The Englishness of English Sedilia

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Abstract

Sedilia are the ceremonial seats of the priest, deacon, and subdeacon placed to the south of the altar. In Gothic church architecture, they typically take the form of three deep niches, recessed into the thickness of the wall, surmounted by arches and separated by shafts. These types of sedilia are most well-known from English churches of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This essay looks to explain why sedilia became so popular in England, through a consideration of trends in English architecture. With the help of Nikolaus Pevsner's characterization of the country's art from* The Englishness of English Art*, it will argue that the basic decorative language of sedilia is entrenched in trends first developed in the Anglo-Norman Romanesque. It will also suggest, however, that regional variations in the distribution of sedilia complicate the idea of a single "national style".

Sedilia–the seats for the priest, the deacon, and subdeacon—are a familiar sight in English churches (fig. 1). The vast majority of English medieval sedilia take the characteristic form of three niches, set into the thickness of the south wall by the altar, surmounted by arches and separated by shafts.[1] This architectural feature, which I have dubbed the "classic" sedilia, is widely noted as being considerably more common in England than overseas.[2] Other solutions for adapting the walls of the chancel to seat the officiating clergy are known: single wide niches (fig. 2), stone arm-chairs, and the simple drop-sill sedilia (fig. 3), but these are relatively rare when the corpus of English sedilia is looked at as a whole.[3] Examples of surviving wooden medieval sedilia are very rare, and documentation suggests that where stone sedilia were not present, the furniture was extremely simple.[4] Unlike piscinas—the drains for the sacred ablutions of the Eucharist—stone sedilia were not a liturgical necessity: apparently being somewhat of an architectural luxury.[5] Sedilia in England seem on the whole to have been so consistent in their design that they can be said to have constituted a genre: a category of artwork with a common function, but also characterized by common forms that made their function clearly intelligible.[6]

Figure 1

Sedilia in the chancel, Parish Church of St James, Audley, Staffordshire, first quarter of 14th century. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Figure 2

Single-niche sedilia in the presbytery, Kirkstall Abbey, West Yorkshire, late 1150s. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Figure 3

Drop-sill sedilia in the chancel, Parish Church of the Holy Cross, Yelling, Cambridgeshire, first quarter of 14th century. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Sedilia first appeared sporadically in the twelfth century. By the early decades of the thirteenth century they became standard in most newly built English parish church chancels, such as Cherry Hinton in Cambridgeshire (fig. 4). It is not until the late thirteenth century that sedilia begin to be found in continental Gothic churches, and here they often lack dividing shafts, the almost ubiquitous feature of the English classic sedilia.[7] The heyday of sedilia occurred during

the first half of the fourteenth century, when the majority of all medieval sets in Great Britain were made: Audley in Staffordshire is an example of their typical appearance at this time (fig. 1). Sedilia associated with the Perpendicular, our *de facto* national style by the fifteenth century, are comparatively rare, constituting around one-sixth of the total corpus of medieval English sedilia. Textual sources, such as liturgical rubrics, diocesan synods, and church inventories throughout the medieval period to the Reformation, do not provide an answer for the proliferation of mural sedilia in England.[8] Rather, the great number of sedilia in England and their distinct appearance seems to be largely determined by regional architectural style and aesthetics, providing both the environment for them to develop and determining the essential grammar of their forms.

Figure 4

Sedilia in chancel, Parish Church of St Andrew, Cherry Hinton, Cambridgeshire, circa 1220s–30s. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Much work has been done regarding the peculiarity of English art, most famously Pevsner's controversial *The Englishness of English Art* based on his BBC Reith Lectures of 1955.[9] Pevsner ambitiously characterized all English art as essentially linear: the flaming line of William Blake, the Decorated Style and the landscape garden, paralleled with the rectilinear grid of Perpendicular and Georgian architecture. Pevsner's *Kunstgeographie*, which was descriptive rather than explanatory of causal factors, has been criticized by a number of scholars; especially in relation to the Middle Ages where the concept of the post-Westphalian nation state is anachronistic.[10] Causation aside, Pevsner's description of formal trends is nonetheless valid. This article will therefore use Pevsner's characterization of broad trends in the style of English art to help explain the great numbers of sedilia in England; ultimately relating this to the unique situation of the wholesale rebuilding after the Norman Conquest and subsequent reactions to the Gothic style of France.

Sedilia and the English Squared East End

One important element that seems to have contributed to the development of sedilia in England was the wholesale rejection of the apsidal east end after the end of the twelfth century. Rounded apses remained popular on the continent throughout the Middle Ages, both preserved in Romanesque churches and newly built in polygonal form. In England, however, they were

frequently demolished and squared-off, and Gothic polygonal terminations are extraordinarily rare.[11] The earliest examples of sedilia from the twelfth century, whether classic or simple single niches, appear exclusively in long square-ended chancels, never those with apsidal east ends. Partly due to the difficulty of recessing a sculptural feature into a curved wall, this must be a major factor in the popularity of sedilia in this country. Therefore to understand the Englishness of English sedilia one must first investigate another peculiarly English genre whose architectural development has been under-considered: the parish church chancel.

By the late thirteenth century, the English parish church was legally defined as having a chancel (also referred to as *cancellum* or *chorum*), for the upkeep of which the rector was financially responsible, and a nave (generally referred to as "the body of the church", or simply "the church"), which was the responsibility of the laypeople of the parish.[12] By the thirteenth century, the chancel in England also had a generic formal appearance. It was typically unaisled, and practically always with a flat east wall, which by the fourteenth century was generally filled with a large east window representing the most impressive monumental design in the building. The evidence of the altar's stone furnishings—namely sedilia and piscina—proves that the altar was always towards the east end of the chancel. These stone furnishings may have been an ensemble with a stone altar reredos either built into the east wall or a few feet away from it as a screen for an eastern vestry.[13] However, the near-comprehensive destruction of such furnishings along with stone altars in the Edwardian Reformation leaves sedilia as often the most ornate stonework remaining in the chancel. This makes them the most consistently interesting feature to subject to formal analysis.

