1997, p.28.
150 Ibid, p.32.
151 Ibid, p.98.
152 Bell 1966, p.79.
155 Ibid, p.146.
156 Ibid, p.59.
Walter Parell of Bolnhurst in 1519/20 left 6s 8d to

\textit{the painting of the sepulchre}^{157}

and in 1509, William Gamman, of Riseley, left

\textit{to the making of the sepulchre 6s.; to the 'panyng' of the same 6s}^{158}.

It is interesting to note that of the 186 references to Easter sepulchres in Bedfordshire wills, only three (the ones above) indicate the potential cost of the construction of a sepulchre; all the other references are to the sepulchre lights. The amount of money left to the lights varies from 20s by Robert Caryngton of Dunton in 1521\textsuperscript{159}, to John Coole of Riseley who, in 1527/8, left

\textit{to the sepulchre of Our Lord 2d}^{160}.

The greatest number of people left 12d (34 in total); eighteen left 20d, sixteen left 4d; only twelve left a sum in excess of 24d (eight left 3s 4d, 4 left 6s 8d). If monetary value can be used to discern the status given to Easter sepulchres by the testators, then Easter sepulchres would not appear to have been considered of enormous significance. Indeed, in terms of bequests, only 27\% of the Bedfordshire wills covered by this survey make any reference at all to Easter sepulchres.

The overall picture in Bedfordshire, therefore, is that in terms of status and significance, the Easter sepulchre did not feature in the bequests of approximately three quarters of the population.

However, another picture begins to emerge within the one quarter of the population who did include Easter sepulchres in their wills. There is a noticeable clustering of such bequests within particular parishes - the parish of Potton is mentioned 22 times out of the 687 wills recorded. And yet within those 22 Potton wills, money is left to the Easter

\textsuperscript{157} Bell 1997, p.104.
\textsuperscript{158} Cirket 1957, p.21.
\textsuperscript{159} Bell 1997, p.75.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, p.90.
sepulchre light in 13 of them; by contrast, Luton is mentioned 26 times and there are only 2 references to Easter sepulchre lights. Riseley, also mentioned in 15 wills, has 12 references to Easter sepulchre lights. Northill is mentioned in 16 wills without a single reference to Easter sepulchre lights, whereas Tempsford, mentioned 15 times, has 11 references. Ampthill is mentioned in 10 wills with not a single reference to Easter sepulchre lights, whereas Oakley is mentioned in 9 wills and there are 7 references to Easter sepulchre lights.

The Bedfordshire picture that results from this analysis seems to show that Easter sepulchres were not considered to be of great status or significance by the vast majority of the population (only 27% of the wills mention them at all) but there were some parishes, for example; Potton, Tempsford, Riseley, Oakley, Dunton and Sharnbrook, where the Easter sepulchre was given high value, and others, for example; Northill, Ampthill, Dunstable and Luton, where the Easter sepulchre appears to have had little or no esteem.

In such circumstances, where the Easter liturgy would have been virtually the same in all parishes, the disparity between churches as revealed by the wills is difficult to account for. Perhaps the only safe conclusion to draw is that the cultural microclimate, as it were, in each parish was determined at a very local level. And if this was the case, to argue, as Duffy and others have done, that the Easter sepulchre and its accompanying ceremonial constitutes

\[ \text{something of an interpretative crux for any proper understanding of late medieval English religion}^{161} \]

is not entirely borne out by the evidence. In Bedfordshire the Easter sepulchre may have been central in Potton and Tempsford, but it was distinctly at the margins in Northill and Dunstable. A microclimate cannot be assumed to be replicated at the macro level, nor can macro-level theology, doctrine or politics be assumed to operate uniformly at the micro level.

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**Buckinghamshire Wills**

The wills of Buckinghamshire follow the same pattern as those in Bedfordshire, that is, the wills open with a standard formula:

\[\text{In primis commendo animam meam deo patri omnipotenti beate Marie et omnibus sanctis} \ldots \]

which is followed by an instruction concerning the place where the testator wishes his or her body to be buried.

In 62% of the wills recorded in Buckinghamshire, there are instructions for burial in the churchyard of the parish church. For example, Johannes Edrede in 1484 asked that his body should be buried

\[\ldots \text{in cimiterio ecclesie parochialis sancti Petri de Ewyer}\ldots\]

Also in 1484 Benet Balon instructed that his body should be buried in the churchyard of Beaconsfield.

Other people making their wills (27% of the sample database) specifically requested burial within the parish church, sometimes giving precise instructions about the location. Ricardus Ardren in 1484 ordered that he should be buried

\[\ldots \text{in ecclesia beate Marie de Addyngton coram ymagine sancti Christoferi}\ldots\]

Johannes Newman, in 1470, a parishioner of Weston Turville, expressed the wish to be buried

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162 Found in Elvey 1975. The wills were registered during the period 1483-1523.
163 For example, the will of Johannes Porter of Wycomb Magna (see Elvey 1975, p.1).
164 Elvey 1975, p.12.
165 Ibid, p.28.
166 The database is the first 100 wills taken from Elvey 1975, using those with useful detail; see Ibid, pp.1-217.
... in ecclesia de Weston Turwyld ex parte boriali [sic] iuxta campanile.\(^{168}\)

Willelmus Mondy of Chepyng Wycomb (Chepping Wycombe) stated that he wished to be buried...

... in ecclesia Omnium Sanctorum de Chepyng Wycomb predicta coram altari sancti Edmundi iuxta sepulturam fratris mei.\(^{169}\)

Johannes Colyngeryge of Medmenham in 1488 asked to be buried in the nave of his parish church:

ante crucem.\(^{170}\)

Christofer Wace of Chepying Wycombe in 1492, in a will written in English rather than Latin, gave the following order:

*My body to be buried in the wedding porche next to Kateryn my wife.*\(^{171}\)

Whereas in the Bedfordshire wills there was not a single reference to a burial being related to the Easter sepulchre, in the Buckinghamshire wills there is one reference to such a burial - in 1486 Johannes Playter of Great Missenden requested his burial to be as follows:

... corpusque meum sepeliendum infra Sacram Sepulturam in ecclesia parochiali apostolorum Petri et Pauli de Missenden predicta.\(^{172}\)

It would seem that his body was to be buried below ('infra') the holy sepulchre, which could mean either that there was in Great Missenden a permanent sepulchre or that the instruction simply relates to the place where the sepulchre was sited during the Easter liturgies. There is no record of a tomb recess or anything resembling an Easter sepulchre in either the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments' inventory of

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\(^{168}\) Elvey 1975, p.25.

\(^{169}\) Ibid, p.31.

\(^{170}\) Ibid, p.71.

\(^{171}\) Ibid, p.137.

\(^{172}\) Ibid, p.30.
Buckinghamshire or the volume on Buckinghamshire in Pevsner's 'Buildings of England' series, though the latter draws attention to the

... extremely strange arcading in the N wall [of the chancel] with detached shafts forming a kind of blank wall-passage. Steep-pitched crocketed gables. All extremely renewed.\(^{173}\)

This single reference to a sepulchre as the location for a burial needs perhaps to be compared with other references to the sepulchre in Buckinghamshire wills.

There are 247 wills in Elvey's survey; and in these 247 wills there are only ten references to the sepulchre. In addition to the one above, they are as follows:

1. Ricardus Kyne of North Marston in 1484 specified in his will:

   ... *lego ad lumen sepulcri in ecclesia de Northmerston predicta vnam dimidiam acram terre iacentem in forlongo vocato Fletemerke ad sustentacionem dicti luminis*\(^{174}\).

2. Thomas Allday of Penn in 1505:

   *Item lego lumini sepulture de Pen vnum examen de apibus*\(^{175}\).

3. Johannes Okeley of Edlesburgh (Edlesborough) in 1509:

   *Item reparacioni torticorum sepulcri ... modios frumenti*\(^{176}\).

4. John Bowdon of Okley (Oakley), 'husbondman' in 1521:

   *... to the sepulcre light a bussshell barley*\(^{177}\).

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\(^{173}\) Pevsner 1960, p.146.

\(^{174}\) Elvey 1975, p.12.

\(^{175}\) Ibid, p.209.

\(^{176}\) Ibid, p.215.

\(^{177}\) Ibid, p.324.
5. Robertus Kyngbrege of Padbury in 1521:

*Item lego lumini sepulcri dominici dimidiatum modij ordei*\(^\text{178}\).

6. Geffry Blace of Rawnston [Ravenstone?] in 1521:

*Item to the Sepulcre light half a quarter barley*\(^\text{179}\).

7. John Aborowgh of Adstoke [Adstock] in 1521/2:

... *to the sepulcre light ij busshell barley*\(^\text{180}\).

8. John Kyng of Steple Claydon [Steeple Claydon] in 1521:

*Item to thuse of the sepulcre light on busshell malte*\(^\text{181}\).

9. Thomas Knyghtley (parish unspecified) in 1522:

*Item to the sepulcre light iiij d*\(^\text{182}\).

10. John Cryppes of Farnham Ryall [Farnham Royal] in 1523:

*Item to the sepulcre light ij d*\(^\text{183}\).

It may be seen, therefore, that approximately 4% of the total sample of Buckinghamshire wills (there are 247 wills extant in the Elvey collection) refer to an Easter sepulchre. There is no suggestion in any of the wills which would lead to the conclusion that the sepulchres may have been a permanent architectural feature. The paucity of will references to Easter sepulchres in Buckinghamshire would again seem to suggest that the

\(^{178}\) Elvey 1975, p.361.

\(^{179}\) Ibid, p.376.

\(^{180}\) Ibid, p.380.

\(^{181}\) Ibid, p.397-398.

\(^{182}\) Ibid, p.403.

\(^{183}\) Ibid, p.409.
sepulchre did not have a very high status or importance in the minds of those creating the wills.

A comparison with image lights may be helpful; whereas 4% of the wills refer to the sepulchre, 54% make reference to image lights and, in a number of cases, the references are to a series of lights – for example, Willelmus More of Messenden Magna [Great Missenden] in 1486/7 left a bequest of 2d each to the lights of the Blessed Mary, the Holy Trinity, St John the Baptist and St Clement. Thomas Bryan of Merlow Magna [Great Marlow] in 1485 left money to ten lights, namely to Saints Mary, Katherine, All Souls, Holy Cross, Saints Anne, Nicholas, Clement, Thomas, John the Baptist and Michael.

There are no references in the Buckinghamshire wills to the construction of a sepulchre, and guilds and fraternities are notable only by their absence. And whereas in Bedfordshire it is clear that there were a number of parishes where the 'cult' of the sepulchre was significant, there is no evidence at all in Buckinghamshire of similar religious micro-climates associated with the Easter sepulchre. Another difference between the archdeaconry of Buckingham and that of Bedford concerns bequests to Lincoln Cathedral, the mother church of the diocese. In Bedfordshire, it will be remembered, at least 75% of the wills included a bequest to Lincoln; the wills of Buckinghamshire reveal that 57% included such a bequest. Similarly, whereas in Bedfordshire 86% of the wills include a reference to the high altar of parish churches (for 'tithes forgotten'), in Buckinghamshire only 60% do so. In St Albans there is a very similar pattern: 59% of the wills refer to the high altar.

The strong impression as far as the Easter sepulchres are concerned is that they were of no great significance to those making their wills. It is clear that they wanted to settle their debts to the Church (all those references to the high altar 'for tithes forgotten'), presumably so they could die with a clear conscience, and then, having satisfied themselves that their place of burial was where they wished it to be, money was left to the lights and to the images of saints. Lights around the sepulchre could not compete

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185 Ibid, p.35.
with the flickering candles around the statues of the Virgin Mary and of the rood crucifix, perhaps because the sepulchre structure was temporary and the lights would only burn there for a limited liturgical period, whereas the images of the saints were permanently on display.

Hertfordshire Wills

The contrast between the wills of Bedfordshire and those of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire (the examples of Hertfordshire wills are drawn entirely from St Albans) is quite considerable. One of the causes of this contrast might be due to the difference in ecclesiastical jurisdiction between the Archdeaconries of Bedford and Buckingham and the Archdeaconry of St Albans. The former archdeaconries were part of the diocesan bureaucratic apparatus and under the control of the Bishop of Lincoln; the latter was part of the abbatial bureaucracy centred on St Albans Abbey. It was in 1109 that King Henry gave exemption from the episcopal control of the Bishop of Lincoln to the Abbey, and from that date the Archdeaconry of St Albans was coterminous with the Abbey's 'Liberty'. That 'Liberty', and thus the archdeaconry, included the following parishes: St Andrew, St Michael, St Peter and St Stephen within the town of St Albans, Chipping Barnet, East Barnet, Bushey, Codicote, Elstree, Hexton, Abbots Langley, Newnham, Northaw, Norton, Redbourn, Rickmansworth, Ridge, Sandridge, Sarrat, Shephall, St Paul's Walden and Watford; and, in Buckinghamshire, the parishes of Aston Abbots, Grandborough, Little Horwood and Winslow. It might be safe to assume, therefore, that the influence of the abbots of the Abbey over this geographical area would have been much greater than that of the bishops of Lincoln. The exemption from episcopal jurisdiction and control had four hundred years to root itself in the local psyche, before it was brought to an end at the Dissolution of 1540.

Perhaps the most obvious example of how the jurisdictional practices of the Bedford Archdeaconry and the St Albans Archdeaconry differed can be seen in the ways in which the testators directed their bequests. In the Archdeaconry of Bedford, at least 75% of one hundred wills directed that bequests should be given to the mother church of Lincoln; in Buckingham 57% of wills did the same; however, not one of the 303 St Albans wills

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1993, p.v. The wills cover the period 1471-1500.

See Bell 1997. Bell claims that all included a donation to the cathedral [Ibid, p.2] but it was only possible to verify that 75% did so.
directs money towards Lincoln. In the light of the importance attached to the 'mother church', money might be expected to have been directed to St Albans Abbey but this did not happen either to any significant extent. In fact only three percent of all bequests were dedicated to 'the mother church' at St Albans - and those bequests (there were ten of them) all occurred within the period 1478-1485 and coincided with the arrival of a new archdeacon, John Rothebury. This same archdeacon may also explain another curious statistic: before he became archdeacon, of seventy-five wills recorded between 1471 and 1478, bequests in favour of the shrine of St Alban occur only seven times but, from 1478 onwards, the date of his appointment, the number of bequests steadily increased. Between 1478 and 1489 bequests to the shrine occur twenty-two times and, thereafter, between 1489 and 1500 they occur thirty-three times. Presumably Archdeacon Rothebury set a trend which his successors were pleased to follow.

The differences in bequests between Bedfordshire and St Albans are not solely confined to differing attitudes towards the financial needs or importance of the 'mother church'. In Bedfordshire, for example, 47% of all testators left money for the bells of their parish church; in St Albans only 2.6% left money for bells.

As well as differences, there are some similarities between the three counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. In Bedfordshire 71% requested burial in the churchyard; in St Albans 66% requested a churchyard burial; in Buckinghamshire 62% requested churchyard burial. In Buckinghamshire 27% expressed a wish to be buried in the church itself; in Bedfordshire 25% wanted to be buried in the church; in St Albans, however, the comparable figure is much lower: 12.2%. The specificity of the burial places in St Albans wills makes interesting reading. John Blakwyn in 1471 asked that his body should be buried

... in the parish church of St Andrew [a chapel attached to the north side of the Abbey] before the image of the crucified Christ next to the chancel door.\textsuperscript{188}

Isabella Croke in 1464 asked for her body to be buried

\textsuperscript{188} Flood 1993, p.10.
... in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary within the parish church of St Peter next to the grave of John Royse, my first husband.\footnote{189}

John Sendall in 1472 requested that his body be buried

... within the monastery of St Alban the protomartyr next to the bell tower, near the tomb of Christine and Isabella my late wives.\footnote{190}

Thomas Kylyngworth in 1491 ordered that his body should be

... beried in the body of the church of the monastery of Seint Albons ayenst the north side of Our Lady Chappell called the fayre Marie, ayenst the gren dore under the pulpite.\footnote{191}

Burials in churchyards in some cases also included details of where the burial was to take place. For example, Denis Trochard in 1481 asked that his body be

... given christian burial in St Peter's churchyard next to the grave of my first wife Katherine.\footnote{192}

Alice Harryes in 1485 requested that her body should be buried in St Michael's churchyard:

...at the footpath there which leads from the north gate of the said churchyard to the priest's door of the said church, that is in the middle of the said footpath opposite the high altar.\footnote{193}

Occasionally there are references, not only to the actual site of burial, but also to monumental markers. John Nuny in 1485 stated:

\footnote{189}{Flood 1993, p.15.}
\footnote{190}{Ibid, p.17.}
\footnote{191}{Ibid, p.101.}
\footnote{192}{Ibid, p.91.}
\footnote{193}{Ibid, p.77.}
My body to be buried in the parish chapel of St Andrew attached to the monastery of St Alban next to the grave of my former wife Joan, and I wish my marble stone to be placed in the south part of the said chapel towards the north side.194

Dame Constance Cressy in 1486 requested that her body should be buried

... in the chappell of Saynt Andrew within the monastery of Saint Albon there as my tumbe is ordeyned and made by the aunter of Oure Lady.195

Benedict Edryche, a priest, in 1476 required that his body should be buried

... in the chancel of St Andrew's chapel within the precincts of St Albans' monastery under a marble slab situated there.196

The theology and beliefs surrounding many of these late fifteenth-century deaths are summarised in the will of Nicholas Andrewe, the parish clerk, in 1477:

In the name of God Amen in the year of His birth 1477 16 Kalends October [the Roman Calendar]. I Nicholas Andrewe of St Albans in the county of Hertford of sound mind and body and in prosperity, contemplating the misery and brevity of this life because of peril and old age, have noted from the passing of the days and the cycle of the years that the day of my death draws nigh, the death which no mortal can escape. I have considered that it will be expedient for me to anticipate my death by making my will, lest perhaps, when I seek the time to make such a will death shall overtake me and I shall be unable to find that time. Therefore, as the result of this beneficial forethought, I thus dispose this my will in three parts, to render first to God those things which are God's, then to the earth those possessions that belong to the earth and the third part to be for the petitioners who remain in the world, to be presented by the hands of the poor, so that I may yet compensate for my lack of treasure in heaven. First, therefore, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God who created it, and to His only begotten Son who redeemed it and to the Holy Spirit who gave me life, to the Blessed Mary, to

194 Flood 1993, p.97.
196 Ibid, p.33.
the Blessed Archangel Michael and to the orders of all the angels and other saints and by all of them this worthless spirit is to be maintained and so cherished bear eternal joy. When my life ends, let my body be laid in the ground under the monument that has long been prepared for my burial in the chancel of the parochial chapel of St Andrew ... When this has been done and the soul has left the body, it remains for the rest of the worldly goods to be disposed of. And by these offerings and sacrifices may the soul be delivered from the second death [see Rev. 20:14] to God with prayers and aims. Hence I bequeath 13s 4d to the chaplains and clerks for my exequies and masses on the day of my burial and month's mind that they be celebrated and sung with full service for the dead, the money to be spent and distributed at the discretion of my executors. I also bequeath 6s 8d for bread to be distributed to the poor attending on the same days and on behalf of my soul, the souls of my parents and all the faithful departed saying the Lord's Prayer with the Antiphon of the Angels [the antiphon Salutatio Angelica. This antiphon was sung in procession as the body was carried from the church to the grave]. To the shrine of the protomartyr St Alban in the monastery 12d. To the same monastery for a pittance 3s 4d. To the sacristan of the monastery for breaking the pavement and for my monument aforesaid 6s 8d. To the friars at Hounslow 12d and the Dominican Friars at Dunstable 12d. To the work of the new charnel chapel constructed in St Peter's churchyard 12d. For maintenance of the rood lights in St Andrew's chapel 12d. The residue of my goods I give and bequeath to my wife Alice, my brother Robert Andrewe and Thomas Robyns to dispose of for the salvation of my soul, reserving part of such for Alice and I appoint the said Alice, Robert and Thomas as my executors. In witness whereof I have written my testament in my own hand and signed it with my signature. Witnessed by John Fuller, John Lane and others 197.

What Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire have in common is that although the vast majority of the wills refer to the place of burial and, in some cases as has been shown, are often very clear about the precise location, not one person locates his or her burial place at or near the Easter sepulchre. One might have expected a few references, out of a total of 990 wills in the two counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, had the practice of burial at or near the sepulchre been of high importance or status - but there are no

197 Flood 1993, pp.56-57.
references. And in Buckinghamshire, of the 245 wills examined, there is only one such reference. This further reinforces the point made in Chapter 7 that the relationship between the sacrament houses ('Easter sepulchres') and burial may have been a local rather than a nationwide phenomenon.

This must raise a serious question about Sheingorn's hypothesis that tomb recesses set in the north wall of the chancel might have been constructed as Easter sepulchres:

> It is fairly common to find, in the north wall of the chancel, an arched recess set rather low in the wall and large enough to contain a life-sized effigy. Both because of their size and because they frequently contain effigies, these are often called tomb recesses, but their original function may have been different. Lawrance and Routh suggest that such recesses functioned as biers, providing a suitable place for the body of the deceased during the Requiem Mass, and were later used to house effigies simply because they provided convenient places. Drawing on the analogy of the wooden funerary bier to the framework of the Easter Sepulchre, it would be logical to suggest that such a 'tomb recess' could also have been used as an Easter Sepulchre.\(^\text{198}\)

Leaving aside for the moment the serious question raised by the evidence from wills and the use of tomb recesses, there is one startling contrast between Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, which it is important to mention. It will be recalled that in Bedfordshire wills, Easter sepulchre lights, etc, were recorded in 27% of the wills (there were 186 references out of 687 wills). In Buckinghamshire that figure drops to 4% and in St Albans wills there are only three references to Easter sepulchres out of 303 wills, i.e. approximately 1%.

The St Albans will references to Easter sepulchres are as follows:

William Wyghtman in 1479 expresses a wish that

> ... a candle be kept before the image of St Mary in Abbots Langley church and another candle before the image of St Mary in the nave of the church of St

\(^{198}\) Sheingorn 1987, pp.36-37.
Albans' monastery ... and that the said candle in the church nave shall be kept alight and burning before the Easter Sepulchre in the said chapel

This reference to the location of the Easter sepulchre in William Wyghtman's will is intriguingly elusive. It seems to suggest that the Easter sepulchre was close to the image of St Mary - but as there were at least three images of St Mary in the nave of the Abbey church, the details are insufficiently clear to be precise about the location of the sepulchre. It needs to be noted, as is seen in the following will, that lights for the sepulchre were limited to the Easter season.