Sedilia were originally a utilitarian solution rather than a desirable object.[14] They have the advantage over wooden furniture of keeping the area around the altar uncluttered, by allowing the officiating clergy, in ascending order of hierarchy, to sit inside the wall when not actively involved in the liturgy. Such an arrangement is not required in a cathedral-scale church where the area around the high altar is aisled, and the officiating clergy can retreat to seats placed between the piers of the arcade.[15]

It has been suggested that the change from the apse to the squared east end is the result of the altar being placed flush against the east wall.[16] However, this leaves the question of why the apse did not disappear on the continent, where altars were also moved further east in church buildings as the belief in the Real Presence in the Eucharist strengthened. Also, late medieval altars did not often seem to be completely flush with the east wall—suggested by the position of many wall piscinas a few steps east from the south-east corner of chancels—discouraging a simple causal relationship between altar position and architectural plan.[17]

During the first millennium, church plans were markedly unlike the late medieval type, partly defined by their fundamentally different seating plans. The plans of the earliest Roman state churches were based on the imperial tribunal basilica, and ended in a rounded apse with the altar on its chord, while around the perimeter of the apse ran a bench with a throne in the middle for the use of the celebrant.[18] This plan spread around western Europe, with one modification. Rome's early churches are unusual in that the main apses are occidented, meaning that when the priest celebrated eastward, he was facing the congregation. Everywhere else, it was standard to build the primary apse facing east, so the priest would pray in the same direction as the congregation.[19]

This layout, known as the basilican plan, was probably used throughout Anglo-Saxon England, although the architectural evidence has largely been found through excavation rather than extant fabric.[20] Two such examples are the great apsed minster church of Reculver in Kent (fig. 5) and

the tiny two-celled local church of Raunds Furnells in Northamptonshire (fig. 6). Both of these have been interpreted as having their eastern cell used for seating the clergy, with the altar standing separate from this space in the main body of the church.[21] Seeking evidence for the use of the basilican plan in twelfth-century buildings is difficult, due to the comprehensive reordering of liturgical space that occurred by the late Middle Ages. However, the well-preserved mid-twelfth-century building of Stewkley in Buckinghamshire, consisting of nave, tower, and east cell, has a portion of an armed bench surviving in its eastern cell. The thirteenth-century piscina shows that this became the chancel in the century after its erection, the altar of which would have destroyed the eastern portion of the bench. However, the evidence of a surviving southern return of the bench suggests that this eastern cell was originally a space for the clergy, with the altar further forward under the tower, showing that the presence of an apse is not proof of its sanctuary status.
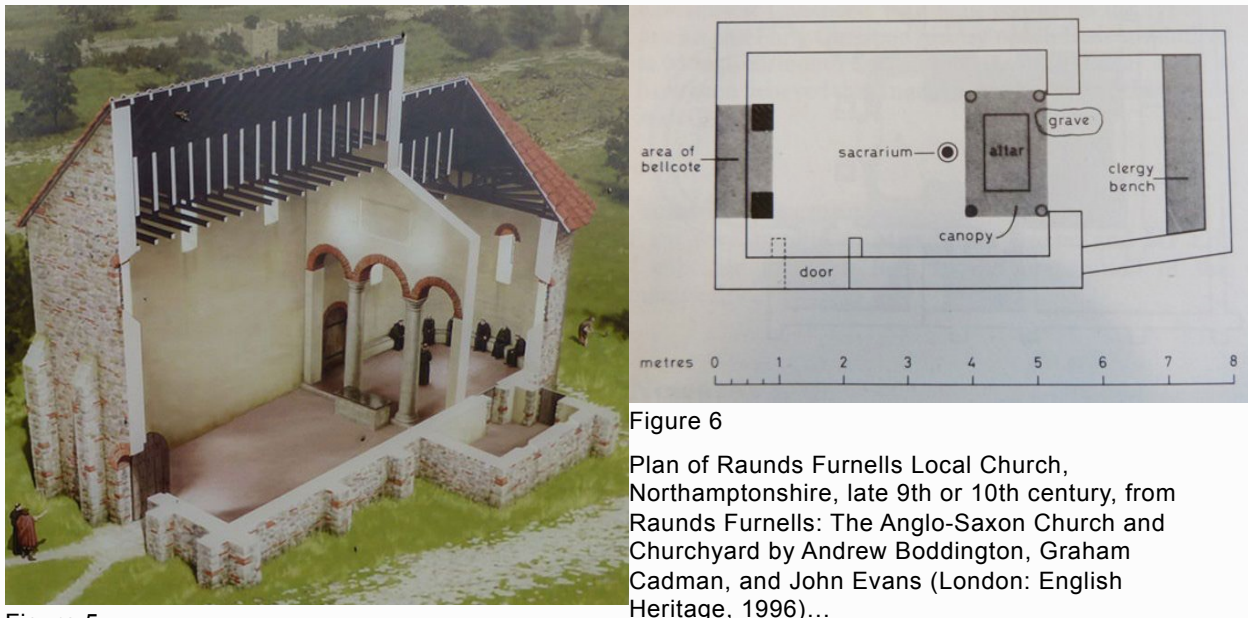

Figure 5

Reconstruction of the Anglo-Saxon Minster of Reculver, Kent, 8th century (reconstruction by Peter Urmston for English Heritage). Digital image courtesy of Peter Urmston.

Figure 6

Plan of Raunds Furnells Local Church, Northamptonshire, late 9th or 10th century, from Raunds Furnells: The Anglo-Saxon Church and Churchyard by Andrew Boddington, Graham Cadman, and John Evans (London: English Heritage, 1996)...