Nicholas Burges in 1478/9 requested:

My body to be buried in St Peter's churchyard. For maintenance of the lights around the shrine of St Alban 4d. For maintenance of the Easter candles at the Lord's Sepulchre in St Peter's church next Easter 6d.

If one compares the value of the donation made by Burges to the Easter sepulchre lights (6d) with his other bequests, again it suggests that the Easter sepulchre was not of the highest priority - 20d was left to the church fabric; forgotten tithes were calculated as 12d; Sir John Welles, clerk chaplain of the charnel chapel received 20d; repairs to the charnel chapel, 12p; and for repairing the highway in 'Bonegate', 20d was allocated.

Perhaps, surprisingly, the only sum smaller than the 6d allocated to the Easter sepulchre lights was the 4d given to the light in the Virgin's chapel.

The third reference to Easter sepulchres in St Albans wills comes from the Vicar of St Stephen's, James Fyssher, in 1495:

My body to be buried in the chancel of St Stephen's church. I bequeath 6d each to the thirteen priests present at my funeral service and my requiem mass the following day. Also 6d each to thirteen priests present on the day of my trental ...

To the wardens of the same church one cow so that out of the profits the wardens

199 Flood 1993, pp.52-53.
200 Royal Commission 1982, see pages (unnumbered endpapers) following p.32.
201 Flood 1993, p.45.
can maintain a wax candle weighing five pounds every year for the Easter sepulchre.\footnote{Flood 1993, p.129.}

It is clear from these three references that in St Albans Abbey, at St Peter's and at St Stephen's, Easter sepulchres did exist — and yet no one else in St Albans left money to the Easter sepulchre lights. It is quite remarkable.

When the evidence from Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire is compared with that from Bedfordshire, it suggests that the cult of the Easter sepulchre, if it can be so described, was a highly localised business; very significant in Potton, Bedfordshire, for example, yet of no real significance in St Albans, and equally of little significance in Buckinghamshire. To refer to this phenomenon as a cultural microclimate seems borne out by the evidence - but what caused the differences between the three archdeaconries and what caused the importance of Easter sepulchres in a few Bedfordshire parishes can only be a matter for speculation. Were the differences related, perhaps, to the personal devotions of local clergy? Or were there other, as yet undiscovered, factors involved?

It might be possible to argue that, again, a statistical fluke has played its part in revealing the pattern of provision in wills in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire related to the Easter sepulchre. Or it might be possible to argue that the archdeacons of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire would have been subject to some kind of diocesan pressure (they were, after all, both part of the diocese of Lincoln). In order to answer these hypothetical arguments, five hundred wills from the Archdeaconry of Sudbury\footnote{See Northeast 2001; the 500 wills were registered over the years 1439-1474.}, in the diocese of Norwich and in the county of Suffolk, have been analysed in the following section. As will be shown, the results related to Easter sepulchres are remarkably similar to the results discovered from the wills particularly of St Albans and Buckinghamshire, but there are some fascinating variants in other items.

**Suffolk Wills**

The first major variant in the wills from Suffolk is that, unlike Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, there is not one single reference in all the wills studied to money...
being bequeathed to 'the mother church' (in Bedfordshire at least 75% of wills contained an instruction for money to be given to the mother church of Lincoln; in Buckinghamshire, 57% of the wills similarly left money to their mother church). This would seem to suggest that there were differences in diocesan custom and archdiocesan practice; in the diocese of Lincoln it would seem that leaving money to the mother church of Lincoln was part of a standard format, whereas in the diocese of Norwich – at least, in the archdeaconry of Sudbury, Suffolk, it was not.

However, the formula for all areas, as regards burial, was very similar. The testator gave instructions about where his body should be buried. Richard Kyng, for example, in 1439 asked to be buried

in Wetheringsett churchyard.

John Turnour of Woolpit asked in 1439/40 to be buried

... in the parish churchyard of Woolpit.

Katherine Prentys of Sudbury asked in 1444 to be buried

... in the churchyard of St Gregory, Sudbury.

Occasionally the place between the church and the churchyard is specified; for example, Robert Kent of Stowmarket asked in 1443 to be buried

... in the porch newly built on the north side of the church of St Peter of Stowmarket.

and John Bygge of Mildenhall in 1450 asked to be buried

... in the processional way on the south side of the parish churchyard of the Blessed Mary of Mildenhall.

In the archdeaconry of Sudbury, 66% of testators requested to be buried in the churchyard (the comparable figure in Bedfordshire was 71%, and in Buckinghamshire, 62%). In Suffolk, only 6% left an instruction saying that they wished to be buried in the church; for example, Alice Langham of Snailwell asked in 1448/49 to be buried

... in the sanctuary of the church of the parish within the bounds of which God disposes that I die.\(^{211}\)

Richard Cullyng of Cokynge, hamlet of Eye, left instructions in 1451 that he should be buried

... in the parish church of Eye, next to the font on the north side.\(^{212}\)

In the light of these instructions therefore, which, as can be seen, are sometimes highly specific, it is important to recognise that there is not one reference to burial either at or near the place of the Easter sepulchre. If one adds together the wills related to Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk, the total is 1,735 – and yet in all of those wills, there is only one reference (Buckinghamshire) to burial at or near an Easter sepulchre.

In the Suffolk wills analysed not only are there no references to burial near the Easter sepulchre, there are very few references to the Easter sepulchre at all. In fact, there are only six – that is, 1% of the total. It might be helpful to enumerate them: thus William Jamys of Milden in 1440 ordered that thirteen candles should be provided

... containing 26 lb of wax, burning each year about the sepulchre in Milden church.\(^{213}\)

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209 It can be seen that in Suffolk, 72% in total left instructions about the place of burial; the remainder left no specific instructions.
210 Snailwell is in Cambridgeshire but in the archdeaconry of Sudbury.
212 Ibid, p.185.
Alice Chambyrlayn of Poslingford on 31 March 1439 left 6s 8d to the sepulchre light\textsuperscript{214}. This was not her largest bequest; she left the sum of ten shillings

\[
... \text{for a trental of St Gregory to be celebrated in Poslingford church \ldots (and) for a new antiphoner 13s 4d}^\text{15}\text{.}
\]

Thomas Seman of Thelnetham on 28 October 1442 asked that

\[
... \text{a coomb of barley}
\]

should be provided for the sepulchre lights\textsuperscript{216}. John Frost of Wickhambrook, in 1442, ordered thus:

\[
... \text{to the sepulchre light the pence from my brethren of the gild [sic] of the Holy Trinity in Wickhambrook}^\text{217}\text{.}
\]

Anne Catour of Ixworth, on 9 September 1446, gave to the sepulchre twelvepence (12d)\textsuperscript{218}. To the parish church of Ixworth she also bequeathed two torches of 24lb wax and 4lb resin, and for a new book, 3s 4d. For a trental to be celebrated in the house of the friars of Babwell, she left ten shillings (note that this is of the same value, 10s, as a cauldron she left to her servant, Isabel). It would appear that even when the sepulchre was mentioned in a will, it was not accorded high monetary value – and therefore it may be assumed that the sepulchre was not considered of outstanding importance. It was rated in Anne Catour's will as only having the value of one twelfth of a cauldron, or one tenth that of a trental.

Robert Schucford of Thelnetham on 20 March 1451-2 left forty pence (40d) to the sepulchre light\textsuperscript{219}.

\textsuperscript{214} Northeast 2001, p.44.

\textsuperscript{215} Ibid, p.44.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid, p.79. A coomb of barley consisted of 4 bushels.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid, p.112.

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid, p.120.

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid, p. 194.
It is not possible in a sample of only six references to draw any firm conclusions, though it is interesting that the sepulchre of Thelnetham is mentioned twice.

Whilst the Easter sepulchre statistics for the archdeaconry of Sudbury mirror very closely those of the archdeaconries of St Albans (1%) and Buckingham (4%), there are other aspects of church life revealed by the Suffolk wills which show a distinctive variation. In Suffolk, for example, there are eleven references to a bequest concerning a pilgrimage. For example, Richard Aniys of Wetheringsett on 31 August 1445 left instructions that John Wodeward should be given forty pence (40d)

...for his labour in going to St James of Galicia in Spain\(^{220}\).

Richard Suttone of Oxburgh left instructions for a pilgrim to go in his stead to St Mary of Walsingham, St Edith of Acle [Eagle] in Lincolnshire, St John of Brydlyngton [Bridlington], and St John of Beverlaco [Beverley]\(^{221}\). Richard Chapman of Rickinghall Inferior, on 24 May 1448, left instructions that

\[
A \text{ discrete and suitable chaplain ...} \text{ should go to Rome} \text{ to pray and celebrate divine service for my soul, and for the souls of my parents and all my benefactors for whom I am bound}^{222}.
\]

Not only were such pilgrimages a particular feature of Suffolk wills, compared with those in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire (though it needs to be noted that such requests occur in only 2% of the Suffolk wills analysed), the amount of money left to friars was again distinctive. 33% of Suffolk wills refer to friars – and frequently in a series; for example, John Schawe of Botesdale in Redgrave in 1442 left 6s 8d to the friars of Babwell, 5s to the Friars Preachers of Thetford and 5s to the Austin friars of Thetford\(^{223}\).

\(^{220}\) Northeast 2001, p.129.

\(^{221}\) Ibid, p.188.

\(^{222}\) Ibid, p.150.

\(^{223}\) Ibid, p.93.
It needs to be recognised that there are, therefore, real differences between Suffolk and, say, Bedfordshire; for example, in the latter, 54% of wills refer to image lights, whereas in Suffolk only 5% do so. Nevertheless, when it comes to references to Easter sepulchres, the situation in Suffolk is very little different from Hertfordshire or Buckinghamshire. It is, perhaps surprisingly, Bedfordshire which is the odd one out – as has already been stated, in Bedfordshire 27% of wills make reference to the Easter sepulchre, and Bedfordshire also had the highest number of requests for a Mass to be said post mortem (in Bedfordshire 51% made such a request, whereas in Suffolk only 31% did so). And yet, in terms of supposition by later historians about the ubiquity of permanent Easter sepulchres, Bedfordshire does not feature in any significant way, whereas places such as Blythburgh, in Suffolk, are mentioned frequently.

The cause of such variation will be outlined and explored in the chapters which follow, but - for the moment - it may be helpful to summarise this study of fifteenth-century wills in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk as follows.

Summary

The subject of this study consists of 1737 wills (Bedfordshire 687, Buckinghamshire 247, St Albans 303, Suffolk 500). There are references to Easter sepulchres in 27% of Bedfordshire wills, in 4% of Buckinghamshire wills, in 1% of St Albans wills and in 1% of Suffolk wills. It needs to be remembered that the Bedfordshire figure revealed micro-climatic 'hot spots' related to Easter sepulchres within a small number of parishes. There are no references to burials at or near the sepulchre in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire or Suffolk, and only one reference in Buckinghamshire.

In brief, whilst the archdeaconry of Bedford appears to have had a greater attachment to the Easter sepulchre than the other archdeaconries, the overall picture is one in which the Easter sepulchre does not seem to have been accorded either great status or great importance. It is possible that the discrepancy between Bedfordshire and Suffolk, for example, may be accounted for by the period of time over which the wills were created. In Suffolk, the sample used in this thesis covers the period 1434-1454, and from the year 1454 onwards to 1461 there is a slight increase in the number of references (9) to the number of references during 1434-1454 (6); the Bedfordshire wills are for the period 1484-1533 – and this might indicate that the latter years of the fifteenth century began to show an upturn in interest. However, the St Albans wills...
architectural features which can be described unequivocally as Easter sepulchres are so elusive. And if the statistics and conclusions drawn from the Edwardian inventories of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and the City of London are also included in this summary, this may add further weight to the argument that Easter sepulchres having a permanent and entirely unambiguous character are really very rare indeed.

If this is the case then the Heales/Sheingorn hypothesis, which can be characterised as saying that 'permanent Easter sepulchres are everywhere but unrecognised' is open to serious question.

(1471-1500) mirror so exactly the Suffolk figures for 1434-1454 that the slight upturn in Suffolk in the 1450s and 60s may be due to a statistical aberration, rather than being significant of a trend.
In the previous chapters of this thesis it has been shown that permanent Easter sepulchres were, and are, very rare indeed. Yet historians, such as Sheingorn and Duffy, and architectural historians, such as Pevsner, claim that there were large numbers of permanent Easter sepulchres in English churches. Given the contrast between the ubiquity of Easter sepulchres in the literature and their very scanty existence in reality, what might have been the influences upon these historians which led them to their assertions about the prevalence of permanent Easter sepulchres? Where did the concept of permanent Easter sepulchres actually originate?

In this chapter the origin of the concept will be traced and the ways in which the concept has entered scholarly thinking will be outlined. It is to the antiquarians of the eighteenth century that we turn first.

Eighteenth-century antiquarians and their successors
In 1724, Samuel Knight (1677-1746), a prebendary of Ely Cathedral, published a biography of Dr John Colet, Dean of St Paul's and founder of St Paul's School. He began that biography by outlining the life of Sir Henry Colet, father of John Colet. He wrote that Sir Henry died

... of a considerable Age, and was buried at 'Stepney'\(^1\)

Knight explained that the monument erected to Sir Henry showed him to have been the third son of Robert Colet, twice Lord Mayor of London and a member of the Mercers' Company, and that the monument to Sir Henry had been 'refreshed'\(^2\) by the Mercers' Company in 1605 and had been further restored in 1697. The significance of the monument, according to Samuel Knight, was that it had been placed in Stepney at the specific instruction of Sir Henry. The latter had said that if he should happen to die within the boundaries of the City of London, then he should be buried in St Paul's, but that if he died in Stepney, he should be buried in the parish church.

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\(^1\) Knight 1724, p.7.

\(^2\) Ibid, p.7.
... at Sepulchre before Seynt Dunston in the same Church."  

It seems reasonable to assume that Sir Henry Colet's instructions refer to the place of the Easter sepulchre which Samuel Knight states was on

...the North Side.  

Certainly, that is how the statement has been interpreted by later antiquarians, for example, Francis Blomefield (of whom more anon). However, it needs to be noted that there is evidence of the word *sepulchre* being used in a different way by at least one eighteenth-century antiquarian. The Revd Sir John Cullum, in his work on Suffolk in 1784, wrote about the parish of Hawsted thus:

*In 1480 John Maryell, junior, of Hausted [sic], bequeathed his soul to God Almighty, and to our Lady Saint Mary, and to all the holy company in heaven, and his body to be buried in the holy sepulchre, that is in the cherch [sic] yerd [sic] of Hausted."

Cullum uses exactly the same phrase concerning the holy sepulchre in another reference:

*Robert Parker of Hawsted, in 1492, bequeathed his soul to Almighty God, &c. and his body to be buried in the holy sepulture [sic]."

It is clear that Cullum knew of the work of Francis Blomefield but whether he meant by the 'holy sepulchre' the object which Blomefield calls the *Sepulchrum Domini* seems unlikely. It may be that Cullum was really referring to burial in the churchyard which, having been consecrated, as all churchyards were, thereby became the 'holy sepulchre', or it may refer to a particular grave space. Perhaps all that can be said, with any degree of

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1 Knight 1724, p.462. For details of late medieval burials near images of saints, see Marks 2004, pp.173-176.  
2 Ibid, p.7.  
3 Cullum 1784, p.16.  
5 Ibid, p.21.  
6 Of these guilds Mr. Blomefield ... in his History of Norfolk, has preserved many records.
certainty, is that it is not safe to think that any use of the word sepulchre in the eighteenth century can be assumed to be a reference to the Easter sepulchre; it may just mean a tomb.

Francis Blomefield (1705-1752) has already been mentioned; and it is to his massive work on the history of Norfolk that it is now necessary to turn, because it is in that work that can be found the primary source of many later antiquarian comments on Easter sepulchres. In his description of the parish of Northwold, Blomefield writes this:

Against the East-End of the North Wall of the Chancel, is a large and lofty Pile of Clunch or Chalk-Stone, the upper Part is of curious wrought Spire-Work, with arch'd Canopies, adorned with many Nitches [sic], and in them little Pedestals for Images, on the Body or lower Part, are the Effigies of three Men in Armour, and three Trees, a Tree between each Man, all in a declining falling Posture; this is as I conceive, what was before the Reformation called, 'The Sepulchre of our Lord', the Posture of the Men, alluding to what the Scripture observes of the Guard or Keepers of the Sepulchre ... These Sepulchres were erected always (as I take it) on the North-Side of the Chancel near to the Altar.

Blomefield cites as his evidence for this assertion, the will of Sir Henry Colet (obviously he had read Samuel Knight's biography) and the will (dated 1 September 1531) of Thomas Fiennes, Lord Dacre of Hurstmonceux. He argues that in addition to Northwold, there might be an example of an Easter sepulchre in the parish church of Wilton, Norfolk:

8 Blomefield 1739-69 (although vol 3 was completed by Charles Parkin, who also compiled vols 4 and 5 which were published in 1775 - see Parkin 1775). Francis Blomefield was born on 23 July 1705 at Fersfield, Norfolk. He came from: ... a family of yeomen farmers and was the first member to receive a university education. [Stoker 2004, p.249]. In the process of creating his great work, he ... exhausted his health and bankrupted his family. [Ibid, p.251].

9 Blomefield 1739, p.517.

10 Blomefield's source for this was Dugdale’s Baronage. There is also a typographical error in Blomefield’s account because he describes Hurstmonceux as being in Essex rather than Sussex [see Ibid, p.518]. For details of Lord Dacre’s will, see Chapter 8, p.200.
On the North Side is a curious work'd Arch in the Wall, and below an old Gravestone without any Arms or Inscription, probably this might be for the Sepulchre of our Lord\textsuperscript{11}.

Charles Parkin, who continued Blomefield's work, also made reference to a Sepulchrum Domini in his description of the parish of Fincham St Michael:

\textit{Against the said wall, east from this, is an enarched monument ... a raised tomb about 2 feet from the ground; on each side of this arch on the summit, is a nitch [sic] carved for some statue; there is no inscription or arms about it, and probably it was the 'Sepulchrum Domini', or the sepulchre of our Lord}\textsuperscript{12}.

In a genealogical foray, Parkin makes another reference to an Easter sepulchre. He quotes from the will of Eleanore Townsend of Rainham, concerning her wishes to have on her tomb an Easter sepulchre\textsuperscript{13}.

Whilst Blomefield and Parkin drew attention to those churches which they considered might have permanent Easter sepulchres (Fincham St Michael, Northwold, Raineham, Wilton), Blomefield himself was also conscious of other forms that the Easter sepulchre might take. For example, of Bunwell he writes that John Bulcke gave

\textit{... 35s to adorn our 'Lady's' Tabernacle and the Herse of the 'Sepulchre' of our Lord in the Church}\textsuperscript{14}.

And of William Martyn of Norwich, a 'Notary Publick', he explains that a legacy was left towards the rebuilding of the church and

\textit{... a Sum of Money to make the Sepulchre of our Lord}\textsuperscript{15}.

John Baly, also of Norwich, gave instructions for a taper

\textsuperscript{11} Blomefield 1739, p.487.
\textsuperscript{12} Parkin 1775 (a), p.108.
\textsuperscript{13} Blomefield 1769, p.816. See Chapter 8, pp.197-199.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p.88.
\textsuperscript{15} Blomefield 1745, p.614.
... to burn about the 'Heres' in the Church, and at 'Easter' about the Sepulchre\textsuperscript{16}.

A prioress in Norwich bequeathed four cushions, a cross cloth, an altar cloth and

... a Frontlet for the Sepulchre\textsuperscript{17}.

There are a number of references in Blomefield to money being left for lights to burn at the sepulchre, for example at Swaffham\textsuperscript{18}, Rushworth\textsuperscript{19} and Norwich\textsuperscript{20}. He also argues for the ubiquity of Easter sepulchres and the liturgies which accompanied them:

\begin{quote}
The 'Prior' was obliged to pay 10s. a Year, to find a Wax Taper burning at our Lord's 'Sepulchre', one of which, was in those Days in every Church, generally in the N. Wall of the Chancel: Great Pomp and Pageantry was used at the Sepulchre at 'Easter', on which Day, the 'Crucifix' and the 'Pix' were taken out of this Place, where they were in a solemn Manner deposited on 'Good-friday', by the Priest, on the saying 'Surrexit, non est hic; He is risen, he is not here'\textsuperscript{21}.
\end{quote}

It can be seen, then, that Blomefield has pulled together a number of elements in his references to Easter sepulchres: a permanent physical structure with clear iconographic details (Northwold); from his understanding of fifteenth-century wills (Lord Dacre at Hurstmonceux, Sir Henry Colet at Stepney), he has begun to speculate that other architectural features in chancels (Wilton) might also be Easter sepulchres; he has provided evidence for temporary constructions (the heres at Bunwell and Norwich, the frontlet bequeathed by the Norwich prioress), and has alluded to sepulchre lights and the Easter liturgy. It is a substantial body of evidence. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that antiquarian writers succeeding him should make much use of his work.

\textsuperscript{16} Blomefield 1745, p.572.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p.597.
\textsuperscript{18} Blomefield 1769, p.510.
\textsuperscript{19} Blomefield 1739, p.197.
\textsuperscript{20} Blomefield 1745, p.602.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, p.516.
Only six years after publication of Blomefield's first volume, William Stukeley (1687-1765) dedicated his major study to Lord Hardwicke, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, whose residence was Wimpole Hall on the borders of Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. The first two volumes of Stukeley's work were rather touchingly subtitled *Origines Roystonianae* and the first volume describes in some detail a supposed oratory at Royston, Hertfordshire, only a few miles from Wimpole Hall. Stukeley refers to a 'cavity' on the left side of the altar and argues that it is an example of

... another Piece of Furniture, in Churches, in Old Times; and that is the Sepulchre of our Lord.

He asserts that

... the Remains of such Sepulchres may be observed by any curious Person in several old Churches even at this Day.