Instead, the presence of a rounded or squared east end should be seen as a stylistic choice. The likelihood that many twelfth-century churches still preserved the basilican plan, keeping the altar further forward, is supported by the phenomenon of the pillar piscina (fig. 7). In Norman times the drain for the sacred ablutions appears to have been typically a drain in the centre of the floor behind the altar, with a hollow pillar above providing easy access.[22] These pillar piscinas have only ever been found either through excavation, such as at Wellingore in Lincolnshire, or as part of Gothic wall piscinas in the late Middle Ages.[23] This latter phenomenon shows how basilican plan churches were refitted for later liturgical trends.

Sedilia are the most important indicator of this new liturgical topography. Simple single-niche sedilia, with little or no decoration and of a width suitable to seat three, appear sporadically in churches across Europe in the twelfth century, especially in the unaisled choirs of the Cistercians, such as Kirkstall Abbey in West Yorkshire, built in the late 1150s (fig. 2).[24] These, along with wall piscinas, are the first proof that an alternative way of laying out the east end of a church was emerging in the twelfth century.[25] The earliest set of classic sedilia can be found in the church of St Mary de Castro, Leicester, probably dating from the 1170s or 1180s (fig. 8). The status of this church as a newly endowed collegiate church is important—it was first provided with a dean and twelve canons by the newly appointed first Earl of Leicester, Robert de Beaumont, around 1107. In 1143 his son transferred the original endowments to the new Augustinian abbey in Leicester, and in 1164–67 the church was refounded as a college of eight clerks

Figure 7

Pillar piscina, Parish Church of All Saints, Wellingore, Lincolnshire, first half of 12th century. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

subordinate to the abbey.[26] This complicated history of the college of St Mary is reflected in its architectural fabric, which, before the addition of a large south aisle in the thirteenth century, was an unaisled building of at least three Romanesque campaigns.[27]

Figure 8

Sedilia in chancel, Parish and former collegiate church of St Mary de Castro, Leicestershire, 1170s–80s. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

The only other evidence for Romanesque classic sedilia are the fragmentary remains at Castle Hedingham in Essex, where the original arches have been filled in with pastiche Romanesque-

style sedilia in Henry Woodyer's restoration of 1870–72; and Hook Norton in Oxfordshire, which has fragments of what appear to be early classic sedilia.[28] Castle Hedingham's name is an indication of its similarity to St Mary de Castro in Leicester, and how endowment from the local castle must have enabled it to have a sizeable clerical staff as well as an ambitious building programme. Hook Norton's former central tower suggests that it was previously an Anglo-Saxon minster, maintaining its pre-Conquest status as home to a number of resident clerics.

What these churches represent is the modification of the standard basilican plan to place the altar right at the end of the church. The first reason why they may have chosen this new plan was due to the larger number of attending clerics in a college. The new layout flips the arrangement of the clerics and the altar. Instead of the whole staff sitting behind the altar, they attended in the western half of the chancel, while those involved with celebration of the Mass sat in the sedilia in the sanctuary. This would have been encouraged by the growing belief in the Real Presence in the consecrated Host, and thus the provision of a more exclusive venue for the Eucharistic liturgy away from the laity. In retrospect we can see that this type of building and liturgical topography, which initially emerged from a situation of variety and experimentation, became the accepted plan for the parish church chancel. In the thirteenth century, the number of clergy nationwide began to rise, bringing many parishes to a level that would have been uncommon in the twelfth century, and thereby causing a previously elite design to have wider application. Once we accept the consolidation of the shape of the mature English chancel around 1200—an unaisled box with a flat east end—we can understand the stylistic environment that enabled sedilia to develop and later flourish.

But, if it is not due to liturgical topography and altar placement, what is the essential cause of the English squared east end? The suppression of the apse for the square east end has been seen as part of a re-emergence of an Anglo-Saxon identity following the imposition of a foreign form by the Norman invaders. The change from early Norman architecture in Britain to the mature Anglo-Norman Romanesque has been described as a gradual "naturalisation" into English institutions,[29] or even as part of a conscious formation of a "national" style.[30] The apse was, however, a major element in pre-Conquest church architecture, certainly in the early Kentish churches such as Reculver (fig. 5) and in early Romanesque buildings such as Edward the Confessor's Abbey at Westminster. The squared east end may have been the most common form in Anglo-Saxon churches, but there were as many rectangular east ends in Normandy before the Conquest as there were in Anglo-Saxon England.[31] This makes the argument of a conscious idea of the square east end as distinctively "Saxon" untenable. Furthermore, it is debatable whether there could have been such a concept of a "national style" of architecture at this period, and such deliberate political intent behind the forms of buildings.[32]

In *The Englishness of English Art*, Pevsner considered the square east end as part of his characterization of the English tendency toward the linear, in the tradition of the formal analysis of Heinrich Wölfflin.[33] However, unlike Wolfflin, Pevsner saw art as the unfolding of a Hegelian *zeitgeist*.[34] He argues for an "irrational" English character that avoids shaping space, instead displaying a preference for flat, linear decoration.[35] Ultimately, the conclusion of *The Englishness of English Art* tries to rationalize the English love of "line" with the geography, climate, and insularity of the island of Britain, not unlike Winckelmann's eighteenth-century understanding of the climate of Ancient Greece as providing the perfect conditions for Athenian art.[36] Even if his attribution of the causes are unconvincing, Pevsner's observations on common trends in English medieval architecture do prove useful: despite the insufficient grounding in historical context, they help to explain the unconscious formation of distinctive national styles.

We shall explore more justifiable reasons for the essential aesthetic of English medieval architecture when we investigate the next aspect of the Englishness of English sedilia: their distinctive arched appearance.

Dado Arcades and the Forms of the Classic Sedilia

We have seen that the sedilia at St Mary de Castro in Leicester are extremely important as the only preserved classic sedilia in the Romanesque style. Nevertheless, they should not be taken as representative of an invention which had immediate influence. Instead, classic sedilia were probably being built alongside single-niche sedilia for several decades. However, it is undeniable that their basic form ultimately proved overwhelmingly popular as the way to create sedilia. Why did this type of sedilia become so commonplace in England and not elsewhere?