(He does not say where these churches are to be found). He explains that such sepulchres were

... in Similitude of our Saviour's Tomb in the Rock

and that they were always erected near the high altar, generally on the north-east side. He, like Blomefield before him, provides evidence for his assertion from the wills of Sir Henry Colet and Lord Dacre. It would appear that Stukeley relied very heavily on Blomefield's researches because he quotes Blomefield almost verbatim and without acknowledgement. For example, Blomefield had written:

*John Wethamsted, Abbot of St. Albans, appointed 12 Wax Lights to burn about the Sepulchre of our Lord, and gave Money to support them for ever, and great Pomp and Pageantry was used here on High-Festivals, on the Day of the Resurrection, or Easter-Day, the Crucifix and the Pix were taken out of this*

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22 See Stukeley 1743.
23 Ibid, p.58.
24 Ibid, p.58.
271
and Stukeley used very similar phrases.27

A later, anonymous author, writing in Norwich in 1768, also drew heavily on Blomefield because in his work he uses the identical alliterative phrase 'pomp and pageantry' in his description of the Easter sepulchre:

A wax taper was constantly kept burning at our Lord's sepulchre, a representation of which, in popish times, was placed in every church, generally in the north wall of the chancel: great pomp and pageantry were displayed at this sepulchre on Easter day, when the crucifix and pix, which had been solemnly deposited here on Good Friday, were taken from hence, at repeating those words of the service, used on the occasion, surrexit, non est hic; He is risen. He is not here.29

M. J. Armstrong, in 1781, published (originally anonymously) a ten-volume work on the history and antiquities of Norfolk. He, too, seems to have drawn on the anonymous Norwich work of 1768 - because, again, the phrase 'pomp and pageantry' crops up:

... Lord's sepulchre, a representation of which, in popish times, was placed in every church, generally in the north wall of the chancel. Great pomp and pageantry were displayed at this sepulchre on Easter-day when the crucifix and pix, which had been solemnly deposited here on Good Friday, were taken from

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26 Blomefield 1745, p.398.
27 Stukeley says:

... John Wethamstede, Abbot of St. Albans, appointed 12 Wax Lights to burn about the Sepulchre of our Lord ... Great Pomp and Pageantry ... were used in all Churches at this Sepulchre on Easter-Day when the Crucifix was taken out of this Sepulchre (in which it was deposited in a solemn manner on Good-Friday) by the Priest, on the saying of this part of the Office of the Day - 'Surrexit, non est hic'. [Stukeley 1743, p.59].

28 See Norwich 1768.
30 See Armstrong 1781.
hence, at repeating those words of the service used on the occasion; 'Surrexit, non est hic; He is risen, He is not here'.

Armstrong also drew directly on Blomefield (he lifts exactly Blomefield's phrases about the Easter sepulchres at Northwold and Fincham St Michael), but he does not follow Blomefield in his account of Wilton.

The towering scholarship of Francis Blomefield, then, obviously began to influence his successors in Norfolk and, it would seem, at least one other antiquarian, William Stukeley, beyond the boundaries of the county. It was Blomefield who also had a major influence upon the antiquarian, Richard Gough (1735-1809). In *Vetusta Monumenta* Gough quotes Blomefield extensively. For example:

*Mr Blomefield's description of the sepulchre at Northwold may serve as groundwork for that at Heckington, which I shall give from actual view and measurement.*

In his other major publication of 1796 he also cites Blomefield and waxes lyrical about Heckington:

*In the North wall of this church is the finest Holy Sepulchre I ever saw. It is 22 feet long by 2 feet in the clear charged with figures of Christ Rising between two angels.*

In the same text he describes Northwold as being

*... of inferior designs and worse preservation.*

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34 See Gough 1796.
35 Gough 1796, p.305.
36 Ibid, p.305.
But it is in the *Vetusta Monumenta* that his indebtedness to Blomefield's work is most obvious; he depends upon him for enumerating the Easter sepulchres at Hurstmonceux, Stepney, Fincham St Michael and Wilton, Norfolk, and adds to that list by referring to Easter sepulchres at Gosberton and Heckington ('stately and sumptuous')\(^1\). In relation to Fincham St Michael, Gough notes that opposite the Easter sepulchre is the sedilia upon which are the arms of Bishop Spencer of Norwich; Earl Warren Fitz Alan, Earl of Arundel; Lord Fitzwalter and Lord Scales:

*These Lords held lands in capite in this town, except Lord Scales, and he had a lordship in the adjoining town of Barton, which extended here*\(^2\).

It is clear that Gough became fascinated by Easter sepulchres because he develops and builds on Blomefield's work. He quotes continental specimens, for example La Pre abbey, Issoudun, where he notes that there is

*... a representation of the sepulchre of Christ with the body laid on a tomb, a beautiful figure*\(^3\).

And at Bourges (?):

*Near the altar at Bowges [sic], a tomb of our Lord, the figures inestimable*\(^4\).

Clearly he has been researching the subject, for he quotes Weever as saying:

*... the Knights Templar had a representation of Christ's Sepulchre in their chapel in Holborne [sic] with verses, brought from Jerusalem*\(^5\).

And he extends his understanding of the sepulchres by citing in detail the liturgies of Rouen, and of Malaga, and the *Rites of Durham*\(^6\). He also cites Du Fresne's\(^7\) *Glossary*

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\(^1\) *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol 3, 1796, plate 32, p.2.


\(^3\) Ibid, vol 3, 1796, plates 31 and 32, p.2.

\(^4\) Ibid, vol 3, 1796, plates 31 and 32, p.3.

\(^5\) Ibid, vol 3, 1796, plates 31 and 32, p.3.

\(^6\) Ibid, vol 3, 1796, plates 31 and 32, pp.3-4.
An old charter in the 'Monumenta Paderbornia', p.104, according to Gough has these words:

_Hae autem parochiae omnia jura parochialia habebunt nisi quod crucem diebus dominicis et in solemnitatibus non ferent ... in Parasceve Sepulturam Crucifixi non facient ..._

More locally his research also encompassed the Minutes of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society of 1747 which referred to Holcombe Burnell and Polwhele's 'Devon II 82' (that is, part 2, p.82). His researches are thorough and painstaking, but although he quotes liturgical sources, the emphasis placed by him upon Easter sepulchres relates more to their antiquarian interest than to their theological significance. Between them, Blomefield and Gough provided a remarkably detailed account of Easter sepulchres — but there is no evidence to show that either of them treated Easter sepulchres in an ideological way, unlike their Victorian successors, Pugin and the Camden Society. Nor is there much evidence which links their own interest in Easter sepulchres with the work of antiquarians in other shire counties, with the exception of T.D. Whitaker.

In nearby Cambridgeshire, for example, neither the work of Blomefield, nor Gough, would appear to have had much influence. The survey of that county carried out by Daniel and Samuel Lysons in the early years of the nineteenth century and published in 1808, mentions fonts and piscinas, and provides examples of outstanding ecclesiastical architecture, but makes no mention at all of Easter sepulchres. And in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, as will be seen in the next section, the work of Blomefield and Gough, in spite of their major and formative research concerning Easter sepulchres, would appear to have had very little impact at all.

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41 Charles du Fresne, Seigneur du Cange, b. 18 December 1610, Amiens, France, d. 23 October 1688, Paris.
42 *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol 3, 1796, plates 31 and 32, p.5.
45 See later in this thesis, Chapter 11, pp.317-318.
46 Lysons 1808.
Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire was well served in the eighteenth century by two antiquarians: Henry Chauncy (1632-1719) and Nathaniel Salmon (1679-1742). Chauncy’s two-volume work, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, was published in 1700 and provided the basis for Salmon’s later work of 1728.

Chauncy was much concerned with genealogical pedigrees but the churches of the county came relatively low in his list of priorities, except for their memorials and inscriptions. He, himself, lived at Ardeley in Hertfordshire, and he writes with great affection about it. There are pages devoted to the Chauncy pedigree, followed by a description of the church itself:

*The Church is situated upon an Hill, in a fair Church-yard, containing about four Acres, in the Deanery of Baldock, in the Diocese of Lincoln, hath a fair Isle on either side the Body thereof, the Roof is cover’d with Lead, and at the West End of the Church a square Tower is erected (where is a small Ring of six musical Bells) with a Shaft or Spire about thirty Foot high, leaded over.*

He gives attention to a monument in the floor of the chancel:

*In the East End of the Chancel on the North Side near the Altar, lyes a Stone with this Inscription; and over it, the Figure of a Priest in his Habit, engrav’d on Brass inlaid thereon.*


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49 Chauncy lived under the reigns of seven 'monarchies': Charles I, the Protectorate, Charles II, James II, William & Mary, Anne and George I.

50 First published in 1700. A facsimile reprint of the 2nd edition of 1826 was issued in 1975 with an introduction by Carole Oman (see Chauncy 1975).

51 Salmon 1728.

52 Chauncy 1826, vol 1, esp. pp.111-126.

53 Ibid, vol 1, p.128.

54 Ibid, vol 1, p.129.
It is surely of some significance that Chauncy does not refer to the tomb recess, on the north side of the chancel, as an Easter sepulchre - which, presumably, had it been used in this capacity, might have remained within the folk memory of the Chauney family. (Chauncy, himself, was born only eighty-three years after the introduction of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.)

Chauney’s travels around Hertfordshire encompassed all of the churches listed in this thesis which some later historians described as containing Easter sepulchres; for example, of Aldbury, he wrote:

... the Church is situated about the Middle of the Vill, cover’d with Lead, hath a large old fashion’d Stone Font therein.

And of Bushey, he wrote:

This Church is erected in the Middle of this Vill, in the Deanery of St. Albans in the Diocess of London, is cover’d with Tile, and at the West End thereof is a square Tower wherein are three tunable Bells.

In none of the churches about which he wrote does he refer to Easter sepulchres. It is as though they simply did not exist or, perhaps, he failed to recognise them for what later ecclesiologists believed them to be.

His successor, Nathanael Salmon (1679-1742), can be described as equally unobservant or equally ignorant, since he too fails to refer to Easter sepulchres in any of the Hertfordshire churches that he visited. It is possible, of course, that the parameters that he set himself in his work, coupled with his desire to prove his own thesis, meant that he failed to see what later historians would claim to see. His opening, breathless remarks indicate the scope and style of his enterprise:

If the Study of Antiquities needs an Apology, its Support to the most useful Parts of Learning may recommend it, tho’ the innocent and manly Amusement be not

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55 Chauncy 1826, vol.2, p.554. Note: Chauncy spells Aldbury, which was in the hundred of Dacorum, Albury - which is the same spelling as the Albury which lay within the hundred of Edwinstree.

reckoned. The farther we go back into Greece and Rome, the plainer Testimonies do we find of the Truth of Moses's History. There wants indeed no other Evidence than the Completion of the Prophecies it contains. Yet it must be a corroborating Satisfaction to view the Religion, the Morality, the History of the Church of the First-born, as well as that of the Jews, in great Measure subsisting in Pagan Times; which, tho' mangled and metamorphos'd, retained strong Lines and Features of their antient Form.

Carola Oman, in her introduction to the facsimile of the 1826 reprint of Chauney's history of Hertfordshire, says of Salmon:

His trouble was that he was essentially undisciplined. He charged into and out of the Church and medicine and literature. His single folio volume had no index ... he relied much upon Chauncey as anyone following him must.

Salmon may not have had Chauney's style or patience but he did, in fact, refer to features in parish churches which Chauney did not; for example, of Bygrave, Chauney had written:

In this Church I saw no Gravestone or remarkable Inscription

whereas Salmon spotted a tomb niche in the chancel, on the north side:

In the Chancel is a Nich [sic] probably for the Founder's Monument, now lost.

He also spotted the tomb recess on the north side of the chancel at St Andrew's, Much Hadham:

Here is a Nich in the North Wall as if it had been for a Monument.

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57 Salmon 1728, p.1 of the dedication at front of the book.
60 Chauney 1826, vol.1, p.94.
61 Salmon 1728, p.336.
62 Ibid, p.278.
He did not categorise it as an Easter sepulchre.

Thus, in the eighteenth century, neither Henry Chauncy nor Nathanael Salmon refer to any features in the churches of Hertfordshire as Easter sepulchres; Salmon does offer other descriptions: 'founder's tomb', or a 'place for a monument'.

The lack of references to Easter sepulchres also characterises the work of Robert Clutterbuck in the early nineteenth century. He sometimes waxes lyrical about the locations of churches; for example, of Aldbury, he writes:

This Village is romantically situated about two miles North East of Tring, at the foot of the Chiltern hills; the sides of these hills ... are clothed with a fine turf, and their summits crowned with waving woods.

He does not mention the recess on the north side of the chancel when describing Aldbury church.

He notes details of memorials in his Hertfordshire history and draws attention to significant interior features of some churches. Thus, for example, he writes of Redbourn:

In the South wall of the Chancel are two recesses with trefoil arches, one of them filled up with masonry, the other now serving as a seat, but which have probably served as piscina's [sic].

He fails to mention the 'Easter sepulchre' on the north wall of the chancel. Did he fail to see it? - or was it at that stage covered and only later exposed when the church was repaired by Thomas Savell, between 1848 and 1850? (See Fig. 35, inserted after page 121 in Chapter 5).

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63 See Clutterbuck 1815-1827.
64 Clutterbuck 1815, p.279.
In brief, therefore, in the works of Chauncy and Salmon in the eighteenth century and in
the writings of Clutterbuck in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, there are no
references at all to objects in Hertfordshire churches which were later described as Easter
sepulchres - and this, in Clutterbuck's case, notwithstanding the work of Blomefield in
his mid-eighteenth-century work on Norfolk.

The first use of the term 'Easter sepulchre' amongst Hertfordshire historians seems to
have been by Cussans\(^6^6\), writing between 1870 and 1881. He refers to Easter sepulchres
in six churches, namely Aldbury, Ardeley, Bushey, Redbourn, Sandon and Sarratt\(^6^7\). It
should be noted that whilst Cussans is the first Hertfordshire antiquarian to define a
number of permanent architectural features as Easter sepulchres, the tone of his
comments is quite hesitant. In the case of Sarratt, for example, he draws attention to the
Edwardian inventory which included

\[\ldots \text{a Clothe for the Sepulcre of yallow silke popingey}^{6^8}\].

He cites Peacock's *English Church Furniture*, published in London in 1866, in a footnote
for his claim that Sandon might possess an Easter sepulchre, namely:

> Before the changes of ritual in the sixteenth century almost every village church
possessed an Easter Sepulchre. These sepulchres were sometimes moveable
closets of wood ... The usual form, as in this instance, was that of a small arched
recess, carved in the north wall of the chancel\(^6^9\).

There was a gap of a little over twenty years in the sequence, following Cussans' major
Hertfordshire history, and then F. T. Davys, in a paper given in 1895 to the St Albans

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\(^6^6\) See Cussans 1870 - 1881.

\(^6^7\) For his comments on Aldbury and Ardeley, see pages 150 and following in Chapter 6 of this
thesis; for his comments on Redbourn, Sandon and Sarratt, see pages 121 and following in
Chapter 5. Of Bushey, he wrote:

> On the north wall, beneath a large aumbry (perhaps an Easter sepulchre)

[Cussans 1879, p.227].

\(^6^8\) Cussans, 1873 (b), p.24.

\(^6^9\) Cussans 1873 (a), p.156, footnote.
and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, also made reference to an Easter sepulchre at Sarratt 70.

In the next few years there was a flurry of Easter sepulchre sightings. In 1902 J. E. Morris wrote a paper on Hunsdon church for the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society 71 in which he cited W. B. Gerish, the assiduous secretary of the society:

Mr Gerish says the recess in the north wall [of the chancel] is probably an Easter sepulchre, and the inscription is of a later date than the tomb itself. This, however, is open to controversy. It consists of a single Tudor arched recess, the arch splayed and panelled, with Perpendicular tracery, surmounted by three shields bearing coats of arms. The tablet records in Latin that 'Francis Poyntz, Knight, lies here. He was distinguished by letters, by friends, by favour of his King, and by piety'. The date is 1528 ... Sir Francis Poyntz was Henry VIII's Ambassador to Germany 72.

It was also in 1902 that W. B. Gerish and A. Whitford Anderson wrote a paper entitled Knebworth Church 73 for the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society. Mr Gerish would appear to be at one and the same time both cautious and confident in his claims about this particular case:

In the north wall [of the chancel] is a low arched recess with mouldings of Perpendicular type. If a founder or benefactor's tomb, it is singularly small; in any case, it served as a suitable recess for the Easter sepulchre 74.

1902 was also the year that A. P. Sanderson, Rector of Aspenden from 1851-1905, gave an account of his church to the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society 75. It may have

70 See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.124.
71 See Morris 1903.
73 See Anderson 1903.
74 Ibid, p.74.
75 See Sanderson 1903, p.62:

In the north wall of the sanctuary there is an altar-tomb, or Easter sepulchre, the date of which is probably (about) 1400, or somewhat later. [Footnote continued on next page]
been Sanderson's confidence which encouraged R. S. Gregory, in 1903, to be equally confident about Easter sepulchres in a paper he also gave to the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society concerning Much Hadham church\(^76\).

Then, two years later, in 1905, F. W. Low read a paper about Sandon church to the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society, in which he strongly suggested that a recess near the chancel was an Easter sepulchre\(^77\).

In 1914 the fourth volume of the *Victoria History for the County of Hertford* (VCH for Hertfordshire) was published and it, too, referred to an Easter sepulchre at Aspenden, though it did so in cautious terms\(^78\). It had been equally cautious in 1914 about the recess at Furneux Pelham\(^79\). It hedged its bets in relation to Much Hadham\(^80\) but suggested that Sarratt probably had an Easter sepulchre\(^81\). It put forward, in support of this suggestion, the fact that in the will of John Rowe of Sarratt in 1502, mention was made of the sepulchre light\(^82\).

The next major publication in this Hertfordshire sequence was the *Inventory of the Historic Monuments in Hertfordshire*, published by the Royal Commission in 1910, in

\(^76\) See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.152.

\(^77\) See Gregory 1904, p.137:

> Perhaps the most noticeable monument is an Easter sepulchre cut into the chancel wall on the north side. It is about 4 feet high; there is no tomb or figure under it, but a simple arch, with floriated work at its head.

\(^78\) See Page 1914, p.23:

> Under the 13th-century lancet [window] is a wide-arched recess, which may have been used as an Easter sepulchre.

\(^79\) See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.153.

\(^80\) See Ibid, Chapter 5, p.120.

\(^81\) See Ibid, Chapter 6, p.157.

\(^82\) See Ibid, Chapter 5, p.125.
which attention was drawn to a tomb recess at Ardeley and it was argued that the recess might have been used as an Easter sepulchre.\textsuperscript{83}

The VCH for Hertfordshire had also noted this same recess but did not describe it as an Easter sepulchre.\textsuperscript{84}

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (RCHM) was much more confident about the recess at Furneux Pulham. The VCH had described this recess as being 'possibly' an Easter sepulchre, whereas the Royal Commission stated categorically that it was an Easter sepulchre.\textsuperscript{85}

However, it shared the uncertainty of the VCH for Hertfordshire about the recess at Much Hadham.\textsuperscript{86} It also drew attention to the recess at Sandon, about which it expressed a degree of conviction:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Easter Sepulchre: in N. wall of chancel, low arched recess with enriched edge mouldings and a double label, the lower forming a series of crocketted finials and the upper a moulded framework, late 14th-century.}\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

And Sarratt also featured in the Royal Commission's Inventory for Hertfordshire as possibly having an Easter sepulchre.\textsuperscript{88}

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{83} See Royal Commission 1910, p.36. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.152.
\textsuperscript{84} See Page 1912, p.198.
\textsuperscript{85} See Royal Commission 1910, p.91:
\textit{Easter Sepulchre: in N. wall of chancel, recess with modern arch.}
See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.120.
\textsuperscript{86} See Royal Commission 1910, p.153:
\textit{In north wall of chancel, tomb recess, possibly also used as an Easter sepulchre, fifteenth century.}
See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.157.
\textsuperscript{87} Royal Commission 1910, p.198.
\textsuperscript{88} See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.125.
\end{flushleft}
In 1953, just over forty years later, the first edition of Pevsner's study of Hertfordshire buildings made no references to Easter sepulchres at Aldbury (nor did the revised edition in 1977), although Cussans had claimed in 1870 that there might be an Easter sepulchre there. And neither does Pevsner refer to the tomb recess at Ardeley as an Easter sepulchre, though Cussans and the RCHM Inventory for Hertfordshire had put forward this suggestion. Aspenden, which featured as a possible Easter sepulchre in the VCH for Hertfordshire, is not accorded that status by Pevsner, nor is the aumbry at Bushey (Cussans had suggested it might be an Easter sepulchre). Furneux Pelham, where both the VCH and RCHM had posited an Easter sepulchre, is not accorded that description by Pevsner. However, Much Hadham and Redbourn are later both described by Bridget Cherry, in her revised edition of Pevsner's work, as having Easter sepulchres, though at Knebworth, where the recess which was described by W. B. Gerish and A. Whitford Anderson in 1902 as probably being an Easter sepulchre, this is simply not mentioned by Pevsner, nor in the subsequent revision. Pevsner does agree that Sandon has an Easter sepulchre but his work does not refer to the recesses at Sarratt, in either the first edition or its revision, as having that function.

The picture thus revealed by this brief survey of apparent, or claimed, Easter sepulchres in Hertfordshire, is a very confused one. It may be helpful to recap: from 1700 until 1870 Easter sepulchres are not mentioned by any Hertfordshire antiquarians, with the sole exception of Stukeley, in 1743. The first definitions of the nineteenth century are offered by Cussans (in 1870-81); he suggested six possible churches (Aldbury, Ardeley, Bushey, Redbourn, Sandon and Sarratt). His successors, notably the members of the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society, suggest other churches, that Cussans did not classify, as having Easter sepulchres (notably, Aspenden, Hunsdon, Knebworth and Much Hadham); the lists put forward by the VCH and the RCHM vary, one from another; Pevsner omits many of those defined previously - and only Sheingorm, using her 'north-side of the chancel' hypothesis, includes every example in all the lists, plus a few additions (for example, Bygrave, Broxbourne, Digswell, Flamstead and Tring).

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89 See Pevsner 1977.

90 Pevsner 1953, p.230:

_The tiny Easter Sepulchre inside the chancel (only 2 ft long) has a depressed arch and little crocketed ogee gables above it..._
It is possible to draw two conclusions from this survey: either there is an increasingly sophisticated academic awareness of Easter sepulchres over the centuries or, and I suggest this as the more likely, there remains genuine confusion over how many such permanent physical structures ever actually existed. If a range of scholars over a period of approximately one hundred and twenty years (from Cussans in 1870 to Sheingorn in 1987) really cannot agree about whether an object may or may not be defined as a permanent Easter sepulchre, the very elusiveness of that agreement suggests that the concept itself may be highly ambiguous.

A survey of the photographs of the apparent Easter sepulchres in Hertfordshire may also add weight to this argument. Even the most cursory glance indicates that the 'form' of the 'Easter sepulchres' is, at the very least, capable of great variation — from a simple hole in the wall, as at Tring (see Fig. 9), to an ogee-arched floor-level recess at Much Hadham (see Fig. 67). Again, it is possible that the forms of Easter sepulchre vary, not because those forms follow some kind of deterministic and evolutionary development, but because the uses to which the objects were put were entirely various. Is it necessary to invent a one-size-fits-all category (that is, Easter sepulchre) for an obviously disparate set of architectural features?

Furthermore, if it is asked whether there are any iconographical clues related to these objects which can be interpreted as being connected with Good Friday/Easter Day, the answer has to be entirely negative. Quite simply, there are no iconographical features attached to these objects which can be described as bearing Easter characteristics — no sleeping soldiers, no angels seated on the tombstone, no figures of the three Marys.

It seems reasonable to argue that because in Hertfordshire, at least, whilst the antiquarians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries might have wanted permanent Easter sepulchres to exist, in reality permanent Easter sepulchres remain tantalisingly out of reach. It may be that the story in the neighbouring counties of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire will be very similar; it is to Bedfordshire, therefore, that we turn next.
Bedfordshire
Whereas Hertfordshire had four major antiquarian studies made of it in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Chauncy, Salmon, Clutterbuck and Cussans), Bedfordshire had none at all. John Britton and Edward Wedlake Brayley included Bedfordshire in the first volume of their work, The Beauties of England and Wales, but they were largely unconcerned about churches. In their description of Potton, for example, they make no reference at all to the church, and in Poddington the only mention concerning the church is to a memorial of Major General John Livesay, who died on 23rd February, 1717.

Hard on the heels of the publication of the work by Britton and Brayley, came the first volume of Magna Britannia by Daniel and Samuel Lysons. In August 1800, Daniel Lysons came to Bedford and began his task of visiting up to five parishes each day. He and his brother thus began the only general historical account of Bedfordshire written in the nineteenth century. It was not on the same scale as the books written by Chauncy and Salmon for Hertfordshire, but then the brothers were acutely aware of that. Their introduction in the 'Advertisement' pages makes their particular purpose clear:

Although copious and well-executed Histories of several Counties have been published ... yet as [they are] for the most part very scarce, are moreover so bulky, as to form of themselves a library of no inconsiderable extent ... it appeared to us that there was still room for a work which should contain an account of each parish, in a compressed form, and arranged in an order convenient for reference.

Not only was each parish visited, but the brothers also conducted research into what they described as:

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91 See Britton 1801.
92 Lysons 1806.
93 Lysons 1978, p.i.
the Ancient Records and Manuscripts preserved in the British Museum and in various publick offices, particularly from that inexhaustible treasure of antient historical evidences, His Majesty's Records in the Tower of London. Their work, then, was thorough but, as they had intended, it was also 'compressed'. In their visits to parishes, they gave very generalised descriptions, although they did draw attention to particularly interesting examples of fonts, stained glass and 'antient tombs', devoting short introductory paragraphs to each of these subjects. They did not, however, make any reference to permanent Easter sepulchres; indeed, in parishes where later historians were to refer to such objects (for example, in Arlesey and in Barton-le-Cley), Daniel and Samuel Lysons, like their early nineteenth-century counterparts, either did not 'see' them or were ignorant of their 'existence'.

In 1806 George Alexander Cooke wrote his Topographical and Statistical Description of the County of Bedford. In this work, which contains, among other things, the journey times between towns, a number of parish churches were visited. Amongst those was Bletsoe church, where Cooke pointed out the monument to the St John family in the north aisle, but he made no reference to the tomb recesses in the chancel. There were some parishes, Potton and Hockliffe, for instance, where the locality is described but the churches, themselves, were not mentioned. There is no reference within the work to any permanent Easter sepulchre.

In 1812 Thomas Fisher published his collection of drawings and engravings of Bedfordshire. The engravings themselves are detailed and elegant; they include not

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94 Lysons 1978, p.viii. This fulsome praise of the Tower of London records may have been connected with the fact that Samuel Lysons had been appointed Keeper of the Records in 1803.
95 Cooke 1806.
96 See Ibid, p.28.
97 See Fisher 1812. In the 'Advertisement' to this work, which is printed at the front of the book (pages unnumbered), he explained the reasons lying behind his publication:

> Every year witnesses the gradual decay or the total destruction of those monuments of wealth and splendour and those curious remains of art, which, so long as they continue to exist, are the documents both of general and local history ... that the County of Bedford should never have found yet a separate historian, and that so little should hitherto have been thought sufficient to justify the publication of the present work.
only engravings of the exteriors of churches and large country houses, but also of tomb monuments, brasses, church doorways, etc. In his work on Salford, for example, there is an engraving of a tomb chest, supporting a cross-legged knight with a lion (?) at his feet; above him is a depressed ogee arch with a missing finial, situated under a three-light window.

Whilst these engravings encompass tomb recesses, Thomas Fisher does not describe any of them as Easter sepulchres, nor does he draw any other feature and give it that name.

Nine years after the publication of Fisher's work, in 1821, Henry Kaye Bonney⁹⁸ was appointed Archdeacon of Bedford and he remained in that post until 1844 when he was appointed Archdeacon of Lincoln. He was assiduous in making architectural notes on every church that he visited and, in a second notebook, he recorded the instructions he gave during his archidiaconal visitations. He sometimes made sketches of monuments and heraldry or, if something else caught his eye, he made a written note. For example, at St Cuthbert's, Bedford, he noted that the inscription on the chalice was

'Sente Cowdberd'⁹⁹

and at Shillington, he noticed that the string course below the parapet at the east end of the chancel was ornamented with a rose, with a 'P' in the centre of it, that the next had an 'A', the next an ox and the last had a tun - and he made a sketch of the tun¹⁰⁰.

In these circumstances, where both observation and conscientious care were being brought to his archidiaconal task, it is surprising to learn that in only one church in the whole of Bedfordshire, namely, Barton-le-Cley, does Bonney refer to an Easter

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⁹⁸ Henry Kaye Bonney was born in Tansor, Northamptonshire, on 22 May 1780, the son of a clergyman, Henry K Bonney (died 1810). He was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge. For further details regarding Henry Kaye Bonney, see Pickford 1994, pp.2-14.

⁹⁹ Pickford's work is of the highest quality, meticulously researched, and is the major study of Bedfordshire churches in the nineteenth century.

¹⁰⁰ Pickford 1994, p.83.

¹⁰⁰ Pickford 2000, p.651.
In the light of this, it is perhaps surprising that in other examples of tomb recesses in the north walls of chancels, he did not make the same observation.

The historical notes that Archdeacon Bonney made can only be dated as having being compiled between 1820-1840 and, as Pickford points out, the notebook may have been written up in what is its current format after he had left Bedford; thus it is impossible to determine at what point in his career Bonney became aware of Easter sepulchres. All that can be said with certainty is that, apart from the one reference to 'The Tomb' at Barton-le-Cley, he makes no further reference to Easter sepulchres at all.

It is only fair to acknowledge that Bonney was more of an antiquarian than an ecclesiologist, and whilst he was most careful to instance and correct the defects in the drains, the pews, the fonts and the general fabric of the churches in his care, he was not concerned about re-ordering their interiors. In Hockliffe, for example, whilst he was Archdeacon, he insisted that the communion rails should be cleaned and oiled and a new cloth for the 'communion table' be purchased but, apart from noting its presence, he made no comments upon the very large pew which occupied a large portion of the chancel and which, because of its size, blocked a two-light window; similarly, neither did he refer to the fact that the sedilia, niches, piscina and tomb recess had all been covered with lath, plaster and whitewash.

Ecclesiological comment about such matters was to come from 'W.A.', the nom de plume of the Duke of Bedford's librarian, John Martin, as will be seen later.

The next major publication relating to Bedfordshire was that of J. D. Parry, in 1827. He acknowledged his debt to Daniel Lysons in the introductory 'Advertisement':

*The work of Mr Lysons has been taken ... as a guide but his authorities have, in almost all instances, been consulted and others in addition*.

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101 See Pickford 1994, p.73. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.132.


104 See Parry 1827.
Parry limited his observations within Bedfordshire to Bedford, Ampthill, Houghton Conquest, Luton and Chicksands and his comments on the churches in each of those places varied in length; for example, of Houghton Conquest he simply wrote:

_Houghton Church is an ancient structure; it contains the tombs and effigies of John Conquest._

He was more effusive and detailed in his description of St Mary's, Luton:

_On the south side of the chancel, west of the sedilia, there is a very handsome arched recess, having its roof delicately groined. Pennant speaks of a recess (doubtless the same) containing the figure of an Abbot with a crosier; this is now entirely gone and the recess is occupied by a handsome modern pyramidal monument to Miss Harriet Gutteridge._

It may be that his eye was distracted by Miss Harriet Gutteridge's 'pyramidal' monument because what he failed to see or explain was what later historians would describe as the Easter sepulchre on the north side of the chancel.

In 1848, the first part (which covered Bedfordshire) of _The Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England_ was published. Although the name of the author is not given on the title page, the work was chiefly prepared by Henry Addington, as the 'Advertisement' (which is printed at the front of the book) makes clear:

_This work is founded upon Rickman's 'Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England' ... The Architectural Notes of Buildings in Bedfordshire now published as the first part of the work were prepared chiefly by the Rev. Henry Addington, one of the Local Secretaries of the Archaeological Institute who visited every church in the county for this purpose during the year 1847 ... The notes so prepared were then submitted for correction to the Committee of the Bedfordshire Architectural Society, to the present Archdeacon of Bedford and_
through him to the Rural Deans of the different Deaneries; they have also been
collated with the notes of Archdeacon Bonney, kindly lent by him for the
purpose. It was a thoroughly vetted and careful piece of work. It does refer in one instance to a
possible Easter sepulchre - at Arlesey. Whilst Arlesey may have had, as Addington claimed, an Easter sepulchre 'well worthy of notice', on his visit to Barton-le-Cley no reference is made to the tomb recess which Bonney had thought might be an Easter sepulchre. At Bletsoe a similar recess was not categorised as an Easter sepulchre by Addington, and of the tomb recess in Blunham he simply said that it was 'fine'. His comments on St Mary's, Luton, like those of many of his contemporaries, echo the despair felt over the state of the fabric:

*This church has been a rich and beautiful specimen but is now sadly dilapidated and disfigured* but he made no reference at all to what later historians would call an Easter sepulchre.

In Potsgrove he noted in the north wall of the chancel

*... a sepulchral recess with an obtuse arch foliated*

but again did not posit the suggestion that it might have been an Easter sepulchre. He noted of Shelton (which the VCH for Bedfordshire would later claim had a recess in the north wall which was probably for an Easter sepulchre) that in the thickness of the wall between the chapel in the north aisle and the chancel was

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109 Addington 1848, in 'Advertisement' (at front of work).
110 See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.130.
111 Addington 1848, para.50.
112 Ibid, para.38.
113 See Page 1912(a), p.163:

> Below the south-east window is a trefoiled ogee-headed piscine, and in the north wall a triangular arched recess with a rectangular sinking in the west half of its sill, probably to hold the loculus [sic] used in the Easter sepulchre.

See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, pp.114-115.
... a plain spherical opening\textsuperscript{114}.

He does not make any reference to the triangular arched recess. At Dean, where he noted in the north aisle a sepulchral recess\textsuperscript{115}, he did not suggest that it, like the version at Arlesey which was also in the north aisle, might be an Easter sepulchre.

It is odd that, rather like Bonney, Addington ventures the definition in only one church, namely Arlesey, and in no others.

The publication of the articles by 'W.A.' in the \textit{Northampton Mercury} between 1845 and 1854, reprinted weekly by the \textit{Bedford Times}, concerning the state of churches in Bedfordshire, marks the public arrival of ecclesiology in the county. As Pickford says:

\begin{quote}
    Martin and his contemporaries sought to inform and advise clergy, parish officers and benefactors regarding church restorations and improvements\textsuperscript{116}.
\end{quote}

Martin, as 'W.A.', wrote with conviction and passion. In Barton-le-Cley, where Bonney had speculated about whether the fourteenth-century tomb recess was 'The Tomb', it is noteworthy that Martin, a man deeply influenced by ecclesiology, did not speculate in a similar vein. Neither did he comment on the so-called Easter sepulchre at Arlesey - he did, however, with considerable irony, commend the hat pegs:

\begin{quote}
    The examples of hat pegs are worth consulting by all churchwardens, who usually deem them of prime importance\textsuperscript{117}.
\end{quote}

St Mary's, Luton, which Pevsner claimed had an Easter sepulchre, appalled Martin:

\begin{quote}
    This noble church is in a most disgraceful condition\textsuperscript{118}.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{114} Addington 1848, para.97.
\textsuperscript{115} See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.136.
\textsuperscript{116} Pickford 1994, p.14
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid, p.51.
The chancel appeared to have been completely blocked by a gallery erected for the Marquis of Bute; the sedilia were covered with plaster, and the Wenlock chapel was filthy and was being used as a schoolroom. He did not notice the recess, which later historians would describe as an Easter sepulchre.

Likewise in Potton, where he was pleased to find the chancel clean and in good order and where he noticed that parts of the rood screen were pieced into some of the pews, he also failed to notice a potential Easter sepulchre in the north wall of the chancel. In fact, in the Bedfordshire churches which twentieth-century historians were to claim might have permanent Easter sepulchres and which Martin himself had visited, he failed to identify the purported Easter sepulchres in any of them.

It is noteworthy that apart from Bonney's single reference made some time between 1820-1840 and Addington's single reference in 1848, antiquarian writings in the first half of the nineteenth century appear to indicate a complete lack of awareness of the existence of permanent Easter sepulchres in Bedfordshire.

On 15 February 1855 Sir Stephen Glynne visited St Peter's, Arlesey, and described it as

*An interesting Church chiefly Decorated and Perpendicular with portions of much beauty.*

His notes were copious and detailed. In his description of Arlesey he wrote about a niche in the north wall of the north aisle which he stated might have been an Easter sepulchre. This was the only one of the churches he visited in Bedfordshire in which he made the suggestion that a niche/recess might have been an Easter sepulchre. In other churches, Billington, for example, he did not hesitate to describe on the north wall of the chancel:

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119 Stephen Glynne, born in 1807, was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. He was the brother-in-law of W. E. Gladstone. He was deeply interested in church buildings and during his lifetime visited over 5,150. In Bedfordshire he visited 51 churches - see Pickford 1994, pp.23-25.

120 Pickford 1994, p.52.

121 See Ibid, p.52. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.130.
... an aumbrye of square form.\textsuperscript{122}

At Eggington he wrote similarly:

\textit{On the North [wall of the chancel] is a square aumbry.}\textsuperscript{123}

St Mary's, Luton, he described as

... a large and extremely curious church, containing many most interesting portions, and some of the richest work that can be met with in the county.\textsuperscript{124}

He did not share Parry's delight in Harriet Gutteridge's monument, describing it instead as 'ugly',\textsuperscript{125} and on the north wall of the chancel he referred to a 'mutilated niche'\textsuperscript{126} - but he did not remark that it might be an Easter sepulchre.

Like Bonney and Addington, therefore, Glynne was not over-exuberant in his definition of what might or might not constitute an Easter sepulchre.

On 21st August 1851, at a joint meeting of the Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Societies, the Revd W. Airey read a paper entitled \textit{Rubble or Rubbish}.\textsuperscript{127} It was an unprepossessing title for what was a most interesting piece of persuasion. Airey explained that his paper was arguing in favour of exposing the rubble walls of churches. He based his argument on three grounds: beauty, utility and antiquity. As the incumbent of Swineshead (Bedfordshire), he explained that he had decided to strip some of the plaster from the walls:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{122} Pickford 1994, p.127.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, p.264.
\textsuperscript{124} Pickford 1998, p.453.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid, p.455.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, p.455.
\textsuperscript{127} Airey 1851; see also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.141.
\end{flushright}
Beneath the mortar in Swynshed Church I found two square-headed trefoil-arch doorways, one in the chancel and one at the eastern extremity of the north aisle\textsuperscript{138}

It is the next part of his explanation which is intriguing:

... and wishing to connect them by means of an exterior passage, so as to form a communication between the chancel and the vestry in the north aisle, I removed the stones with which the doorways had been blocked ... The doorways, I believe, to have been originally connected by an exterior passage, in precisely the same way as that in which I have again connected them after a lapse of nearly six hundred years\textsuperscript{139}.

What he did not make absolutely clear in his paper at this point was that the doorway he found under the plaster on the north side of the chancel was set into a canopied, sepulchral recess. Nor, in spite of his obvious ecclesiological interests, did he then make any claim that this recess was an Easter sepulchre.

There is a fifty-year gap between Airey’s paper and the next major publication concerning Bedfordshire. In 1904 the first volume of the VCH for Bedfordshire was published. It was the beginning of the first comprehensive history that this county had ever had – almost a hundred years after Daniel and Samuel Lysons had published their ‘compressed’ account. In later volumes of the VCH, published in 1908 and 1912, claims were made about five possible permanent Easter sepulchres in Bedfordshire, namely at Arlesey\textsuperscript{130}, Luton\textsuperscript{131}, Potton\textsuperscript{132}, Shelton\textsuperscript{133} and Yelden\textsuperscript{134} but the claims the VCH made about Easter sepulchres were very tentative.

\textsuperscript{138} Airey 1851, p.378.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, p.378-379.
\textsuperscript{130} For further details see earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.113 and, particularly, Chapter 6, pp.129-132.
\textsuperscript{131} For further details see Ibid, Chapter 6, p.138.
\textsuperscript{132} See Page 1908 (a), p.239:

\textit{... on the north side is a late fifteenth-century window of three lights, part of its sill being cut down to within 2ft. 6in. of the floor, perhaps for the fitting of a locker for the sepulchre.} 

[Footnotes continue on next page]
In 1968 Nikolaus Pevsner produced his guide to Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough. In the latest edition, under the section devoted to Bedfordshire, the church at Arlesey (which Glynne and Addington had both conjectured might have an Easter sepulchre) is described as having in the east bay of the north aisle:

...[a] very plain Perp recess.

It is not suggested that it might have been an Easter sepulchre.

Pevsner follows Bonney in claiming that Barton-le-Cley has an Easter sepulchre and at Hockliffe, also, the existence of an Easter sepulchre is affirmed:

*In the chancel C14 PISCINA and EASTER SEPULCHRE*.

(The VCH had simply described it as 'a 14th-century tomb recess'.) He is similarly clear about St Mary's, Luton:

*Dec. again the EASTER SEPULCHRE in the chancel with fleurons in a moulding.*

but the VCH for Bedfordshire also, as has already been seen, suggested that it might possibly have been used for the Easter sepulchre.

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133 See Page 1912 (a), p.163:

... in the north wall a triangular arched recess with a rectangular sinking in the western half of the sill, probably to hold the locusus used in the Easter sepulchre.

134 See Ibid, p.177:

... a 14th-century recess with a trefoiled arch, probably for the Easter sepulchre; there are two pin-holes in the cusps, and in the sill a larger hole, which is probably not original.

135 See Pevsner 2002(a).


137 See Ibid, p.45; see also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.132.

138 Pevsner 2002(a), p.100.

139 Page 1912 (a), p.385.

And at Swineshead, Pevsner, as has been noted earlier, described the tomb recess as being both an Easter sepulchre and as 'sumptuous'.

Almost twenty years after the first edition of Pevsner’s work on Bedfordshire, the number of possible permanent Easter sepulchres rises dramatically in the analysis of Bedfordshire churches by Pamela Sheingorn, published in 1987. She suggests that there are twenty-three potential sites.

The ‘trend’ in Bedfordshire over nearly two hundred years may be expressed like this: during the nineteenth century there were only three tentative claims concerning permanent Easter sepulchres (Bonney: Barton-le-Cley; Addington and Glynne: Arlesey). In the first two decades of the twentieth century, with the publication of the VCH, the number had risen to five; whereas, following Sheingorn’s ‘north side of the chancel’ hypothesis, by 1987 the number had risen to twenty-three.

In some ways the Bedfordshire statistics mirror those of Hertfordshire – until the mid-decades of the nineteenth century there are hardly any references to Easter sepulchres at all. (Bonney’s reference in 1820-1840 may have been an addition made following his departure from Bedfordshire.) However, whereas in Hertfordshire the number of possible ‘sightings’ increased in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, in Bedfordshire the number remains virtually at zero - Glynne makes one claim in 1850 - then there is none recorded until the publication of the second volume of the VCH in 1908.

What is very clear, however, is that, as in Hertfordshire, there is no real certainty amongst either the nineteenth-century authors or the early twentieth-century contributors to the VCH, about what exactly a permanent Easter sepulchre might look like. Similarly,

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142 See Sheingorn 1987, pp.78-86.
143 Namely, at Arlesey, Barton-le-Cley, Billington, Bletsoe, Blunham, Bohlhurst, Cople, Dean, Hockliffe, Houghton Conquest, Luton, Meppershall, Northill, Podington, Potsgrove, Potton, Shelton, Shillington, Stagsden, Tilsworth, Tingrith and Yelden. Swineshead, at one time in Huntingdon, is the twenty-third.
as in Hertfordshire, the sheer variety of forms seems to be evidence that perhaps these objects really did not share the same function - and their existence can be accounted for most satisfactorily by saying that they were used for different purposes.

In short, whilst it is possible that some of the features mentioned might have been used for the 'burial' of a cross and Host, on the basis of the evidence - or, perhaps more accurately, the lack of it – it might be much safer to say that in Bedfordshire churches, there were probably no permanent features which had been created especially for the Easter ceremonies at all.

Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire presents a not dissimilar picture to Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Its most famous antiquarian of the eighteenth century was Browne Willis (1682-1760), MP for Buckingham. His first major publication was a survey of a number of cathedrals in England. In spite of the scale of the task, in which he considered epitaphs and inscriptions amongst other things, Willis did not at any point make reference to Easter sepulchres. He did, however, in his description of Durham, refer at some length to the Rites of Durham but did not suggest that this account of the Easter ceremonies was anything other than a local historical custom.