Classic sedilia rarely have ergonomic motifs such as arm-rests common to wooden furniture or thrones, and instead rely on an almost purely architectural vocabulary.[37] The most important formal precedent for classic sedilia is decorative blind arcades, most specifically those at dado level. Blind arcades have been noted as common in Romanesque and Gothic architecture in England, a linear approach to ornament at odds with the Gothic spaces of France.[38] An interest in the decorative potential of miniature arches and shafts was not confined to England, but nevertheless the country does display a particular fondness for the motif.[39] Anglo-Norman twelfth-century church facades stand in particular contrast to the French tradition of the harmonic facade with grand portals encasing figural sculpture.[40] Decorative arcading has been called the "Englishman's favourite motif", and the English great church west front referred to as an "orgy of arcading" (fig. 9).[41]

Figure 9

West front of the Augustinian Priory of St Botolph, Colchester, before 1177. Digital image courtesy of Alamy / Photo: Rodger Tamblyn.

Figure 10

Dado arcade, south nave aisle, Peterborough Cathedral, begun circa 1118. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

More importantly for sedilia, decorative arcades are also used in profusion at dado level in many second-generation Anglo-Norman buildings, such as Durham (begun 1093), Anselm's choir at Canterbury (c. 1093), Norwich (1096), Ely (in the post-1100 work), and Peterborough (1118) (fig. 10). At Durham and Peterborough such round-arched dado arcading is developed through interlacing into an even more elaborate and noticeable feature.[42] This arcading along the dado level of nave and transepts would of course not have been intended to mark out seats, although the plinth for the shafts in English buildings is frequently large enough for its use as such. Dado arcading is much less common in French Gothic churches, absent from Suger's formative Early Gothic choir at St Denis (1130s) and many canonical French High Gothic cathedrals.[43] When they are present, French dado arcades are often less like sedilia, either much larger or with no substantial plinth on which to sit, for instance the choir of Saint-Remi in Reims (1170).[44] It is very unusual for English Gothic great churches to exclude dado arcading like those in France: Canterbury choir under William the Englishman (1177–84), Wells (1170s), and Salisbury (1220) are notable exceptions, and significant in that the latter two are in the south west where sedilia did not become widespread in Gothic parish churches, as will be discussed below.[45]

The reason this aesthetic developed is once again not due to nationalism, through either a conscious revival of Saxon forms or an irrepressibly "irrational" English character, but instead can be attributed to a way of dealing with the architectural legacy of the Norman Conquest. The Norman rebuilding of the second half of the eleventh century was unprecedented in Europe, with all of the former Anglo-Saxon cathedrals demolished and rebuilt on a heroic scale within a timespan of around fifty years.[46] This gave English architecture an unavoidable inheritance of Romanesque buildings that would govern their appearance for the rest of the Middle Ages.[47] The Gothic style of France, a novel conception of shaping space coupled with a quest for verticality, could not be transplanted on to these massive buildings, and instead an alternative aesthetic solution was developed. For some scholars, Durham and its successors fused the gigantism of the Anglo-Norman Romanesque with an earlier Anglo-Saxon tradition, which had also displayed a general taste for elaborate surface and blind arcading in architecture.[48] However, it was the unique combination of forms and aesthetics in the Anglo-Norman Romanesque, and its subsequent influence on Early English Gothic, that was fundamental for the development and popularization of the classic sedilia.

The use of arcading to demarcate the seats of clerics has its clearest precedent in monastic and cathedral chapter houses. Worcester's chapter house of around 1100–15 was the first in a long line of the peculiarly English genre of the centrally planned chapter house (fig. 11).[49] The interior is encircled by ninety-five tall, rounded arches which were intended to accentuate the seats of a stone perimeter bench.[50] Yet because the monastic community at Worcester never even approached this number, combined with the narrowness of the arches relative to later chapter houses, these arches were unlikely to be intended as prescribed seats as they were in church sedilia.[51] Above this is another storey of intersecting arcading, and as a whole the building is characteristic of the ornamental treatment of the mature Anglo-Norman Romanesque.[52] It was typical for subsequent twelfth-century chapter houses, such as Bristol (1160s), to have similarly rich treatment of the walls, and a dado level that had the function of backing the mural benches of the attending community.[53]

Figure 11

Interior of the chapter house, Worcester Cathedral,
circa 1100–15. Digital image courtesy of Alamy /
Photo: David Gee.

Dado arcading also appears in Anglo-Norman church east ends. The church of St John in Devizes, Wiltshire, is a three-cell Norman church dating from the 1160s.[54] The eastern cell has a lavish display of arcading, six arches with curved chevrons against each wall (fig. 12). With the uncertain position of altars at that date, it is difficult to be sure whether this cell was designed for the altar in a similar position to its current location, or with a now-destroyed clergy bench against the east wall.[55] However, the presence of a pillar piscina relocated into the eastern arch of the south wall suggests that the east end was converted from the basilican plan in the later Middle Ages into the now familiar layout of a late medieval chancel. From this time on, the remaining three arches on the south side would then mark out places for the priest, deacon, and subdeacon. This is suggestive of the link between decorative practice and its practical potential that was instrumental in the development of the familiar classic type of sedilia. In this context, we can see how St Mary de Castro in Leicester may have been attempting to emulate a church such as Stow in Lincolnshire, which is certainly of ex-minster status, with a lavish arcading scheme round the whole late twelfth-century chancel (fig. 13).[56] At St Mary de Castro (fig. 8) only the bare minimum of arches needed for the seating of the officiating clergy were inserted into the dado. As they were not part of a larger decorative scheme, modifications could be made to suit them better to their function. These included making them more deeply recessed to keep the area in front of the altar unencumbered by free-standing furniture, and placing the seats over the chancel steps with the levels of the seats ranked accordingto the floor levels and also the rank of the officiating priest, deacon, and subdeacon sitting inside them.

Figure 12

East end (modern chancel), looking south east, Parish Church of St John, Devizes, Wiltshire, third quarter of 12th century. Collection Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Digital image courtesy of Courtauld Institute of Art.

Figure 13

Interior of the chancel, Parish and former Prebendal Church of St Mary, Stow, Lincolnshire, third quarter of 12th century. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Succeeding the Anglo-Norman Romanesque, English Gothic represented continuity rather than a break with the practice of embellishing thick-wall construction with rich and lively decoration.[57] It is with St Hugh's choir at Lincoln (begun c. 1192), the first true "Early English Gothic" building, that the characteristic Anglo-Norman motif of blind arcading is taken to new levels of development: the famous syncopated arcading of the choir and transept dados take Romanesque interlaced arcading deeper into a third dimension of spatial relationships.[58] The later nave dado, however, continues as richly moulded, pointed trefoiled arcades (dogtoothed on the south) in a manner that is more like the linear richness of Durham.[59] Importantly, this nave may be contemporary with Lincoln's chapter house, the first extant polygonal example following Worcester's centrally planned design.[60] Its interior uses the design of the south nave aisle dado arcades, with stiff-leaf capitals and dogtooth to demarcate the seats of the canons. Decorative arcading from the late twelfth century onward became progressively more detached from the wall, emphasizing and exploiting the three-dimensional possibilities of thick-wall construction.[61] Dado arcades would become an essential motif of English Gothic great-church architecture, such as the retrochoir of Worcester (begun 1224), York transepts, and Beverley Minster (1220s).[62] This would continue through to the fourteenth century with the particularly lavish dados of St Stephen's, Westminster, and subsequently the Lady Chapels of Lichfield and Ely. It is then the undeniable trend toward surface ornament—the *horror vacui—*typical of late Anglo-Norman Romanesque architecture, along with thick walls, that led to the embellishment of dado levels with deeply recessed arcading, which endured throughout the Middle Ages in England. This in turn encouraged the development of the simple single-niche sedilia into a more compact version of dado arcading, suitable for churches that could not afford the expense of a full scheme.

Sedilia and Local Style

Two factors of national style stemming from the bulky linear aesthetic inaugurated by the Conquest contributed to the Englishness of English sedilia: the environment of the squared-off east end, and the linear aesthetic of dado arcading. However, mapping sedilia distribution across England reveals some surprising patterns (fig. 14). Sedilia appear much more common in central areas and the eastern half of the country, something which does not necessarily correspond with population and wealth. Instead of factors such as these or local liturgy, the distribution of sedilia seems more affected by stylistic variation in church buildings across different regions of England.
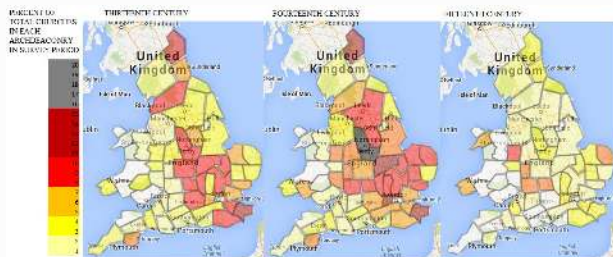

Figure 14

Diagram mapping sedilia distribution across England, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

One particularly high density of sedilia can be found in Northumberland. The Early English Gothic as pioneered in St Hugh's Choir at Lincoln (begun 1192) took on an exuberant form in the north. Buildings such as Tynemouth Priory (late 1180s) and Hexham Abbey transepts (fig. 15; first quarter of the thirteenth century) demonstrate an enthusiasm for sculptural ornament, wall articulation, and (most importantly for sedilia) dado arcading.[63] York Minster transepts (underway 1225, finished by c. 1250), Fountains Abbey choir, and Durham Cathedral's great eastern transept of the Nine Altars (begun 1242) use dado arcading extensively.[64]
A survey of parish churches in the medieval archdeaconry of Northumberland articulates the general aesthetic of this style with their more limited resources, resulting in the inclusion of sedilia. Bamburgh in Northumberland could be said to occupy a point of contact between the middle rank and the parish church.[65] It is more securely datable than other parish churches in the diocese of Durham. In 1228 the parish church became a cell of Nostell Priory and was subsequently staffed by five to six Augustinian canons under a master, a plausible reason to build the finest chancel in the county.[66] The five-bay chancel with doubled lancet windows has an interior with blind wall articulation originally with detached shafting. In its south wall, there are sedilia with trefoil heads and continuous arch mouldings that are related to the popularity of dado arcading in the great churches in the area.[67] Chancels in the Wansbeck Valley area further south in Northumberland clearly relate to the model of Bamburgh (fig. 16), with long lanceted chancels and sedilia. Bothal, Hartburn, and Mitford can all be reckoned to be of a date in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, with assured triple classic sedilia integral with their long square-ended lanceted chancels, with moulded arches supported by shafts.[68]

Figure 15

West wall of south transept, Hexham Abbey, Northumberland, first quarter of 13th century. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Figure 16

Chancel interior with sedilia, Parish Church of St Aidan and former Augustinian cell, Bamburgh, Northumberland, circa 1228. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

By contrast, in the West Country such examples of thirteenth-century sedilia are difficult to find. This is a particular surprise in the lands surrounding Salisbury Cathedral, well known for its codification of the Sarum Rite, the Order of the Mass for England which came to dominate English liturgical use in cathedral and parish alike by the late Middle Ages.[69] Virginia Jansen has related the noble simplicity of the architectural style associated with Salisbury Cathedral with the straight-forward and logical mental habits of bishops active in liturgical reforms and the codification of the Sarum Rite.[70] Despite this link of reforming clerics with architecture, there are very few sedilia indeed in the orbit of the Cathedral and the wider diocese (Wiltshire and parts of Devon, Dorset, and Berkshire), suggesting instead that architectural form and ritual practice were potentially disconnected.[71]