In 1755 he published a work which was less wide-ranging and confined itself to the town, hundred and deanery of Buckingham, and included some of the surrounding villages.

He was aware of Easter sepulchres because he had noted references to them in wills

In old Wills before the Reformation, I find Bequests to St. Cecilia's and St. Nicholas's Altars, St Sigebert's Image, and to Our Lady, the Holy Rood, and the Sepulchre Lights in this Church.

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144 See Sheingorn 1987 in particular.
145 Willis 1727.
146 Ibid, vol 1, p.223.
147 Willis 1755, p.125.
In Lillingstone Dayrell, Willis noted on the south side of the chancel a raised altar tomb inscribed with the names of Paul and Margaret Dayrell, dating from the late fifteenth century, and opposite that tomb he observed:

*On the North Side [of] the Chancel Wall is a Stone under an Arch, but no Inscription on it*\(^\text{148}\).

He did not categorise it as an Easter sepulchre.

Lillingstone Dayrell was also the subject of a visit by the Victorian antiquarian, George Lipscomb who, in 1847 described the north-side recess very simply:

*On the north side of the chancel is a low arch in the wall, with a sepulchral slab beneath it without ornament or inscription*\(^\text{149}\).

He did not make any claim for it as being an Easter sepulchre, either. It was this same church which the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society later visited in 1891. They were given a lecture on the church by the Revd R. Dayrell, who drew the members' attention to this north-side recess\(^\text{150}\). He explained that it was 'supposed' to have been used as an Easter sepulchre\(^\text{151}\).

Twenty-two years later, the RCHM's *Inventory* for Buckinghamshire described in 1913, without equivocation, the same recess as an Easter sepulchre:

*In chancel, in north wall, recess with drop arch of one filleted and hollow chamfered order, with similar ribs springing from a corbel capital in the middle, shafted jambs, all of rough workmanship, similar to arcade in south wall, late thirteenth century*\(^\text{152}\).

\(^{148}\) Willis 1755, p.219.

\(^{149}\) Lipscomb 1847, vol.3, p.38.

\(^{150}\) See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, pp.146-147.

\(^{151}\) Dayrell 1897, p.84.

\(^{152}\) Royal Commission 1913, p.169.
Yet in 1927, the fourth volume of the VCH for Buckinghamshire, whilst describing the recess in some detail, did not conclude that it was an Easter sepulchre. However, in the light of the RCHM description, it is perhaps not surprising that Pamela Sheingorn should make a fairly strongly worded claim for it to be regarded as an Easter sepulchre.\(^{153}\)

Pevsner, in 1960, made the suggestion that the recess was an Easter sepulchre:

\textit{... chancel ... apparently built in the early c13 and lengthened fifty years later...}

\textit{Late c13 again the curious Easter Sepulchre, in the chancel N wall.\(^{154}\)}

Whilst Buckinghamshire had two antiquarians in the eighteenth century who wrote about its topography and history, unfortunately neither of them covered the county in its entirety. Browne Willis concentrated on the town of Buckingham and its environs, and Thomas Langley (1769-1801) concentrated on the hundred of Desborough and the deanery of Wycombe, in the south of the county. Langley paid tribute to Willis’ earlier publication and explained the reasons for his own writing in the preface to his work. He suggested that he was racing against the tides of change.

Unfortunately for the purposes of this thesis, Langley’s travels did not take him to any of those churches which later historians would suggest might have Easter sepulchres - except, that is, for the parish church of Hambleden. Langley wrote at some length about the memorials in the church and explained, when referring to the building itself, that in the chancel there was

\textit{... a piscina of elegant workmanship.\(^{155}\)}

but he did not draw attention to the altar tomb on the north wall of the chancel. It was that tomb which the VCH for Buckinghamshire explained had on it an inscription:

\begin{quote}
I believe in the resurrection of life  
To see you again at the last day  
And now farewell Elizabeth my wife
\end{quote}

\(^{153}\) See Sheingorn 1987, pp.95-96. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.147.

\(^{154}\) Pevsner 1960, pp.186-187.

\(^{155}\) Langley 1797, p.162.
Teach my three children, God to obey.\textsuperscript{156}

The VCH suggests that this might be the tomb of Henry, who died c. 1555, the son of Lord Sandys\textsuperscript{157}.

The RCHM's \textit{Inventory} for Buckinghamshire, in its comments on the altar tomb, simply refers to its architectural details:

... \textit{altar tomb in recess with flat four centred arch in square head, spandrels containing shields and foliage}\textsuperscript{158}

but puts forward no suggestion that the recess in which it is placed might once have been used for an Easter sepulchre. Pevsner, however, describes the altar tomb as

... \textit{c16 tomb-chest in an Easter Sepulchre recess}\textsuperscript{159}

and notes that Hambleden had been subjected to a major restoration in 1858-9 by Henry Woodyer, which cost £2,981.

The eighteenth-century antiquarians of Buckinghamshire, it would appear therefore, did not have Easter sepulchres as part of their investigative vocabulary - but there is one tantalising glimpse, at the very end of that century, which indicates that there were those who had visited some of the churches in Buckinghamshire who did. It will be recalled that in the \textit{Gentleman's Magazine} of 1796 an anonymous letter written to the Editor, signed 'P', mentioned a possible 'holy sepulchre' in the north wall of the chancel of the church at Aston Clinton\textsuperscript{160}.

Lipscomb did not define the niche as an Easter sepulchre - and nor, perhaps surprisingly, did the next official visitors to Aston Clinton, members of the Buckinghamshire

\textsuperscript{156} Page 1925, p.52.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, p.52.
\textsuperscript{158} Royal Commission 1912, pp.185-186.
\textsuperscript{159} Pevsner 1960, p.153.
\textsuperscript{160} See the Gentleman's Magazine, 1796, p.841. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.117 and following pages.
Architectural and Archaeological Society, who made an excursion to the church on 8th August, 1895.  

The nineteenth century was slightly more loquacious about the existence of Easter sepulchres in Buckinghamshire than the eighteenth century had been; Lipscomb made no references to them at all, but in the last decade of the nineteenth century, a few more instances occur. One of them is to be found in *The Buckinghamshire Miscellany*.  

Another is to be found in an article entitled 'The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Haddenham', which was published between 1887-91. F. G. Lee noted that there were two arched stone aumbries or recesses in the east wall of the chancel but did not speculate about whether or not they were Easter sepulchres. However, in describing the Lady Chapel, he referred to the Easter sepulchre on its south side. The drawing of this sepulchre is initialled 'FGL' and is dated 1866.  

Neither the VCH (1908) nor the RCHM (1912) make reference to this recess as an Easter sepulchre.  

It may be helpful to recap the antiquarian interest in Easter sepulchres in Buckinghamshire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There was only one reference in the eighteenth century - and that was to Aston Clinton. In the nineteenth century there were only three references to Easter sepulchres - Aylesbury (1889), Haddenham (1887-91) and Lillingstone Dayrell (1891).  

It was in the early years of the twentieth century that interest began to quicken. In 1904 members of the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society visited Chalfont St Giles. The principal points of interest were explained to them, including

\[161\] See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, p.118.  
\[162\] See earlier in this thesis, Chapter 5, pp.117-118.  
\[163\] See Gibbs 1891.  
\[164\] See Lee 1887-91.
... a recess for the Easter sepulchre.\textsuperscript{165}

Neither the VCH in 1925 -

\textit{On the north side ... a large pointed locker of thirteenth-century date}\textsuperscript{166}

- nor the RCHM defined the recess as an Easter sepulchre.

However, the VCH (1905-27) claimed that Easter sepulchres could be found at:

- Aston Clinton\textsuperscript{167}

- Aylesbury\textsuperscript{168}

- Bierton:

\begin{quote}
In the north wall of the chancel is a fairly large niche with moulded jamb and a moulded trefoiled head, possibly part of an Easter sepulchre and of the same date [late fourteenth century] as the chancel\textsuperscript{169}.
\end{quote}

- Ivinghoe:

\begin{quote}
In the north wall ... a recess ... which may have been used as an Easter sepulchre\textsuperscript{170}.
\end{quote}

- Olney\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{165} WN [who was probably W. Niven, secretary to the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society]: 'Church of St Giles', \textit{Records of Buckinghamshire} 9, 1904-09, p.314.

\textsuperscript{166} Page 1925, p.190.

\textsuperscript{167} See earlier in this thesis, pages 117-119.

\textsuperscript{168} See Page 1925, p.14; see also earlier in this thesis, pages 143-144.

\textsuperscript{169} Page 1908, p.325.

\textsuperscript{170} Page 1925, p.383.

\textsuperscript{171} See Page 1927, p.437; see also earlier in this thesis, p.149.
Soulbury:

*On north wall of chancel, below easternmost window is a recess possibly for an Easter sepulchre of fourteenth-century date with a moulded depressed ogee arch and a label with a foliated finial*\(^{172}\).

Stoke Poges:

*In north wall of chancel is a mid fourteenth-century tomb recess which may have been used as an Easter sepulchre*\(^{173}\).

Stokenchurch:

*In the north wall is a fourteenth-century locker which was probably used as an Easter sepulchre in the fifteenth century when it was given its present trefoiled ogee head*\(^{174}\).

Seven years after the publication of the first volume of the *Victoria History of the County of Buckingham*, the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments published the first volume of its work, *An Inventory of the Historic Monuments in Buckinghamshire*. It was fairly definite in some of its conclusions; thus, for example, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury and Lillingstone Dayrell are described as having Easter sepulchres but, like the VCH, it describes objects in other churches (notably Oney, Soulbury and Woughton-on-the-Green) as having recesses which were only possibly, or probably, used as Easter sepulchres.

Nikolas Pevsner is a little more conservative in his work on Buckinghamshire than the RCHM or the VCH in his estimate of possible or probable Easter sepulchres. He includes

- Aston Clinton
- Aylesbury

\(^{172}\) Page 1925, p.418.

\(^{173}\) Ibid, p.311.
... below the arcading [of north wall of the chancel] an Easter Sepulchre\textsuperscript{175}.

- Olney:

  ... against the N wall [of the chancel]. Easter Sepulchre. The tomb-chest [below] has quatrefoil panels in a crisply and richly ornamented framework.\textsuperscript{176}

- Hambleden:

  ... C16 tomb-chest in an Easter Sepulchre recess\textsuperscript{177}.

- Lillingstone Dayrell

- Little Missenden

Pamela Sheingorn, again using her 'north side of the altar' criterion, suggests that there could be twenty-three Easter sepulchres in Buckinghamshire.

The trend, therefore, over three centuries shows one reference in the eighteenth century, three references in the late nineteenth century, seven references in the RCHM of 1912-1913, nine references in the VCH volumes of 1908-27, six references in Pevsner of 1960 and twenty-three references in Sheingorn's work of 1987.

It is abundantly clear that in spite of the cluster of references in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, there is no agreement about what a permanent Easter sepulchre might look like – and the historians refer more often to the possible or probable use of a recess for an Easter sepulchre, rather than make a positive identification based on design or architectural treatment.

\textsuperscript{174} Page 1925, p.100.
\textsuperscript{175} Pevsner 1960, p.54. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.143.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid, p.219.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid, p.153.
Surrey

Whilst the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire have been the main focus for this study, lest it be regional 'chance' that has skewed the results and the conclusions, it seems important to discover whether the pattern is replicated in other areas. Surrey, south of the River Thames, has therefore been chosen as a comparison.

In 1673, John Aubrey (1626-1697) began his 'perambulation of the county of Surrey'. He took copious notes which, during his lifetime, did not see the light of day. Those notes were edited by Dr Richard Rawlinson and published 1718-19 in five volumes entitled *The Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* by the bookseller Edmund Curll.

John Aubrey, now famous for his *Brief Lives*, was an assiduous visitor of the churches on his Surrey tour, but in not one of them did he refer to an Easter sepulchre. As Aubrey himself was born only seventy-seven years after the publication of the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* it is perhaps surprising that, like Chauncy in Hertfordshire, he did not refer to any pre-Reformation rites for they would, presumably, have been held within the very recent folk-memory of his own family.

Almost a hundred years after the publication of Aubrey's *Natural History and Antiquities* came the three-volume work of Owen Manning and William Bray, entitled *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*. Manning had been the domestic chaplain of the Bishop of Lincoln and would, therefore, have been aware, presumably, of the claimed Easter sepulchre in Lincoln Cathedral and the Easter sepulchre at Heckington. He became Vicar of Godalming, Surrey, in 1763. He died in 1801, before his great Surrey work was completed, and the final editing was undertaken by William Bray. Despite the fact that Richard Gough was one of the subscribers to this major county study, there is not a single reference to Easter sepulchres within it.

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178 Rawlinson, an Oxford bibliophile, himself completed a second 'perambulation' of the county of Surrey in 1717.

179 See Aubrey 1975.

180 See Manning 1974 (vol.1 was published in 1804, vol.2 in 1809 and vol.3 in 1814).
Nor was there any reference to Easter sepulchres in a work which slightly preceded that of Manning and Bray: the Revd Daniel Lysons' *The Environs of London*. Whilst Lysons was undoubtedly aware of the Easter sepulchre ceremonies, he does not refer to Easter sepulchres in Addington or Kingston upon Thames, which later scholars would define as existing in those places.

It is with the formation of the Surrey Archaeological Society that the first mention of Easter sepulchres occurs. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, it comes in an essay on Cranley Church by Alfred Heales, a prominent and highly respected member of the society. (It will be recalled that he wrote a major piece on Easter sepulchres in *Archaeologia* in 1868.) It is interesting to note that only one year after that *Archaeologia* piece, Heales had two essays published by the Surrey Archaeological Society, one on Godalming Church, the other on Limpsfield Church. In neither of these two articles does he refer to Easter sepulchres, but his motives in writing about the churches is gently rehearsed. Of Godalming Church he wrote:

> Let us hope that ere long the rising taste for art and propriety and the good sense and feeling of the parishioners will set right the wrong done by their predecessors ... Family comfort (if that is the theory of the present arrangement) should give way to public propriety and the edifice be restored from its present state – a nest of private boxes – to a decent, suitable and noble House of Prayer.

Eleven years later, in 1880, in an essay on Thames Ditton Church, A. J. Style refers to an Easter sepulchre:

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181 Lysons 1796 (a).
182 Ibid, p.231.
183 Heales 1874 (a), esp. pp.42-47.
184 See Heales 1868.
185 Heales 1869 (a).
186 Heales 1869 (b).
187 Heales 1869 (a), p.213.
188 Style 1880.
In the north wall of the chancel close to the east end and below the lancet window there is a very low fifteenth-century arch, probably intended for an Easter sepulchre.\(^{189}\)

And then in 1895, J. Lewis André, writing about Compton Church\(^ {190}\) and referring to a tomb recess on the north chancel wall, wrote:

> Probably it was both a tomb and an Easter sepulchre, it having become a very favourable practice in the latter part of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century for a tomb to serve as a burial place and also for the ecclesiastical ceremonies of Holy Week.\(^ {191}\)

Whilst Heales, therefore, may have played a part in introducing the concept of Easter sepulchres to his fellow Surrey antiquarians, it is interesting to note that apart from his own papers on Cranley and on Peper Harow\(^ {192}\), he did not mention Easter sepulchres in the other churches of Surrey about which he also wrote - Merstham, Great Bookham, Chiddingfold, Limpsfield, Chipstead, Horley, Effingham and Kingston on Thames\(^ {193}\) - though in this latter church, he does refer to the Easter play\(^ {194}\). In spite of Heales' modesty and reticence, it can, nevertheless, be seen that the concept of Easter sepulchres had become part of the vocabulary of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

In 1905 the second volume of the VCH of Surrey was published\(^ {195}\), and in it was an article by Philip Johnston on ecclesiastical furniture. He wrote:

> Easter sepulchres are neither numerous nor easy of identification, for the reason that they were usually movable wooden structures, and also because in the century before the Reformation it was fashionable for wall-tombs to be

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189 Style 1880, p.223.
190 André 1895.
192 See Heales 1880.
193 See Heales 1865-1888.
194 Heales 1883, p.86.
195 See Malden 1905.
constructed for the double purpose of a monument and for a place of deposit for the wooden 'sepulchre' containing the Host and crucifix. Tombs so used remain in several churches, e.g. Compton, Carshalton, Kingston, Peperharrow and Witley; while recesses which may have served as Easter sepulchres occur at Alfold, Blechingley, Burstow, Cranley, Nutfield, Oxted, and, perhaps, Thames Ditton. In fact, the VCH adds some other parishes to this list, including Leatherhead and Nutley; of Leatherhead, for example, in 1911, it states:

* A wide arched recess on the inner face of the wall, now much modernized, has served as a cupboard and probably as an Easter sepulchre.*

In 1971 the Pevsner 'Buildings of England' volume on Surrey came out in a second edition. Unlike the VCH which identified a possible thirteen Easter sepulchres in Surrey, Nairn and Pevsner identified only two. Was this because Ian Nairn had done most of the work for the Surrey edition and was less inclined to believe in their existence? The two he did identify were at Kingston on Thames and Thames Ditton. In the case of the latter, it is significant to note that the VCH had identified the low four-centred arch of the fifteenth century as an Easter sepulchre:

* ... opening to the north chapel and designed to contain a tomb and perhaps to serve for the Easter sepulchre.*

whereas Nairn and Pevsner drew attention, instead, to a tomb monument:

* A most unusual Perp stone structure in the form of a six-poster. Heavy attic with crenellation.*

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196 Malden 1905, p.439.
197 Malden 1911, p.299.
198 See Nairn 1971.
199 Malden 1911, p.465.
200 Nairn 1971, p.481.
In 1997, Melvyn Blatch's survey of Surrey churches\textsuperscript{201} was published; it suggested that there were eight churches which had Easter sepulchres (Alfold, Burstow, Carshalton, Cranleigh, Frensham, Kingston upon Thames, Oxted and Thames Ditton). Sheingorn posited a possible seventeen.

The pattern of Easter sepulchre sightings in Surrey is remarkably similar to the pattern in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, namely that there were no references in the eighteenth century, a significant surge of interest in the last half of the nineteenth century, consolidation of the concept via the VCH in the early twentieth century, followed by lack of agreement about what might or might not constitute a permanent Easter sepulchre.

Conclusion

What this historiographical overview seems to suggest is this:

1. It was Blomefield in his work on Norfolk who seems to have given birth to the concept of permanent Easter sepulchres, based largely on his analysis of the monument at Northwold. His ideas about permanent Easter sepulchres were developed further by Gough in \textit{Vetusta Monumenta}, but whilst Blomefield in Norfolk had explored with considerable scholarship the liturgical and cultural context of Easter sepulchres and had posited that in Norfolk there might be a number of such features, antiquarians in other counties, notably Chauncy and Salmon in Hertfordshire, Willis in Buckinghamshire and Manning and Bray in Surrey (Bedfordshire had no eighteenth-century antiquarian history written about it) did not refer to Easter sepulchres at all.

2. But it was only in the middle and last decades of the nineteenth century that Easter sepulchres began to feature significantly in the minds of county-based historians. The first definitions were offered by Bonney and Addington in Bedfordshire in the 1840s and 1850s, by Heales in Surrey in the 1860s, by Cussans in Hertfordshire in the 1870s, whilst in Buckinghamshire the only references belong to the 1880s and 1890s.

\textsuperscript{201} See Blatch 1997.
3. The major flurry of interest in all these counties is associated with the development in the mid-nineteenth century of county-based architectural and archaeological societies\(^\text{202}\), which, in turn, gave rise to the work carried out by the VCH and the RCHM during the first decades of the twentieth century.

4. What this survey also reveals is that there was considerable caution amongst all antiquarians about what might or might not constitute an Easter sepulchre. They were willing to speculate that a recess or tomb might have been used for the Easter sepulchre rites – but in none of the counties surveyed was there any shared conviction that a particular recess was unequivocally an Easter sepulchre.

5. In Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey there are no recesses, tombs or other permanent features currently described as Easter sepulchres which have any iconographical detail connected with the stories of the resurrection – no sleeping soldiers, no women visiting the tomb, no figure of Christ stepping from the tomb. Nor, it must be said, is there any uniformity in the design of so-called Easter sepulchres in any of these counties.

6. What this historiographical survey has shown, above all, is that the concept of Easter sepulchres entered the mindset of architectural historians only in a significant way in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century.

This raises a further question - who or what caused such a major shift in thinking in the nineteenth century? The chapter which follows will attempt to answer that question.

\(^{202}\) The Architectural Society of the County of York was founded in 1842, that of Lincoln in 1844, and that of the Archdeaconry of Northamptonshire, also, in 1844. St Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society was founded in 1845, that of Bedfordshire in 1847, and that of Buckinghamshire, also, in 1847. The link between the purposes and tone of the societies is caught by the preface to the Buckinghamshire Record Society, whose objects were defined as

... collecting such materials and promoting such measures as may assist in the compilation or illustration of the history of the county, and in diffusing a taste for the revival of architectural and ecclesiastical art. [Records of Buckinghamshire 5, 1878, p.iii].
It will be argued in this chapter that the concept of Easter sepulchres introduced by Blomefield in the eighteenth century and drawn upon by late nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first-century historians was so invigorated and re-energised by Pugin and by the ecclesiologists of the Cambridge Camden Society that it became a foundational part of the intellectual apparatus of later historians. It was a concept which became the means of perception, rather than the object of that perception. The Victorians, it would seem, created a myth which continues to influence our understanding of churches, of medieval belief and of those objects which symbolise that belief. How did this happen?

The first four decades of the nineteenth century saw a burgeoning interest in architecture - and Gothic architecture in particular. In 1807, John Britton produced the first volume of his five-volume work, entitled *The Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain*. In 1817 Thomas Rickman produced his major work, *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture*. His remarks in the Preface describe succinctly the purpose of the book:

> The object of the present publication has been to furnish at a price which shall not present an obstacle to extensive circulation, such a view of the principles of architecture, more particularly that of the British Isles, as may not only be placed

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1. M. J. Lewis provides a pithy analysis of the origins and development of the taste for Gothic architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

> The eighteenth century admired it [Gothic] for its suggestive quality of decay and melancholy, the early nineteenth for the religious piety it expressed, the late nineteenth century for its superb engineering. [See Lewis 2002, p.7]

These values, of course, stood in opposition to the classical values of clarity and orderliness.

2. John Britton (1771-1857) is described by Margaret Belcher as an antiquary, topographer, and compiler of illustrated books. He collaborated with A. C. Pugin on his *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, *Illustrations of the Public Buildings of London*, and *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy* (1828) but their cooperation ended in bitterness and litigation. [See Belcher 2001, p.30 (note 4)].

3. See Britton 1807; for the remaining four volumes, see Britton 1809, Britton 1812, Britton 1814 and Britton 1826.

4. Rickman 1817.
with advantage in the hands of the rising generation, but also afford the guardians of ecclesiastical edifices such clear discriminate remarks on the buildings now existing, as may enable them to judge with considerable accuracy of the restorations necessary to be made in those venerable edifices that are under their particular care; and also by leading them to the study of such as still remain in a perfect state, to render them more capable of deciding on the various designs for churches in imitation of the English styles, which may be presented to their choice.

It can be seen that the Preface to Rickman's work makes abundantly clear what the author's objectives are: education in historical accuracy, coupled with practical discrimination in 'deciding on the various designs for churches in imitation of the English styles'. The text details the orders of both Grecian and English architecture (the first, or Norman, style; the second, or Early English, style, etc.) and although it goes into some detail, including mouldings, dripstones and niches, it is important for our purposes to note that it does not make any reference to Easter sepulchres. Churches in various counties are 'enumerated' in the Appendix, including, in Bedfordshire, Luton St Mary's - but there is no mention of an Easter sepulchre in the church. Neither Hawton (Nottinghamshire) nor Heckington (Lincolnshire) feature in their respective counties. In Hertfordshire only St Albans Abbey is mentioned in detail. However, two years later, in the second edition, the number of churches 'enumerated' has increased.

St Mary's, Luton, is given fuller coverage, though the Easter sepulchre is not featured; neither is it at Barton-le-Cley where, as we have seen, Pevsner claims an Easter sepulchre is present. In Hertfordshire, the list of churches has also increased and now

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5 Rickman 1817; the preface is not paginated.
6 Rickman 1819, Appendix, pp.121-382.
7 The Bedfordshire list includes Clapham, Felmersham, Eaton Socon, Eaton Bray, Houghton Regis, Sundon, Bedford St Paul's, Bedford St Mary's, Bedford St John's, Great Barford, Clifton, Copio, Moggerhanger, Harold, Willington, Marston Moretaine, Eltow, Ampthill, Maulden, Silsoe, Barton-le-Cley, Luton, Leighton Buzzard, Toddington and Wilmington.
8 Earlier in this thesis, Chapter 6, p.132.
includes Aldbury, Redbourne and Sarratt where some twentieth-century scholars claim that Easter sepulchres might exist. Rickman does not mention them.

There is a significant development in the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire lists. Both Heckington and Hawton are included; the descriptions need to be noted. Of Heckington, Rickman states that there is

... the tomb of an ecclesiastic under a low arch in the chancel and the assemblage of niches used in the Catholic ceremonies at Easter and called a sepulchre.

And of Hawton, Rickman says:

The chancel is of wholly Decorated date ... on the north side is the sepulchre about the same size as that at Heckington but superior in design and also in the richness of the different parts.

It would seem, then, that at some point between 1817 and 1819, Thomas Rickman had become better informed about Easter sepulchres, perhaps by having read Gough's essays in *Vetusta Monumenta*.

In attempting to trace the conceptual development of Easter sepulchres in the nineteenth century, it is interesting to discover that in the fifth edition of Rickman's work, published in 1848, included in the 'Advertisement' is an editorial gloss:

The Editor of the present edition felt that what the work really required to make it more intelligible to the public, was a better set of engravings of the objects described; an accurate drawing of the object is worth more than a whole chapter of description.

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9 See Sheingorn 1987, p.166.
10 Rickman 1819, p.245.
12 Rickman 1848, p.vi.
The Editor then explains that

... the greater part are from original drawings made expressly for the work by Mr Mackenzie and Mr Orlando Jewitt.\(^{13}\)

Whilst the original text in the first edition (1817) has no reference to Easter sepulchres, the later fifth edition (1848) has references to an Easter sepulchre in a note accompanying the illustrations:

*Niche, Piddington, Oxfordshire; a very rich specimen, with shafts having foliated capitals, and a trefoiled canopy; it is situated on the north side of the altar, in the usual place of the Easter sepulchre, and from the small figures of angels in the canopy, adoring some object which has disappeared, it may probably have been used to deposit the Host during the Easter ceremonies.*\(^{14}\)

At this point in the development of the argument, it simply needs to be noted that Rickman's original text of 1817 was bare of Easter sepulchre references, whereas the second edition noted their existence, for example in Hawton and Heckington, and by 1848 the editorial hand (of J. H. Parker?) had made a significant interpretative definition of their function ('probably ... used to deposit the Host during the Easter ceremonies').

In 1821 A. C. Pugin\(^{15}\) (1769-1832) produced detailed, measured drawings of Gothic architecture in a two-volume work entitled *Specimens of Gothic Architecture Selected*.

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\(^{13}\) Rickman 1848, p.vi.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, p.xlii.

\(^{15}\) A. C. Pugin fled from France at the time of the French Revolution:

> Whether he fled to England because of a duel, or whether the story is true that he fell fighting for Louis XVI, was thrown with the bodies of the slain into a pit near the Place de la Bastille, escaped by swimming the Seine, and eventually reached England by way of Rouen, it now seems impossible to determine. [See Trappes-Lomax 1933, p.3].

He eventually found work as a draughtsman with John Nash. In 1802, A. C. Pugin married Catherine Welby of Islington. For details of her character, see Ferrey 1978, pp.26-28; and for her religious beliefs and practices, see Ibid, pp.41-47.
From Various Antient Edifices in England. It contains no references to Easter sepulchres, in spite of the fact that there are drawings relating to Lincoln Cathedral. The glossary, accompanying Pugin's exquisite drawings, provides a number of detailed definitions, for example of shafts, shingles and shrines, but makes no reference to sepulchres. The lack of attention to them by A. C. Pugin suggests that they were either not recognised by him or were considered of no importance.

One year later, in 1822, Owen and Blakeway produced the first part of their antiquarian survey, entitled The History of Shrewsbury. It has a number of references to the liturgies of Holy Week and also refers to the Easter sepulchre ceremonies - including, in part 9 of the work, the following:

*Before the Reformation it was customary, as it still is in most Roman Catholic countries, to dramatise the chief events of our Saviour's life on their anniversaries ... thus the rood, or a picture of our Lord on the cross, was put on Good Friday into a sepulchre set up on the north side of the chancel and remained there until the morning of Easter Sunday when it was taken out with much ceremony and with a kind of theatrical representation of the great event then commemorated. Many churches had an elegantly sculptured sepulchre of stone for this purpose*. All the churches of Richmondshire, according to Dr

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16 See Pugin 1821. Edward James Willson FSA (1787-1854), who wrote the literary part of this work, was a Roman Catholic, the surveyor for the county of Lincoln. He restored a number of churches and Lincoln Castle. He was a person for whom A. W. N. Pugin had a great respect and with whom a lively correspondence took place over a number of years. His brother, Robert William Willson (1794-1866) became a Roman Catholic priest and in 1842 was consecrated Bishop of Hobart, Tasmania.

17 For a careful examination of the Lincoln Easter sepulchre, see Sekules 1986; see also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 7, pp.161-167.

18 A. C. Pugin's book was described in The Quarterly Review of June 1821 as: ... exceedingly serviceable to the practical architect, at the same time that it is equally satisfactory to the antiquary. [See Trappes-Lomax 1933, pp.5-6].

19 See Owen 1822-1825.

20 Hugh Owen and John Blakeway cite Bampton, Oxford [See Owen 1825 (a), p.346].
Whitaker, have such an appendage which sometimes also served for the sepulture [sic] of an individual. The account continues with a description of the will of Lady Townshend of Raineham who, in 1499, ordered her tomb to be designed so that it could be the ‘locus’ for the Easter sepulchre.

One year later, in 1823, the work History of Richmondshire by Thomas Dunham Whitaker (1759-1821) was published - two years after Whitaker's death. Therefore one can only assume that Owen and Blakeway, who referred to it in their 1822 book, must have had sight of at least some of it before their own publication.

In Whitaker's introduction to his History of Richmondshire he described the churches of that part of North Yorkshire:

Many have light and highly adorned tabernacles for statues north and south of the altar; all have rich stalls on the south side for the officiating priests, and all on the opposite side an arch richly adorned with tabernacle work, which though it has probably contained, in most instances, a stone coffin beneath the slab, was primarily intended not for an internment, but to serve as a sepulchre in acting the paschal play of the resurrection.

In an asterisked footnote to the above sentence, Whitaker added a few more details:

The union of the tomb for an individual and a sepulchre for the paschal tragedy, always in the same precise situation on the north side of the chancel, is very general in Richmondshire. It has, however, been so little attended to in other

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21 Owen 1825 (a), p.346.
22 See also Blomefield 1769, p.816. Owen and Blakeway sourced their reference to the Lady Townshend tomb from Blomefield's Norfolk [Owen 1825 (a), p.346, footnote 4]. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 8, pp.197-198.
23 Whitaker 1823. The full title: An History of Richmondshire, in the North Riding of the County of York: together with those parts of Everwicexshire of Domesday which form the Wapentakes of Lonsdale, Ewecross, and Amundarness, in the Counties of York, Lancaster, and Westmoreland.
24 Ibid, p.5.
parts of England, that excepting from appearances, I can give no other evidence of the fact than what follows. By will, dated November 9th, 1499, Eleanor, widow of Sir Roger Townshend, Kt, orders her body to be buried ...

The quotation is taken by Whitaker, as he himself acknowledges, from Blomefield's History of the County of Norfolk. Whitaker concludes his footnote by stating very clearly that

... the tomb now remains on the north side of the choir in Rainham church.

The reasons for Whitaker’s clarity, his knowledge of Blomefield, and his interest in Raynham is explained by the fact that he was born at the rectory, East Raynham, where his father was the rector. His mother, Lucy Thoresby (1759-1837) was the daughter of Thomas Thoresby, the Yorkshire antiquarian. With such strong antiquarian connections and with his own birthplace in Norfolk being East Raynham, it is unsurprising that he should have known about Easter sepulchres from Blomefield’s work - and thus introduce them into his own work on Richmondshire.

Matthew Bloxam’s book, The Principles of Gothic Architecture, is next in this chronological survey; published in 1829, it sold 17,000 copies between 1829 and 1859.

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25 Whitaker 1823, p.3.
26 This is found in full earlier in this thesis, Chapter 8, p.198.
27 Whitaker 1823, p.3.
28 For further details on Whitaker, see Crosby 2004. Whitaker’s antiquarian work on Whalley, Lancashire, was illustrated by J. M. W. Turner.
29 See Bloxam 1829. M. H. Bloxam (1805-1888) was by profession a solicitor based in Rugby but he was also an antiquarian. His brother, John Rouse Bloxam (1807-1891) was an Anglican priest and from 1835 to 1862 a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. He was caught up in the Oxford Movement, was a curate of Newman’s (1837 to 1840) and was a good friend of A. W. N. Pugin. His College rooms were decorated in Gothic fashion, including a corona designed by A. W. N. Pugin [Belcher 2001, p.379, footnote 3]. A third brother, Andrew Bloxam, was incumbent of Twycross, Leicestershire [Ibid, p.148, footnote 16]. Bloxam’s Principles began as a 79-page book written in catechetical format. It was enormously popular and Sir George Gilbert Scott persuaded him to produce the eleventh, final and definitive version; this was published in 1882 in three volumes [see Horner 2004].

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It prefaces its educative section by setting 'Gothic' in an historical context. Until the
Reformation, it states

... no country could vie with our own in the number and beauty of religious
edifices, which were erected in all the variety of styles that had prevailed for
many preceding ages ... nothing could have been more injurious or tend so much
to involve and hasten the decline and fall of our national architecture, as the
suppression of the monasteries.30

The hint in this paragraph of nationalist pride and identity, and their links with
architecture, is a theme which emerges with greater strength only seven years later with
the publication of A. W. N. Pugin's *Contrasts*.31 Bloxam's work was couched in
'question and answer' format:

Q: What is Gothic architecture?
A: The peculiar modes or styles in which most of our ecclesiastical edifices
have been built since the establishment of Christianity in this country.

Q: When did this kind of architecture originally appear?
A: From the Romans who on quitting this country in the fifth century left
many of their temples and other great buildings remaining.32

Apart from attempting to root Gothic in the ancient (and therefore 'noble' past), Bloxam
provided detailed answers about specific features in churches, thus:

Q: What is a locker?
A: A small niche found in some churches near the altar, generally of a
square form and unornamented, within which the chalice and other
sacred vessels were formerly placed.33

There is no attempt to suggest that such lockers were anything other than practical and
useful cupboards:

30 Bloxam 1829, p.12.
31 See Pugin 1836.
We also find on the east or north wall of the chancel a small, square recess, generally unornamented: this was the 'locker' and is supposed to have contained the chalice, paten and other utensils necessary for the celebration of mass. Bloxam describes in detail all the fittings of a chancel, including piscinas and sedilia, but makes no mention of Easter sepulchres, either in relation to lockers or to tomb recesses.

In 1836, seven years after Matthew Bloxam's popular work, J. H. Parker produced his major study: *A Glossary of Terms Used in Grecian, Roman, Italian and Gothic Architecture*. The work consists of major and careful definitions of various architectural features, including, amongst other things, sedilia, brackets, piscinas and corbels. Notwithstanding the earlier work of Rickman, and the antiquarian studies by Owen and Blakeway, and Whitaker, Parker does not include Easter sepulchres within his architectural categories. His subsequent volume, published in 1841, was also devoid of sepulchre references; it has plates featuring doorways, finials, fonts, towers and buttresses, etc, and although Heckington, Lincolnshire, and Bampton, Oxfordshire, feature in the detailed drawings, their Easter sepulchres do not.

It was, however, in 1838 that a more detailed reference to Easter sepulchres emerged; it appeared in John Britton's *Dictionary*, which was an attempt by Britton to provide suitable and carefully worded definitions:

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35 Bloxam 1829, p.15.
34 Ibid, pp.69-70.
36 See Parker 1836. This work is normally attributed to Parker but no author's name is given in the introductory pages. It went through five editions by 1850 and ten by 1900 [see Riddell 2004, p.697].
37 Parker 1841. Britton's *Dictionary of the Architecture and Archaeology of the Middle Ages*, its copper plates and copyright, were sold and became the basis of J. H. Parker's Companion to the glossary.
38 Britton 1838.

In a letter of 24 February 1838 to E. J. Willson, A. W. N. Pugin expresses his dislike of Britton:

> John Britton sent me a note some time since [sic] which I dare say he meant to to [sic] be very civil but I consider it Like a fresh insult. he [sic] terms my conversion to the true

[Footnote continued on next page]
A peculiar custom of the Roman church was the interment, in a sepulchre on the north side of the chancel, of an image or picture of our Lord on a cross. This was done on Good Friday and the figure was raised from the sepulchre on Easter day, great ceremony being observed on each occasion. The sepulchre was, in some instances, left in the church till after Ascension day. During the night before Easter day it was watched by the deacon, sexton or some other officer of the church. Godwin (de Presulibus) mentions 'ministers of the holy Sepulchre' at York; also charges 'for watching the holy Sepulchre at Easter eve', and other references to this practice are common in many old church accounts. In some places the sepulchre was a temporary wooden erection; in others, permanent and of stone. It is still to be seen in many churches, as at Bampton in Oxfordshire, etc.

It needs to be noted that in the definition of an Easter sepulchre offered by Britton in 1838, and by Owen and Blakeway in 1825, there is no reference to the burial of a Host. Britton and Owen and Blakeway draw on Gough's descriptions in Vetusta Monumenta and again, in that work, there is no reference to the burial of a Host.

It is in the final years of the 1830s that the Easter sepulchre begins to emerge more clearly from antiquarian obscurity. It was in 1836, or possibly 1837, that A. W. N. Pugin produced a series of drawings which were intended to accompany the fastidious and painstaking work of Dr Daniel Rock (1799-1871), entitled The Church of Our Fathers.

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38 Britton 1838, pp.419-420. Belcher dates them to 'about 1836' [see Belcher 1982, p.321]; Alexandra Wedgwood dates them to 1837 [see Wedgwood 1985, p.167].

39 Rock 1849-53. Thus the work was not actually published for several years; for the possible causes for the lack of progress of Rock's work, see Belcher 1982, esp. pp.325-326.
Daniel Rock was one of the leading scholars of his day, concerned with church history and eccesiology. He had been educated at St Edmund's College, Ware, and the English College in Rome, and became chaplain to the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1827 (he left Lord Shrewsbury’s employ in 1840). Rock had first written to Pugin in 1836. The letter was particularly fulsome:

Though, as yet, I have not had the good fortune of making your personal acquaintance, but know you only by your admirable and very valuable works on the architecture of our country, still I cannot resist the pleasure of addressing a line to you, to offer you my most cordial congratulations and sincere thanks for the manner in which you have contributed to honour our holy religion, by the way in which you have executed the screen part more particularly, of your Book of Designs for silversmiths. The work is a most elegant and correct one: the designs are really beautiful. In the second part I was quite at home, amid chalices, monstrances, cruets, &c., and I cannot tell you how much I feel indebted to you, not only for the delight you afforded me as an individual who is enthusiastically attached to the study of the architecture and church antiquities of Catholic England, but for the assurance which I felt that your designs of Catholic church-plate would, on many occasions, propitiate the good-will of the man of taste towards the olden faith, and, perhaps, induce some to inquire into, and adopt its tenets. The first moving cause of several of our countrymen returning to

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41 For brief information on Rock, see Gwynn 1946, p.40; for details of Rock’s life see Trappes-Lomax 1933, esp. pp.98-99.

42 In the summer of 1840, Rock moved to Buckland to be the chaplain of Sir Robert Throckmorton. Shrewsbury wrote of Rock:

As a Missionary, I never considered him to be at all effective. He has some good qualities, but a very weak mind, which study & seclusion seem to have altogether overpowered. I will never have another chaplain in the House, they are almost sure to be spoilt. [Belcher 2001, p.167, (note 1)].

43 In a letter (5 Sep 1836) to E. J. Willson, A. Pugin wrote:

I have just received a most kind letter from Dr Rock author of the ‘Hierurgia’ telling me how delighted he is with my publications. [Ibid, p.62].

Pugin immediately sent Rock a copy of his Contrasts. Pugin met Rock at Alton in July 1837. Pugin was a frequent visitor to Alton for the rest of his life. [see Ibid, p.114].

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the faith of our forefathers has, more than once, originated in similar trivial incidents. Truth is, very often, at first, like the grain of mustard-seed. It was the kind of comment which would have been music to the ears of Pugin, who saw his own design and architectural task as part of a great campaign designed to restore England to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. In a letter to William Osmond (30 January, 1834) he explained his dismay with the Church of England and his desire to become a Roman Catholic. He wrote the letter whilst visiting Ely:

\[\text{I have been to the cathedrall [sic] all the Morning. how I am delighted. how I am greived [sic]. here is a church magnificent in every respect falling into decay through gross neglect. Would you belive [sic] it possible. there no regular person appointed to attend to the repairs of the building and only person who has been employed during the Last 60 [?] years is a bric [bricklayer]. there is not even common precaution taken to keep the building dry ... The great western tower is falling into great decay -  and alarming fissures have taken place ... I truly regret to say that in my travels I am every day witnessing fresh instances of the disgraceful conduct of the greater portion of the established [sic] clergy -  at a place in Lincolnshire called West Raisin the Rev'd W ' Cooper vicar goes to perform the service in top boots & white cord breeches. this I have seen. the præcentor of Lincoln Cathedral the Rev'd M' Prettyman Tomline son to Late}\]

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44 See Ferrey 1978, pp.122-123.

45 Pugin's main principles of design were published in *Contrasts* in 1836

\[\text{It will be readily admitted, that the great test of Architectural beauty is the fitness of the design to the purpose for which it is intended. [see Pugin 1836, p.1]}\]

He links the symbolism of church design with the theological truth it is designed to convey:

\[\text{... every portion of the sacred fabric bespeaks its origin; the very plan of the edifice is the emblem of human redemption – each portion is destined for the performance of some solemn rite of the church. Here is the brazen font where the waters of baptism wash away the stains of original sin; there stands the gigantic pulpit from which the sacred truths and ordinances are from time to time proclaimed to the congregated people. [Ibid, p.2]}\]

In a purple passage he highlights the altars, the images, the vaulting, the aisles – but he does not mention the Easter sepulchre.
Bishop Tompline ... *Lost 7 Thousand pounds Last Lincoln Races*. I can assure you after a most close & impartial investigation I feel perfectly convinced the roman Catholic church is the only true one – and the only one in which the grand & sublime style of church architecture can ever be restored^7^.

In a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury (5 January 1841), he wrote:

> England is certainly not what it was in 1440 but the thing to do is *to bring it back to that era*. And how can this be better affected than by restoring glorious works of that period, *not mutilated or modernised*, but ‘tale quale’ as they existed in the days of England’s faith^8^.

Pugin’s commitment to that idealistic task was zealous, fiery and unquenchable.

The sketches he produced for *Church of Our Fathers* reflect that commitment. The sketch of the Easter sepulchre is worthy of note; it outlines an entombment group of six people. Joseph of Arimathea (?) is at the head of the Christus, holding the body beneath the arms. At the feet is a female figure who appears to be embracing, or weeping over, the cloth-shrouded body. Two other male figures are in the background (Nicodemus and John the Evangelist) and two female figures, one of whom is kneeling. What makes the sketch so unusual is that it appears to combine a French entombment group of the fifteenth century staged within an English entombment niche^9^. To one side is a massive

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^6^ The worldliness of the Lincoln clergy was also noted by Sir Charles Anderson who, in 1838, described the Sub-Dean of Lincoln Cathedral, Thomas Manners Sutton, as:

> ... one who like most of that name loves the loaves and fishes in the literal sense, who devour a jowl of salmon with their eyes before it is cut, yet a good-natured fellow.

[see Barrett 1993, p.66].

The canons at Worcester in the 1870s were remarkably eccentric:

> One suffered from the delusion that his nose was coming off and fixed it to his cheeks with black sticking-plaster; ‘which gave him the appearance of a venerable tiger’.

> Another, who preached in lavender kid-gloves, had a regular rota of sermons, punctuated by an unvaried sequence of familiar anecdotes. [Ibid, p.68].