A church such as Potterne, dating around the same time as Salisbury's rebuilding at the beginning of the second quarter of the century, has an exceedingly grand and well-preserved interior of uniform date (fig. 17).[72] The sophistication of the single-build plan of disciplined lancets akin to Salisbury's episcopal style can surely be attributed to the fact that the prebend was held by the *rector* of the Cathedral fabric, canon Elias of Dereham.[73] Despite being a well-endowed prebend with surely a high number of clergy and level of celebration, Potterne shows no provision for stone seating in the chancel akin to that we find in Northumberland at the same time. There is a niche with a double piscina drain at the east end of the south wall, then a gap, and then a priest's door. The latter of these is accommodated by raising the sill of the second lancet, showing that practical, liturgical concerns were still considered by the architect. The chancels at Stockton and Berwick St James are further examples of Early English chancels in Wiltshire, displaying the same sober manner with no provision for sedilia.[74] This is attributable to the lack of dado arcading in Salisbury Cathedral, a unique omission for a thirteenth-century

English cathedral.[75] It seems that the motif of dado arcading was not provided by the area's great-church architecture, and thus was not part of the vocabulary of the masons who built parish churches, meaning the opportunity to deploy such arches as sedilia was not available. When decorative practice was not present, the relation between it and ritual could not manifest.

Figure 17

Interior of the chancel, Parish Church of St Mary and former prebendal church, Potterne, Wiltshire, second quarter of 13th century. Digital image courtesy of James Alexander Cameron.

Conclusion

Sedilia first developed as a utilitarian solution, probably in multiple places all over Europe, as independent innovations facilitating the primary function of the eastern sanctuary: to contain the altar, its ceremonies, and its performers. However, it was only in England, through characteristic tendencies in architectural design, that essential formal elements of this idea were sufficiently reinforced for it to be become a visually distinct and widespread genre. This would not have been possible without the cultural permeability that permitted the continental styles of Norman Romanesque and French Gothic to be subsumed. The variations in the distribution of sedilia across England, furthermore, demonstrate how there was not a single national style, and that sedilia, through their presence or absence, reveal that "Englishness" in art in the thirteenth century should be considered as a series of family resemblances rather than a single ideology.

Acknowledgements

About the author

Dr James Alexander Cameron has studied at Manchester University and The Courtauld Institute of Art. He is a member of the council of the British

Archaeological Association, and an editor of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture for Great Britain and Ireland. In 2017 he co-organized the conference *Towards an Art History of the Parish Church, 1200–1399* with Meg Bernstein at The Courtauld Institute of Art, which was partly supported by the Paul Mellon Centre.

Footnotes

1. James Alexander Cameron, "Sedilia in Medieval England" (PhD thesis, London, The Courtauld Institute of Art, 2015) has a full investigation of the corpus of sedilia in England and Wales, their liturgical background and later development as a site of display, through to their eventual decline in popularity.

2. John Charles Cox and Alfred Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, 2nd edn (London: Methuen and Co., 1908), 67; J. Turner, ed., "Sedilia", in *The Grove Dictionary of Art* (London and New York: Grove 1996); Nicola Coldstream, "Sedilia", in *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, ed. Hugh Brigstocke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Michael Clarke and Deborah Clarke, eds., "Sedilia", in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Bond says they are exceptional on the continent except for Normandy and Brittany, but I know of no sedilia in either of these regions as yet; Francis Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches: The Altar, Reredos, Lenten Veil, Communion Table, Altar Rails, Houseling Cloth, Piscina, Credence, Sedilia, Aumbry, Sacrament House, Easter Sepulchre, Squint, Etc*. (London: H. Milford, 1916), 203.

3. Arm-chair type sedilia are extremely rare, and many are often reconstructions by Victorian restorers using discovered uprights that may have served other purposes in the church, most probably as ends to simple stone long benches in the western half of the chancel, as preserved at Campsall (West Yorkshire) and Aldwincle, St Peter (Northamptonshire). However, a small amount of authentic examples exist, namely Sedgeberrow (Worcestershire), Owston (West Yorkshire), Upchurch (Kent), Brailes (Warwickshire), Newark (Nottinghamshire), Isle Abbotts (Somerset), and Lenham (Kent). Drop-sill sedilia, where the sill of the south-east window of the chancel is dropped down to provide a seat, are particularly common in East Anglia. Some have sculptural detail, but the vast majority are completely unornamented and thus very difficult to study comprehensively.

4. For wooden sedilia, see James Alexander Cameron, "Materiality and Reflexivity between Sedilia and Choir Stalls in Medieval England", in *Craftsmen, Artists and Entrepreneurs—Choir Stalls and their Workshops: Misericordia International 2016 Conference Transactions*, ed. Willy Piron and Anja Seliger (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2017), forthcoming.

5. Ian Jessiman, "The Piscina in the English Medieval Church", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 20 (1957): 53–71. Because of its necessity, the wall piscina develops before mural sedilia, and in the first quarter of the thirteenth century is a common site of display. However, by the second quarter of the century, as sedilia explode in popularity, it becomes common to incorporate the piscina into the design of the adjacent priest's seat.

6. The term "genre" is a contentious one in literary criticism, but I feel that it is the best way to codify the idea of sedilia. In using the term I am implying a simultaneous, partly self-aware performance by the multiple creators of the objects in question to convey indication of their function through the use of similar forms, rather than simply a retrospective taxonomy, see John Frow, *Genre*, The New Critical Idiom (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 17–28. Sedilia are said to be one of many genres of a "very blurred kind" in Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style, 1290–1350* (New Haven, CT, and London:

Yale University Press, 2014), 90. Also see Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 50, for notions of the winged altarpiece as a genre.

7. Justin E. A. Kroesen, *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 148–53.

8. For textual references to sedilia, both in liturgical rubrics and inventories, see James Alexander Cameron, "'Sedilia in Choro Sunt Fracta': The Medieval Nomenclature of Seating in Churches", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 168 (2015): 115–30.

9. Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Englishness of English Art: An Expanded and Annotated Version of the Reith Lectures Broadcast in October and November 1955* (London: Architectural Press, 1956).

10. From a medievalist perspective, see Jonathan Alexander, "Medieval Art and Modern Nationalism", in *Medieval Art, Recent Perspectives: A Memorial Tribute to C. R. Dodwell*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 206–23; Andrew Causey, "Pevsner and Englishness", in *Reassessing Nikolaus Pevsner*, ed. Peter Draper (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 161–74; and Richard Marks, "The Englishness of English Gothic Art?", in *Gothic Art and Thought in the Later Medieval Period: Essays in Honor of Willibald Sauerländer*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, NJ: Index of Christian Art, Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University, with Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 64–89. For a discussion of the validity of the category of British art, see Richard Johns, "There's No Such Thing as British Art", *British Art Studies* 1, DOI:10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-01/conversation

11. Apart from the group of polygonal chevets on the royal abbeys of Westminster, Hailes, and Vale Royal, there also appear to be a small number of English apses related to dedications to the Virgin, such as at Madley (Herefordshire) and Bluntisham (Cambridgeshire) parish churches, and Lady Chapels at Tewkesbury Abbey, Wells, and Lichfield Cathedrals and the parish church at Patrington (East Yorkshire). See Richard K. Morris, "The Mason of Madley, Allensmore and Eaton Bishop", *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club* 41 (1974): 187–91; John Maddison, "The Architectural Development of Patrington Church and its Place in the Evolution of the Decorated Style in Yorkshire", in *Medieval Art and Architecture in the East Riding of Yorkshire*, ed. Christopher Wilson, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 9 (Leeds: Maney, 1989), 141.

12. Carol Davidson Cragoe, "The Custom of the English Church: Parish Church Maintenance in England before 1300", *Journal of Medieval History* 36, no. 1 (2010): 20–38.

13. Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 51–100. A c. 1300 screen reredos was reconstructed over evidence of its foundations by G. G. Scott at Warfield (Berkshire), following the design of the sedilia. A plain screen reredos of the early fourteenth century survives at Blakeney (Norfolk). Two separate piscinas of the 1330s chancel at Dennington (Suffolk) strongly suggest it had a dividing screen before the east wall.

14. For their development into objects of desire through the use of novel microarchitectural forms, see James Alexander Cameron, "From Hole-in-the-Wall to Heavenly Mansions: The Microarchitectural Development of Sedilia in Thirteenth-Century England", in *Microarchitecture et figure du bâti: l'échelle à l'épreuve de la matière*, ed. Ambre Vilain, Clément Blanc-Riehl, and Jean-Marie Guillouët (Paris: Institut national d'histoire de l'art, 2017), forthcoming.

15. Sedilia begin to appear in permanent, ostentatious form at great-church high altars from the early fourteenth century as part of stone reredoses, the first being Exeter Cathedral's, documented from 1316–28. The earliest set at an unaisled high altar are the unique set at Westminster Abbey, c. 1307. See James Alexander Cameron, "Competing for *Dextra Cornu Magnum Altaris*: Tombs and Liturgical Seating in English Churches", in *Revisiting the Monument: Fifty Years Since Panofsky's Tomb Sculpture*, ed. Ann Adams and Jessica Barker (London: Courtauld Books Online, 2016), 141–46. http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/research/courtauld-books-online/revisiting-the-monument.

16. Carol F. Davidson, "Change and Change Back: The Development of English Parish Church Chancels", in *Continuity and Change in Christian Worship*, ed. Robert Norman Swanson, Studies in Church History 35 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 65–77. Also in David Parsons, "Sacrarium: Ablution Drains in Early Medieval Churches", in *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture, and Archaeology in Honour of Dr H. M. Taylor*, ed. L. A. S. Butler and Richard K. Morris (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1986), 106–7.

17. Warwick Rodwell, *The Archaeology of Churches* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 158.

18. Archdale Arthur King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 87; Richard Krautheimer, "The Constantinian Basilica", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967): 115–40; Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 3rd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), 39; Eric Fernie, *An Architectural History of Norwich Cathedral* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 107. In Byzantine churches this apsidal bench and throne is known as the *synthronon*: see Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 521; Noel Duval, "L'Architecture chrétienne et les pratiques liturgiques en Jordanie en rapport avec la Palestine: recherches nouvelles", in *"Churches Built in Ancient Times": Recent Studies in Early Christian Archaeology*, ed. Kenneth Painter (London: Society of Antiquaries, Accordia Research Centre, University of London, 1994), 188–91.

19. *Versus populum* for its own sake is a very recent development in the Catholic church. See Sible de Blaauw, *Met Het Oog Op Het Licht: Een Vergeten Principe in de Oriëntatie van Het Vroegchristelijk Kerkgebouw* (Nijmegen: Nijmegen University Press, 2000); de Blaauw, "Innovazioni Nello Spazio di Culto Fra Basso Medioevo e Cinquecento: La Perdita dell'Orientamento Liturgico e la Liberazione della Navata", in *Lo Spazio e il Culto: Relazioni Tra Edificio Ecclesiale e Uso Liturgico dal XV al XVI Secolo*, ed. Jörg Stabenow (Venice: Marsilio, 2006), 26–38; Uwe Michael Lang, *Turning Towards the Lord: Orientation in Liturgical Prayer* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2009), 59; Justin E. A. Kroesen and Victor Michael Schmidt, eds, *The Altar and its Environment, 1150–1400* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 8; and Victor Michael Schmidt, "Ensembles of Painted Altarpieces and Frontals", in *The Altar and its Environment*, ed. Kroesen and Schmidt, 218.

20. P. S. Barnwell, "The Laity, the Clergy and the Divine Presence: The Use of Space in Smaller Churches of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 157 (2004): 42–45.

21. For Reculver's original plan, see Richard Gem, "How Much Can Anglo-Saxon Buildings Tell Us about Liturgy?", in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield (London: Boydell Press, 2005), 277–78; Harold McCarter Taylor, "Reculver Reconsidered", *The Archaeological Journal* 125, no. 1 (1969): 296; Taylor, "The Position of the Altar in Early Anglo-Saxon Churches", *The Antiquaries Journal* 53, no. 1

(1973): 52–58; Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Batsford, 1983), 35, 42. For the liturgical arrangement of Raunds Furnells, see Parsons, "Sacrarium", 106; David Parsons, "Liturgical and Social Aspects", in *Raunds Furnells: The Anglo-Saxon Church and Churchyard*, ed. Andrew Boddington, Graham Cadman, and John Evans (London: English Heritage, 1996), 63.