^8^ Wedgwood 1985, p.103.

^9^ Alexandra Wedgwood says: [Footnote is continued on next page]
(brass?) five-branched candlestick and, to the other, a hooded figure kneels at prayer, holding a rosary (Fig. 104).

There is no evidence extant that entombment groups of the kind sketched by Pugin ever existed in England; the sketch, therefore, would appear to be a kind of medieval fantasy, a highly idealised 'construct'. In her study of the sketches, Margaret Belcher makes a telling point:

*Pugin is not here concerned primarily with the structure; these are not architectural drawings, let alone detailed plans ... What he concentrates on ... is the event taking place against the background ... what he is illustrating is what, in his opinion, it felt like to be alive in the fourteenth century.*

In brief, the sketch is not an Easter sepulchre as such, but rather his idea of the ideal Easter sepulchre and, more than that, the religious feelings it should evoke. Again Belcher points out:

*... no fewer than twenty of the sketches contain figures kneeling in attitudes of devotion ... life is axiomatically theocentric.*

Whilst this particular sketch is interesting in the history of the 'idea' of the Easter sepulchre, it cannot be used as evidence for the specific architectural treatment which Pugin brought to the design of Easter sepulchres in his own churches. It captures a mood and an aspiration and an ideal, but nothing more.

*This illustration shows an interesting example of Pugin's knowledge of French and English ecclesiastical buildings: the architecture of the canopy is typical of England, whereas the scene of the entombment is common in France.* [Wedgwood 1985, p.167].


In her essay 'Pugin Writing', Belcher notes the following concerning Pugin's picture of medieval England:

*What is revealing is that he [Pugin] offers no evidence for his account of the medieval period ... Pugin's picture of the Middle Ages is a vision stimulated by his reading and by his religion, but essentially born of his imagination. It is a new construction rather than a reconstruction of the old, the representation of an ideal.* [Belcher 1994, p.107].


Comparing Rock's scholarly style with Pugin's, Belcher says Rock was: [Continued overleaf]
Fig. 104

Pugin's sketch of an entombment group.
It is known that Pugin had met Daniel Rock not later than 24 June 1837, when Pugin noted Rock's name in his diary during a visit to London. It seems highly likely that the meeting with Rock, the church historian and ecclesiologist, led Pugin to refine his own thinking about the architectural components of churches and the rôle of Easter sepulchres in particular. For example, in Pugin's designs of imaginary churches, one of a chapel in 1831, there is no drawing of an Easter sepulchre (it shows the north-east view of the exterior of the chapel, the exterior of the choir, and a transverse section looking west); and in his ground plan of a Catholic chapel produced in 1832, there is no Easter sepulchre; nor in St James', Reading, whose foundation stone was laid on 14 December 1837, is there any sign of an Easter sepulchre. However, in his design for St Mary's, Uttoxeter, to which Trappes-Lomax assigns an 1838 date, there is an Easter sepulchre:

... opposite to these [sedilia] is an arched recess, for the sepulchre in holy week.

In an article written by Pugin in the *Orthodox Journal*, 20 July 1839, he stated:

*This small church may be truly described as the first Catholic structure erected in this country in accordance with the rules of ancient ecclesiastical architecture since the days of the pretended Reformation. The style is that of the early part of the thirteenth century: lancet arches, without tracery. Over the entrance doorway is a circular window, divided into twelve compartments with a sexfoil in the centre, filled with richly stained glass. At the summit of the western gable is a belfry for two bells, surmounted by an iron trefoil-ended cross ... [the] altar is left entirely free for sacrifice; but the blessed Sacrament, according to an ancient...*}

... slow, cautious, even ponderous. Pugin, on the other hand, was brisk, decisive ... impetuous, sometimes even rash; and he did not always wait to amass all the evidence before announcing his conclusions. [Belcher 1982, p.325].

Belcher does point out, however, that Rock's work, *The Church of Our Fathers*, was in its own way as utopian as Pugin's *Contrasts*:

'The Church of Our Fathers' offers ... the same utopian vision as 'Contrasts' ... not primarily an archaeological one at all, let alone theological, but personal, romantic and ideal. [Ibid, p.332].

Trappes-Lomax 1933, p.342.

326

See Pugin 1843, p.32; this was originally published in the *Dublin Review* 20, May 1841.
and formerly general practice, will be suspended over the altar in a pyx, inclosed [sic] within a silver dove, surrounded by rays of glory\textsuperscript{55}.

Pugin described the sedilia and then went on to explain that there was, in the opposite wall, an

... arch and tomb to be used for the reservation of the blessed Sacrament on Maundy Thursday\textsuperscript{56}.

It would seem, therefore, that St Mary's, Uttoxeter, was the very first church in England, built since the Reformation, to have had an Easter sepulchre created in permanent form.

It is important to recognise that whereas \textit{Contrasts}\textsuperscript{57} omitted all mention of Easter sepulchres, by 1838/9 Easter sepulchres had in Pugin's eyes become part of the necessary furnishings of a Catholic church, for example St Mary's, Uttoxeter; and by 1841 in \textit{True Principles} Pugin was reiterating the singular importance of Easter sepulchres\textsuperscript{58}.

The Hospital of St John, Alton, Staffordshire, built, as was St Mary's, Uttoxeter, with the considerable financial and moral backing of the Earl of Shrewsbury (whose personal chaplain, it needs to be remembered, was Dr Daniel Rock), also received the full Pugin treatment:

\textit{This chapel communicates with the chancel by a richly moulded and paneled [sic] doorway, and also by an arched opening of the same description, containing a high tomb with tracery and emblems, to serve for the sepulchre at Easter}\textsuperscript{59}.

In 'Article II', first published in the \textit{Dublin Review} (February 1842) and reprinted in \textit{Present State}\textsuperscript{60}, Pugin refers to the new churches for which he was responsible:

\textsuperscript{55} Gwynn 1946, pp.42-43.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p.44.
\textsuperscript{57} Pugin 1836.
\textsuperscript{58} See Pugin 1841, pp.16-17.
\textsuperscript{59} Pugin 1843, p.89. Trappes-Lomax dates St John's, Alton, 1840-1844 [see Trappes-Lomax 1933, p.341].
\textsuperscript{60} See Pugin 1843.
Southport, Keighley, Kenilworth, St Oswald’s near Liverpool, Macclesfield, Dudley, Pomfret and Masborough, near Rotherham, where

... the chancels are built precisely after the ancient models, and bear a good relative proportion to the length of the church; they are also duly provided with screens, sedilia, sepulchres, reredoses, &c. ⁶¹.

He describes some of those churches, including the Jesus Chapel at Pomfret:

*On the Gospel [north] side of the chancel is a richly ornamented niche, which is also open towards the chantry, and within it a high tomb to serve for the sepulchre at Easter.* ⁶².

In describing St Bede’s, Masbro, near Rotherham, he states that it includes

... all the essentials of a Catholic church ... Nave, southern porch, font, chancel, rood screen, altar, sedilia, sepulchre, belfry ... ⁶³.

It was in *Present State* (1843) that he made clear which components in a church were necessary,

... what is to be regarded as forming a complete Catholic parish church ⁶⁴.

Apart from nave, chancel, south porch

... in which a stoup for hallowed water should be provided ⁶⁵

he also categorised what should be in the chancel: on the epistle (i.e. south) side of the altar there should be a piscina plus sedilia for the priest, deacon and subdeacon;

*Opposite to these an arched tomb, to serve as the sepulchre for holy week.* ⁶⁶.

⁶¹ Pugin 1843, p.58.
⁶² Ibid, p.97.
⁶⁴ Ibid, p.12.
⁶⁶
The instructions could not be clearer. (For an example, see Fig. 105.) They are in marked contrast to his 'mythical' entombment sketch of 1836/7.

It was also in the 1843 work Present State that Pugin outlined the uses for which Easter sepulchres were designed:

On the gospel side of the chancel, and nearly opposite the sedilia, we generally find an arch forming a recess and canopy to an altar tomb: this was used as a sepulchre for the reservation of the blessed sacrament, from Maundy Thursday till Easter Sunday morning, which was anciently practised in the Sarum rite. There is frequent allusion to this in the wills of pious persons, who desired to have their tombs so built that they might serve for the sepulchre; that when men came to pay their devotions to our Lord's body, at that holy time, they might be moved to pray for the repose of their souls.  

Pugin's description of function is redolent of Rock's description; both link Easter sepulchres with piety and prayer. So close in tone are their descriptions, it is very difficult to believe that they did not deeply influence each other.

Pugin continues his description of use by citing Long Melford church and the Clopton tomb, and also refers to Eckington (sic) and Hawton. In a footnote, he tries to distinguish between the use of a side chapel as an altar of repose for the consecrated elements on Maundy Thursday:

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60 Pugin 1843, p.13.
In a letter to Dr Rock (13 December, 1840) Pugin wrote:

I have a southern porch - Chancel - rood sedilia Easter chapels in every church I build but I am compleatly [sic] alone & it is of Little use building churches without men - who will use them. [see Belcher 2001, p.174].

67 Pugin 1843, pp.34-35.
68 See page 331 in this chapter.
69 Pugin 1843, p.35:
... these are richly decorated in the style of Edward III, with representations of the Roman soldiers asleep, and other appropriate imagery.
Major example of a design by Pugin for an Easter sepulchre [Cheadle, St Giles, Staffordshire]
... the name of sepulchre has been most improperly given to the chapel in which it is solemnly kept\textsuperscript{70}

- and the actual ceremonies of Good Friday:

\textit{The watching, according to the Sarum rite, commenced on Good Friday, and continued till Easter-day, early in the morning, when the blessed sacrament was brought forth from the sepulchre with solemn procession. This ceremony was also practised in France and some of the Northern Countries, but there is no trace of it in the Roman rite\textsuperscript{71}.}

It is significant that Pugin, like Rock, does not refer to the deposition or elevation of a cross in the Easter sepulchre; the rite is essentially and solely centred on the consecrated Host.

In terms of architectural design, however, it is clear that Pugin regarded the Easter sepulchre as a necessary, authentic and permanent feature of a Catholic church. In his \textit{Glossary} of 1844 his definition was simple:

\textit{A place where the Blessed Sacrament was solemnly reserved from Good Friday till Easter Sunday\textsuperscript{72}.}

It needs to be noted that this definition contrasts strongly with the definition offered by John Britton\textsuperscript{73} six years earlier. Britton's definition referred only to an image being 'buried' in a sepulchre on the north side of the chancel; it failed to refer to the 'burial' of a eucharistic Host. By contrast, Pugin omits any reference to the burial of an image or a cross and, instead, lays sole emphasis upon the blessed sacrament. Pugin believed there were only two categories of Easter sepulchre. Firstly, one which was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[70] Pugin 1843, p.34, footnote.
\item[71] Ibid, p.34, footnote.
\item[72] Pugin 1844, p.186.
\item[73] Britton 1838, pp.419-420. See earlier in this chapter, p.321.
\end{footnotes}
... built in the north walls of the choir or chancel, and adorned with rich ornamental covering and appropriate imagery.\footnote{Pugin 1844, p.186.}

He cites, as an example, Heckington, Navenby and Hawton.

Secondly, one which was

\textit{Composed of frame work and rich hangings, set up for the occasion\footnote{Ibid, p.186.}.}

However, he also argues for another kind of Easter sepulchre:

... there are few parochial churches which are not provided with a tomb on the north side of the chancel, which served for the Sepulchre, and was adorned on these occasions with hangings and other decorations\footnote{Ibid, p.187.}.

Pugin's descriptions of the Easter sepulchre can be compared with those of Daniel Rock. Rock suggests that the Easter sepulchre was a tomb-structure on the north side of the chancel:

\textit{In the wish to be buried in one particular spot on the chancel's northern side, and in those injunctions for the architectural adornments of the grave to be fashioned so that there always might be set,}

\textit{THE EASTER SEPULCHRE UPON HIS TOMB,}

we meet another proof of that eagerness in bygone times, to be prayed for when dead, felt by him who could have his will fulfilled in such things. While doing this, the owner of the soil, or the lord of the manor, only sought to avail himself best of those opportunities for getting his soul remembered, afforded him by those highest and therefore rare but impressive solemnities of the ritual, which once in every year were sure to bring all the people in crowds to the parish-church, as they mingled in its heart-stirring celebrations\footnote{Rock 1849-53, vol. 3, pt.1, pp.94-95.}.\footnote{\textsuperscript{74} Pugin 1844, p.186.}
It is interesting to note the contextual themes with which Rock surrounds the Easter sepulchre. There are four of them: firstly, the association with 'bygone times'; secondly, the association with the powerful; thirdly, the association with teaching about death and the afterlife; and fourthly, the desire, not unlike Pugin's, to assume a golden age when people thronged to the churches. The Easter sepulchre carried, it would appear, a range of meanings and ideologies for Rock and, indeed, for Pugin.

Rock described in detail the liturgies associated with the Easter sepulchre:

> From the early part of Maundy Thursday till Easter morning, the Blessed Eucharist was kept in what was called the 'sepulchre'; and night and day, crowds thronged to watch and worship there.\(^78\)

He drew close theological and doctrinal links between the sepulchre as the place where the Host was reserved and the tomb used for its shelter:

> ... the people of the parish knowing who it was that had made their 'sepulchre' to be so beautiful, and had endowed the church with the means of lighting it up so splendidly, were taught to pray for the soul, while they remembered that there lay hard by the remains of him who besought as a precious boon that the marble table of his monument might 'bear the body of our Lord at Easter'.\(^79\)

In a footnote to his description, Rock provides the evidence for his assertions about the Easter sepulchre. He refers to the will of Thomas, Lord Dacre\(^80\), and also draws upon evidence from the will of Ralf Verney, Knight, who in 1478 directed that his body should be buried

> ... in the tomb standing under the sepulture between the choir and our Lady's chapel.\(^81\)

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\(^80\) Ibid, vol. 3, pt.1, p.96, footnote 85. Rock sources this: Text. Vet. ii, 653. See also earlier in this thesis, Chapter 8, p.200. For illustration of the tomb, see Fig.102.

And he refers also to the will of Eleanor, wife of Judge Townsend. In volume 3, part 2, of The Church of Our Fathers, Rock describes the original rites found in the Regularis Concordia. He describes the deposition of the cross in those rites taking place as follows:

At the hind part of the altar, and where the hollow within might be easily laid open, there was made a kind of sepulchre, hung all about with a curtain. Inside this recess, and just beneath the altar-stone itself, the cross, after the ceremony of kissing it had been done, was carried by its two deacons, who had, however, first wrapped it up in a linen cloth or winding-sheet ... and it lay thus entombed till Easter morn.

He argues that when the three Marys came to the sepulchre on Easter day, they placed the thuribles they had been carrying in the hollow of the altar where the cross had lain.

What Rock does not seem to make clear is the location, in rites subsequent to the Regularis Concordia, where the burial of the Host, rather than the cross, actually occurred. In volume 3, part 1, of his work, he says that it was buried...

... in what was called the 'sepulchre'.

In volume 3, part 2, he suggests that the Host was...

... reverently carried to a place set aside for it in the sacristy.

- that is, ready for the Mass of the Pre-sanctified on Good Friday. At no point does Rock mention that in the Sarum rites for Holy Week, Host and cross were both central. In emphasising the rôle of the Host and in drawing evidence from Lord Dacre's will, Rock

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lays supreme evidence upon the Host as the central carrier of meaning in the ceremonies. Pugin, whether influenced by Rock or not (and circumstantial evidence suggests that surely he must have been), treated the Easter sepulchre as essentially the place where the Host alone was buried; associating it with tombs reinforced the theological doctrines about the efficacy of the Mass and its link with death and the afterlife, which were central also to Rock’s perspective.

At this juncture, therefore, it seems not unreasonable to conclude that for both Pugin and Rock the Easter sepulchre, amongst other furnishings for the chancel, was an object which carried a series of complex but powerful meanings. In the new Catholic churches built by Pugin, it was a reminder of the ancient faith of England; it was a witness to that idealised age when people reputedly flocked to the Easter ceremonies; it was a signal of the link made between Mass and the afterlife; it was a claim to authenticity - this was an object rooted in the very life of Christ Himself, transmitted through the golden age of faith, being restored in the lifetime of Pugin and Rock’s generation. It was perhaps, above all, a sign which was deliberately ambiguous; it pointed backwards towards ‘authenticity’ and forwards to a new and coming golden age of faith.

In the light of all this evidence, it seems safe to assume that in the late 1830s the links between Rock and Pugin gave rise to a powerful and highly influential reworking and reenergising of the Easter sepulchre phenomenon. Whereas Blomefield and Gough in

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87 The ‘meaning’ of an object in Pugin’s scheme of things was not always related to the reality of the ecclesiastical situation at the time; for example, whilst he invariably designed his sedilia for priest, deacon and sub-deacon, there were rarely enough clergy to fulfil those roles:

*In small churches there would seldom be three clergymen to occupy the sedilia ... and many clergy would have been ignorant about the piscine and Easter sepulchre.*

[See Meara 1995, pp.56-57]

And as David Meara points out:

*Pugin himself wrote ‘the churches I build do little or no good for want of men who know how to use them. Dudley is a complete facsimile after an old English parish church and nobody seems to know how to use it.’* [Ibid, p.57].

88 Whilst there is no literary evidence extant to prove without a shadow of doubt that the Rock-Pugin friendship was one of the primary sources for the Easter sepulchre phenomenon, their affection and respect for each other was very considerable; for example, a letter from Pugin to Rock, dated 4 March 1840:

[Footnote continued on next page]

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the eighteenth century focussed attention on permanent Easter sepulchres, seeing them as being of significant antiquarian interest, Pugin and Rock invented and fostered the myth that permanent Easter sepulchres were central to the liturgies of the medieval church, and should therefore - by implication - be rediscovered and reinvented. But Pugin and Rock were not the sole source for this development; it is also very clear that in the creation of the Cambridge Camden Society, in 1839 by John Mason Neale, further impetus was given to Easter sepulchres.

The changes in attitudes towards, and understanding of, Easter sepulchres, occasioned by J. M. Neale and the creation of the Cambridge Camden Society, can be traced quite simply and chronologically. In 1839 the Camden Society produced one of its first instructional pamphlets. It was entitled *A Few Hints on the Practical Study of Ecclesiastical Antiquities*. That first edition includes definitions of 'aumbries' and 'piscinae' but does not include any reference to Easter sepulchres. However, one year later in 1840, the second edition offers the following definition:

*Generally, a shallow recess in the chancel, under an obtuse arch, rising about three feet from the ground. The use was the reception of the elements consecrated on the Coena Domini (Maundy Thursday) till the celebration of High Mass on Easter Sunday. They are said usually to occur on the north side; with what truth it may be questioned. For, though in the Midland Counties such is the case, in the Southern they are seldom met with but in the south. They occur of all...*

*... I have seen some glorious things [he is describing a visit to churches in Norfolk] and believe [sic] me I have profited by them. I will never perpetrate [sic] anything foreign in England again - you are quite right ... a thousand thank [sic] for all your observations ... every thing you have said is true - and no one ever did me so much good as you have done. the revival of our national antiquities must be our cry. [See Belcher 2001, p.133].

Note the use of the word 'our' in the final sentence. It would appear that Pugin and Rock were driven by the same vision and the same aspiration. *True Principles* (Pugin 1841) also includes a tribute to Rock, where

*Pugin acknowledges his debt to the 'learned researches and observations on Christian antiquities' of his 'respected and revered friend' [see Belcher 2001, p.236, note 2].

Neale 1839.

Neale 1840.
degrees of magnificence ... they do not abound near Cambridge. Examples, Balsham, Grantchester.\(^9\)

This definition is fascinating for its early attempt to consider regional differences in the design of Easter sepulchres.

The third edition\(^9\) takes the regional issue a stage further; it provides another and fuller definition of Easter sepulchres:

\begin{quote}
A recess for the reception of the elements consecrated on the Coena Domini or Maundy Thursday till High Mass on Easter day. They are generally shallow under an obtuse or broad ogee arch, rising about three feet from the ground. They usually occur on the north side of the chancel (sic) but often in Kent, Sussex and Hampshire on the south, and may be found of all degrees of magnificence, from the plain oblong recesses in the Weald of Sussex, to the gorgeous sculpture representing the Resurrection in Heckington, Lincolnshire. They are almost invariably of Decorated date. Cambridgeshire does not present many examples, but there is one in Grantchester church. Sometimes an altar tomb on the north side of the altar, especially in the Tudor age, served as an Easter sepulchre. At East Wittering, Sussex, is a curious example, here the monument consists of two parts, one in the north wall, the other jutting out at right angles to it, at a distance of about three feet from the eastern wall.\(^9\)
\end{quote}

The definition has thus become slightly more precise, the regional variations have been specified and a curiosity (East Wittering) noted. It seems almost inevitable that one of the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire group should have also now appeared. But doubts remain:

\begin{quote}
We often find adjacent to the sedilia, on the western side, a large recess, as at Great Haseley, Oxfordshire, and Meysey Hampton, Gloucestershire, which may
\end{quote}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{9} Neale 1840, p.15.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{9} Neale 1842.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{9} Ibid, p.20.}
be called the 'magnum sedile'. Its use is unknown, but it may have been an Easter sepulchre.

The tone of the writing is less forceful, less didactic, perhaps less driven than Pugin’s. The introduction to the third edition indicates what purpose the study of churches was designed to serve:

*It is plain that the only safe way to arrive at any general principles of ecclesiology is to observe and describe the details and arrangements of unmutilated churches, or parts of churches, and from a large collection of such observations, if carefully recorded much advantage may accrue to science.*

In other words, ecclesiology was meant to have a degree of objectivity and was not, at least at first sight, meant to serve some greater propagandising purpose. Easter sepulchres were worthy of note in their own right, rather than being primarily carriers of ideology. Even so, hidden within this apparently objective study were a number of quieter and less strident ulterior ideological motives.

In 1843 *Hierologus* by John Mason Neale was published. It takes the form of a conversation between Catholicus and Palaeophilus. They open their conversation by discussing the purpose of ecclesiology; Catholicus remarks:

*Assuredly, it is a glorious study. So it would be if it only made us conversant with works of art so exquisite, and accustomed our eyes to details so beautiful and so

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94 Neale 1842, p.19.
95 Ibid, p.16.
96 J. M. Neale also wrote pamphlets for church builders. In *A Few Words to Church Builders* (see Neale 1841(a)), he gave instructions about what chancels should contain and how they should look:

*... a very magnificent appearance may be given to the chancel by raising it on a flight of nine or ten steps.* [Neale 1841(a), p.11]

But although he discusses and describes sedilia, piscinas, etc, he does not mention Easter sepulchres:

*The usual position of the aumbrye was on the Gospel side of the altar.* [Ibid, p.12].
97 Neale 1843(a).
highly wrought, but when we add the sanctity of feeling that attaches itself to our pursuit, and the practical influence which it possesses on the worship of God in this land, one wonders that any can look on it as uninteresting, or refuse to give up themselves to it with all their ardour.

The study of churches then is closely associated with the stimulation of 'sanctity of feeling'; but it also has a moral dimension:

*We, of all people, ought to be alive to the nothingness of all worldly distinctions and the curse of all worldly wealth unless the one and the other be devoted to God for the service of his Church; and we, of all people, should have a fellow feeling with the poor, frequenting, as we do, those houses where they and the rich meet together as equals.*

The two participants, in a self-conscious, knowing, way also remind themselves of other virtues engendered by their church studies:

*Another great benefit ... is our constant association with memorials and remembrances of death. The high tomb, the coped coffin ... but they also speak to us of that which can live beyond it, of faith and charity and good works.*

It is only once these generalised statements about the evocation of religious feelings and moral virtues have been completed that the conversation moves to a specific theological and ideological outcome:

*... the great charm in the acquisition of this kind of knowledge is the remembrance of the high and holy use to which it will be dedicated, namely, the attempt to help forward the present great revival of church principles.*

It is leisurely, romantic, touched by the sublime; but not as strident a manifesto for radical change as Pugin's. Pugin was obsessively interested in the renewed importance

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98 Neale 1843(a), p.4.
99 Ibid, pp.4-5.
100 Ibid, p.5.
101 Ibid, p.5.
of Gothic architecture - though his interest was invariably a mixture of hard-edged practicality and utopian dream

For example, in *True Principles* he expatiated on the purpose of pinnacles:

> I have little doubt that pinnacles are considered by the majority of persons as mere ornamental excrescences introduced solely for picturesque effect. The very reverse is the case ... they should be regarded as answering a double function, both mystical and natural; their mystical intention is, like other vertical lines and terminations of Christian architecture, to represent an emblem of the Resurrection; their natural intention is that of an upper weathering, to throw off the rain.

He pushed the importance of symbolism in Gothic architecture even further:

> It must appear evident that the present revival of ancient architecture in this country is based on the soundest and most consistent principles. It is warranted by religion, government, climate and the wants of society. It is a perfect expression of all we should hold sacred, honourable and national and connected with the holiest and dearest associations.

Pugin was attempting to create a unified theory of architecture - a unification which brought together nationalism and religious belief:

> An Englishman needs not controversial writings to lead him to the faith of his fathers; it is written on the wall, on the window, on the pavement, by the highway.

Megan Aldrich wrote:

> ... there can be no doubt that the Romantic movement provided a context for those who turned to the medieval rather than the classical past for inspiration.

[See Aldrich 1995, p.14].

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102 Megan Aldrich wrote:

> ... there can be no doubt that the Romantic movement provided a context for those who turned to the medieval rather than the classical past for inspiration.

[See Aldrich 1995, p.14].

103 Pugin 1841, p.9.

104 Ibid, p.45.

105 Ibid, p.49.
Two years after the publication of True Principles, Pugin produced The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England\textsuperscript{106}, a collection of papers originally published in 1841 in the Dublin Review. The first article contains a ringing and emotionally charged paragraph about the nature of parish churches:

\textit{It is, in fact, by parish churches, that the faith of a nation is to be sustained and nourished; in them souls are engrafted to the Church by the waters of baptism; they are the tribunals of penance, and the seats of mercy and forgiveness. In them is the holy Eucharistic sacrifice continually offered up, and the sacred body of our Lord received by the faithful; there the holy books are read, and the people instructed; they become the seat and centre of every pious thought and deed; the pavement is studded with sepulchral memorials, and hundreds of departed faithful repose beneath the turf of the consecrated enclosures in which they stand\textsuperscript{107}.}

The Easter sepulchre in Pugin's thinking was but one element in this idealised and highly romanticised version of the function of churches. But the churches, and Pugin's conceptual ideology which shaped his designs, should also be seen in a different kind of context - one which involved a growing and changing national awareness\textsuperscript{108}.

Following the fire of 1834, in which much of the Palace of Westminster was destroyed (a fire witnessed by Pugin), there was considerable national debate about where and in what style the building should be rebuilt. In commenting upon the final decision of the Royal Commission to award Barry with the contract, Fredericksen says:

\textsuperscript{106} Pugin 1843.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, p.1.

\textsuperscript{108} E. Sheridan Purcell's essay (see Purcell 1978 - originally published in 1916) makes frequent reference to the 'national' theme; for example:

\textit{Pugin has done more than any other man in the present age to promote the study of medieval art and to revive again the glories of our national architecture. [p.308].}

\textit{He was the first to raise his voice against the abomination of an adopted paganism, against the base imitation of a corrupt style, foreign to our soil, to our climate, and to our national character. [p.312].}
The committees' [sic] decision on location and style was, in many ways, a romantic gesture, prompted by the overwhelming response to the destruction caused by the fire¹⁰⁹.

It was also, in some ways, very reminiscent of Pugin’s thinking about ‘Christian’ architecture; that is, it involved the creation of a tradition:

... the desire to imply - through a carefully staged architectural programme that both pilfered from and lent to the historical associations of the Westminster setting - a continuity with a suitable past perceived as the nation’s Golden Age¹¹⁰.

The chronological proximity of the fire to the French Revolution, and to the subsequent rise and then defeat of Napoleon, added a political and cultural urgency to this invention of a new form of national identity.

It could be argued, therefore, that in the excitement and controversy generated by Pugin, the foundation of the Cambridge Camden Society, and the renewed interest in Gothic architecture (including objects and ceremonies such as those associated with Easter sepulchres), accuracy of scholarship, for example, about how Easter sepulchres were actually used liturgically in the Middle Ages, took second place to the powerful desire to idealise the past in order to create a new and dynamic future.

Whilst Easter sepulchres were important features in Pugin’s churches, the fact remains that for J. M. Neale and his fellow ecclesiologists, Easter sepulchres were not central to their conceptual world. In a pamphlet, A Few Words to Church Builders¹¹¹, by J. M. Neale, where Pugin’s influence is acknowledged, particular reference being made to his True Principles, recommendations are made about the interiors of churches, including altars, reredoses, sedilia and aumbryes [sic] but there is no mention of an Easter sepulchre. In fact, Neale challenges some of Pugin’s foundational assumptions about Christian architecture by saying that it is ‘sacramentality’ which distinguishes ancient ecclesiastical architecture from its contemporary equivalents:

¹¹¹ Neale 1841(a).
By this word [sacramentality] we mean to convey the idea that by the outward and visible form is signified something inward and spiritual: that the material fabric [sic] symbolizes, embodies, figures, represents, expresses answers to some abstract meaning. Consequently, unless this ideal itself be the true one, or be rightly understood, he who seeks to build a Christian church may embody a false or incomplete or mistaken ideal, but will not develop the true one ... It must be Christian reality, the true expression of a true ideal, which makes Catholic [sic] architecture what it is ... Mr Pugin does not seem in his books to recognise the particular principle which we have enunciated.

In these circumstances, therefore, where in Pugin's view an Easter sepulchre was a necessary part of a Catholic church, and where in Neale's view a pre-medieval, indeed early Christian understanding of sacramentality, was the key to the creation of true Christian architecture, it is perhaps not surprising that Easter sepulchres themselves remained intriguingly elusive. Pugin, it cannot be denied, tried to recreate them in solid form; they were a sign of the authenticity of the catholic faith and of the authenticity of the catholic churches which he created - whereas Neale and the ecclesiologists tended, perhaps, to treat them as objects of curiosity, having some part to play in a generalised educative and moral task. What Pugin, for the Roman Catholic Church, and J. M. Neale, for the Church of England, were certainly agreed upon was the rites which once took place within and upon them. Those rites, as can be seen in Pugin's Glossary definition and in the work of the early ecclesiologists, seemed to centre solely and supremely upon the Mass and the part played by the consecrated Host. Neither Pugin nor the ecclesiologists seemed to acknowledge what Britton and the early antiquarians had pointed out - that the rites also involved the burial of a cross. Pugin and Neale looked at Easter sepulchres through particularly Mass-focused Catholic lenses.

This may help to explain the patchy and disconnected developments of the Easter sepulchre idea in the nineteenth century. It is an interesting fact that a number of books published post-1840 continued not to refer to Easter sepulchres. R. and J. Brandon's work on Gothic architecture, published in 1847, whilst having numerous references to sedilia, fonts and piscinas, has no references to Easter sepulchres - and this in spite of

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112 Neale 1843(b), p.xxvi.
113 See Brandon 1847.
Heckington being mentioned in their text at least five times. Similarly, their later work on English parish churches\textsuperscript{114}, published seven years later, features careful studies and detailed measurements of sixty-three churches, but Easter sepulchres are not mentioned once.

J. H. Parker's *An Introduction to the Study of Gothic Architecture*\textsuperscript{115}, published in 1849, which began life as a series of lectures given to the junior members of the Oxford Architectural Society in the spring of that year, describes the styles of architecture in England, for example Norman, Early English, etc. It concentrates its attention largely on windows, doorways, mouldings and capitals but, again, does not feature or mention Easter sepulchres.

In 1871, a lecture on Easter sepulchres, given by Matthew Holbeche Bloxam\textsuperscript{116} to the Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society, was published\textsuperscript{117}. It is a masterly, well-founded survey of the liturgical origins of parts of the Easter sepulchre rites (he traces the history of the adoration of the cross but, unfortunately, seems not to have been aware of the *Regularis Concordia* ceremonies). He alludes to the Sarum rite:

*In a manuscript I possess of the fifteenth century, of the use of Sarum, are certain rubrical directions ... The procession was to go through the west door to the place of the first station, on the north side of the church. Then the priest put off his chesible [sic], and took the cross with his feet unshod and in his surplice, and deposited the cross in the sepulchre, then the host, but in a pix, in the same sepulchre*\textsuperscript{118}.

He argues for the primacy of temporary, wooden sepulchres, and tries to clear up misunderstandings that had arisen about what should or should not be claimed to be an Easter sepulchre:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[114] See Branden 1854
\item[115] Parker 1849.
\item[116] Author of *Principles of Gothic Architecture*; for further details see Bloxam 1829.
\item[117] Bloxam 1871.
\item[118] Ibid, p.70.
\end{footnotes}
In the 'Consilia', I do not mean the 'Concilia Generalis', but the 'Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae', better known perhaps as 'Wilkin's Concilia'. I do not find in any of the Synodical or Provincial Constitutions relating to church furniture, any order for the sepulchre in the articles therein enumerated as essential to a church. It appears to have been regarded much in the light of organs to our churches, the gifts of individual benefactors, whilst the arches under which the Easter Sepulchres were placed, or the architectural and sculptured compositions within which they were deposited, and which at the present day are popularly, but erroneously, known as Easter Sepulchres, bore the same reference to the sepulchres as the organ-lofts or organ chambers bore to the organ.\[19\]

The tone of this piece of writing is a long way removed from the persuasive and energetic tones of Pugin. It would appear, if Bloxam is to be believed, that by the 1870s the idea of the Easter sepulchre had become firmly embedded in the consciousness of many - how otherwise explain the phrase: 'which at the present day are popularly, but erroneously, known as Easter sepulchres'? Bloxam attempts to set the record straight\[20\].

He refers to the history of Melford (Long Melford) church and the Clopton tomb, to the high tomb at Stanwell, Middlesex, to the will of Lady Townshend of Raineham, to the 'sepulchre' at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, and to the book known as *The Ancient Rites and Monuments of the Monastical and Cathedral Church of Durham*. He traces also the injunctions relating to Easter ceremonies in the reigns of Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I, and then, having given a full description of a wooden sepulchre formerly belonging to Kilsby church, Northamptonshire, he completes his survey by detailing permanent Easter sepulchre features in a number of churches, namely Cubbington (Warwickshire), Long Itchington (Warwickshire), Garthorpe (Leicestershire), Bilton (Warwickshire), Stanton St John (Oxfordshire), and says:

*The most interesting examples, however, of receptacles for Easter Sepulchres, wherein both architectural features of a high degree of merit and sculptured accessories skilfully worked out are combined, are to be met with in the churches*  

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19 Bloxam 1871, p.71.

20 In the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Bloxam is described as: Scrupulous in his search for truth, Bloxam had no qualms in demystifying popular legends. [Homer 2004, p.328].
of Hawton, and St Peter, Sibthorpe, Nottinghamshire; Heckington, Navenby, and Lincoln Cathedral, Lincolnshire; Patrington, Yorkshire; Northwold, Norfolk; and Holcombe Burnell, Devonshire.\(^{121}\)

It is clear that the accumulation of scholarship and the growth in understanding between the first tentative descriptions offered by Owen and Blakeway in 1825 or Rickman in the second edition of his work in 1825, and Matthew Bloxam's lecture published in 1871, has been considerable. The romanticism of the early part of the century has given way to a more considered and well-founded exploration.

It can be seen, therefore, that there were a number of streams in the nineteenth century which influenced the way in which Easter sepulchres came to be regarded. Firstly, there was the romantic stream, which gave rise to the first effusions of the Gothic revival; then secondly, the historical stream, represented by the early antiquarians, such as Rickman and Britton. Thirdly, there was the patriotic stream, which was a response to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Fourthly, there was an ideological stream, represented by Pugin and Rock (a stream which also included 'utopianism'); and fifthly, the 'scientific' stream, represented by J. M. Neale and the founding members of the Cambridge Camden Society. These streams were never entirely separate but, rather, mingled and flowed together. And it can be argued, therefore, that antiquarians who, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were not even aware of Easter sepulchres, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were 'seeing' Easter sepulchres almost everywhere (the evidence for this was provided in the last chapter).

It may be entirely coincidental that, in looking for Easter sepulchres for this thesis, in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire (with the exception of one parish), I seemed to find Easter sepulchres in those churches which were 'restored' under the hands of people such as G. E. Street, G. G. Scott, J. S. Wing, J. O. Scott and J. D. Sedding, who themselves were deeply influenced by Pugin and the Camden Society. Might this imply that the objects designated as Easter sepulchres were not, in reality, Easter sepulchres at all (they might originally have had other purposes) but were part of that desire, so dramatically and fiercely promoted by Pugin, to create or rediscover Catholic authenticity? - or, less tendentiously, that other powerful desire, to romanticise the past?

\(^{121}\) Bloxam 1871, p.80.
M. H. Bloxam, who had played such a significant part in the raising of architectural awareness in the nineteenth century, concluded his 1871 lecture in this way:

To look back upon the past, to endeavour to trace the clue to some neglected or misunderstood point relating to church discipline and customs in former ages, is not immaterial. What our forefathers, our learned Divines at the Reformation\textsuperscript{122}, understood and were able to comment upon, have now been in great measure forgotten. It is no needless or idle research to inquire into and pursue the origin, progress, and disuse of ancient religious rites and ceremonies. The relics pertaining to such still to be found in our churches, historic memorials of the past, are, to the great majority of us, like what has been said of the pyramids of old, 'they mumble something, but what it is we know not'\textsuperscript{123}.

It is an elegiac and wistful note that Bloxam sounds, the certainty of his youthful classifications of Gothic architecture in 1829 has given way, forty-two years later, to a recognition that to enter imaginatively and sympathetically into the mindset of an earlier age, is a delightful but complex and daunting task.

What can be said with confidence, however, is that the energetic enthusiasm generated by Pugin and by the Camden Society in the middle decades of the nineteenth century was sufficient to cause the concept of permanent Easter sepulchres to lodge firmly in the minds of later architectural and ecclesiastical historians, no matter how elusive such sepulchres were in reality. Pugin, following the logic of his own ideological desires, created new ones; the Camden Society ecclesiologists, longing to discover Easter sepulchres, began to 'see' them everywhere.

The same energetic enthusiasm was sufficient to ensure that the newly founded, county-based, archaeological and architectural societies of the second half of the nineteenth century continued the quest for permanent Easter sepulchres in their own localities. The

\textsuperscript{122} Unlike Pugin's desire to trace his history to pre-Reformation England, Bloxam seems content to locate his starting point with the Reformation.

\textsuperscript{123} Bloxam 1871, p.82.
mid-Victorian myth created a long-lasting and powerful, but ultimately distorting, 'reality'. 
This thesis has traced the development of Easter sepulchres in England from their liturgical and cultural origins in the tenth century to their rediscovery and re-creation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It has been shown that in the tenth century Easter sepulchres were temporary structures situated near the high altar; they were created originally within the framework of the monastic Holy Week liturgies, centred on Winchester and its royal court. Later in the tenth century the Winchester liturgies were adapted for use elsewhere in England though, in their adaptation, some of the original elements (for example, the depositio and visitatio sepulchri) were omitted. In such circumstances, it is clear that permanent Easter sepulchres did not come into existence.

After the eleventh-century Norman invasion, the Holy Week liturgies were altered further. Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, introduced a liturgy which did not require or involve an Easter sepulchre, but while Lanfranc's liturgy was influential over a wide area of the country, there were parts of England where the pre-Norman Anglo-Saxon liturgy of Winchester remained in use, even if adapted to suit local needs. No evidence has been found, however, which might indicate that Easter sepulchres became permanent architectural features in eleventh-century English churches.

It was only in the thirteenth century, with the development of the Sarum rite, that the necessity for some kind of Easter sepulchre in each church began to be widespread. (The Sarum rite had incorporated some of the pre-Norman Winchester material). The Sarum rite required, as part of the Holy Week services, the 'burial' of a cross in the sepulchre, as well as the 'burial' of a consecrated Host. The growth in importance of the doctrine of transubstantiation, arising from the fourth Lateran Council of 1215, meant that the narrative focus of the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon rite upon a cross, as the personification of Christ, began to shift. Whilst the cross remained an important element, it had to share the centre of the liturgical stage with the consecrated Host.

Within the Sarum rite, however, the theme of death and burial was very important. This thesis has argued, therefore, that the actual structure and form of Easter sepulchres would have reflected that dramatic and powerful metaphor.
The suggestion, originally made by the Victorian antiquarian, Alfred Heales, and developed further in the twentieth century by Pamela Sheingorn, that aumbries might have been prototypical Easter sepulchres, has been challenged on the grounds that multifunctional cupboards would not have been appropriate 'carriers' of the death and burial metaphor. It has also been argued that whilst tomb recesses might seem much more appropriate as Easter sepulchres (one of the other Heales/Sheingorn hypotheses), when looked at carefully, this idea also lacks plausibility.

An examination of the 'classic' examples of permanent Easter sepulchres found in churches on the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire borders, but also elsewhere, notably in Norfolk, has revealed that those structures, when seen in their liturgical and topographical context (as parts of an ensemble involving founder's tomb, sedilia, piscina and altar), were more likely to have been designed primarily as sacrament houses rather than as Easter sepulchres. It has also been shown in relation to 'classic' examples in Suffolk and Sussex that chest tombs, whilst being sometimes designed for use as the resting place for temporary Easter sepulchres in Holy Week, are mis-categorised if they are called permanent Easter sepulchres.

Considerable documentary evidence from fifteenth-century wills and Edwardian inventories has also been explored and it has been shown that within the religious and cultural milieu of that period, Easter sepulchres had only minor and temporary significance. They were only very rarely chosen to be the sites of burial and they were not accorded as much status as other late medieval religious activities, for example, the burning of candles in front of saints' images.

Detailed analysis of those wills and inventories, however, has revealed surprising local variations in the status accorded to Easter sepulchres. In Bedfordshire, Easter sepulchres are mentioned in 27% of the wills whereas in Suffolk, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, they receive only very infrequent mention. Careful examination of the sixteenth-century Edwardian inventories revealed significant amounts of money being expended on the accoutrements of Easter sepulchres in the City of London compared with expenditure in other parts of England, but none of the inventories, either in London
or elsewhere, provided any evidence to show that permanent Easter sepulchres actually existed.

The accumulation of evidence - liturgical, documentary and architectural, from the tenth century to the sixteenth - has pointed inexorably towards the conclusion that whereas temporary Easter sepulchres most certainly played a part in the religious, spiritual and cultural life of parishes in pre-Reformation England at Easter, permanent Easter sepulchres were (and are) very, very rare indeed.

Such a conclusion is not only surprising but also disappointing. It had been my hope, at the inception of this research, to discover a large number of permanent Easter sepulchres throughout England. The evidence, however, has simply not allowed that to happen.

The inability to find enough evidence to prove the existence of permanent Easter sepulchres led to the raising of an important question. Major scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the fields of medieval and architectural history have taken the ubiquity of permanent Easter sepulchres for granted and have written about medieval religious belief and practice with that in mind. How has such an important yet apparently erroneous idea entered their thinking?

The exploration of this question has been central to the latter part of this thesis in which the way in which the concept has developed has been explored. It has been shown that the idea that permanent Easter sepulchres existed in many churches in medieval England was largely the 'construct' of Pugin, the Cambridge Camden Society ecclesiologists and their late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century successors. Their ideological belief that permanent Easter sepulchres must have existed led them to the conclusion that they therefore did exist and, as a result, they began to 'find' them everywhere. But the hard evidence, as the first part of this thesis has demonstrated, is that permanent Easter sepulchres in English medieval churches are rare, almost to the point of non-existence. It has also been shown that whilst some eighteenth-century antiquarians, notably Blomefield and Gough, knew about Easter sepulchres, their interest was not primarily ideological. Pugin and the ecclesiologists, however, drew on their work and then it was the energetic drive of the mid-Victorians which led to the concept of permanent Easter sepulchres becoming so pervasive and influential.
This discovery raises serious and far-reaching questions about our contemporary understanding of medieval religious belief and practice. If permanent Easter sepulchres are extraordinarily rare (as this thesis has shown) and if the importance attached to Easter sepulchres, whether temporary or permanent, was not very high in late medieval society (as this thesis has also shown in its analysis of wills and inventories), then this may have a significant bearing upon the way in which we view late medieval religious culture. It is to be hoped, therefore, that whilst the interpretation of historical evidence remains as challenging, tough and complex as ever, the findings of this thesis may provide a useful, strong and realistic basis for further study and exploration of medieval religious belief and practice in the future.
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