22. Alfred William Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture after the Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 153; Parsons, "Sacrarium", 110.

23. An example of a pillar piscina preserved by Gothic masons is at Deal (Kent).

24. David Martin Robinson, *The Cistercian Abbeys of Britain: Far from the Concourse of Men* (London: Batsford, 1998), 132–34, with bibliography; John Blair, "Clerical Communities and Parochial Space: The Planning of Urban Mother Churches in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries", in *The Church in the Medieval Town*, ed. T. R. Slater and Gervase Rosser (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 277. Some continental Cistercian abbeys with twelfth-century single-niche sedilia include, in Sweden, Roma and Nydala Abbeys, founded in 1143 and 1164 respectively; see Ingrid Swartling, *Nydala Abbey: An Outline of its Architecture from Foundation to Dissolution* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 97–98; Swartling, *Roma Abbey Church in the Middle Ages* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 50–51. In France, Senanque (Vaucluse); see Marcel Aubert and Geneviève Aliette de Rohan-Chabot Maillé, *L'Architecture Cistercienne en France*, 2nd edn (Paris: Les Éditions d'art et d'histoire, 1947), 324.

25. The earliest mural seating of this type, probably designed for only one man, can be found in the small but ambitious church of Avington (Berkshire), stylistically dated through its collapsed rib vault to the 1130s. See Roger Stalley, "A Twelfth-Century Patron of Architecture: A Study of the Buildings Erected by Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, 1102–1139", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 34 (1971): 78–80; George Zarnecki, "Sculpture in Stone in the English Romanesque Art Exhibition", in *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque*, ed. Sarah Macready and Frederick Hugh Thompson (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1986), 22–23. The likely patronage of Roger of Sarum would seem to put this church into the phenomenon of the collegiate move away from the "basilican" plan described subsequently.

26. W. G. Hoskins and R. A. McKinley, eds., *The Victoria Count History of the County of Leicestershire*: Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 45–46.

27. The twelfth-century transepts in the plan of C. A. R. Radford, "Leicester: Church of St Mary de Castro", *The Archaeological Journal* 112 (1955): 156–58, have no archaeological evidence. Pevsner's account in Nikolaus Pevsner, *Leicestershire and Rutland*, The Buildings of England (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 144–46, only recognized two Romanesque stages, and has been altered significantly in Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, *Leicestershire and Rutland*, The Buildings of England, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 212–14, incorporating material from Geoffrey K. Brandwood, *The Anglican Churches of Leicester* (Leicester: Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service, 1984), 15–17.

28. Despite their illustrated appearance in Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 176, 179, Pevsner did not even mention the Castle Hedingham sedilia. See Nikolaus Pevsner, *Essex*, The Buildings of England (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), 99–101; and they are called "all too perfect" in James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Essex*, The Buildings of England, 3rd edn (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 195–96. They are also ignored

by Andrew Harris in his "St. Nicholas, Castle Hedingham", in *The Colchester Area: Proceedings of the 138th Summer Meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute, 1992*, ed. Norman John Greville Pounds (London: Royal Archaeological Institute, 1992), 27–28. Woodyer's sedilia are unusually small, and the outline of some larger arches can be seen under the plaster. An account of 1852 mentions "narrow niches on the south side" containing paintings of bishops, a fragment of which survives in a case elsewhere in the church, which strongly suggests medieval sedilia were present before the restoration; see E. L. Cutts, "St. Nicholas Church, Castle Hedingham", *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* 1 (1853/58): 133–34.

29. Francis Bond, *Gothic Architecture in England: An Analysis of the Origin & Development of English Church Architecture from the Norman Conquest to the Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1905), 156–57; Millard Fillmore Hearn, "The Rectangular Ambulatory in English Mediaeval Architecture", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 30, no. 3 (1971): 203.

30. For instance, the Romanesque choir of Southwell Minster, c*.* 1109, known through excavation to be one of the first great churches with a squared east end, has been seen as exhibiting a conscious continuity with the earlier Saxon Minster. See Peter Coffman, "The Romanesque East End of Southwell Minster", in *Southwell and Nottinghamshire: Medieval Art, Architecture, and Industry*, ed. Jennifer S. Alexander, British Archaeological Association Transactions 21 (Leeds: Maney, 1998), 2–3; Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 252.

31. Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture*, 101–2; Hearn, "Rectangular Ambulatory", 202; Fernie, *Architecture of Norman England*, 251–52.

32. Ute Engel, "British Art and the Continent", in *The History of British Art*, Vol. 1: *600–1600*, ed. Tim Ayers (New Haven, CT, and London: Tate and Yale Center for British Art, 2008), 38.

33. Pevsner, *Englishness of English Art*, 84–86.

34. Emilie Oléron Evans, "Transposing the Zeitgeist? Nikolaus Pevsner between Kunstgeschichte and Art History", *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (2014): 11–12.

35. For Pevsner's opposition to race as a cause in artistic form; Causey, "Pevsner and Englishness", 166–67; Engel, "British Art and the Continent", 54. Pevsner himself acknowledges race as a "dangerous tool"; Pevsner, *Englishness of English Art*, 184. For more implicit reading, see Alexander, "Medieval Art", 206–23.

36. Pevsner, *Englishness of English Art*, 11–19. For an overview of Pevsner's methodology, his background, and engagement with social theories of art, see Paul Crossley, "Introduction", in *Reassessing Nikolaus Pevsner*, ed. Draper, 4–19.

37. Cameron, "Materiality and Reflexivity", forthcoming.

38. Jean Bony, *French Gothic Architecture of the 12th and 13th Centuries*, California Studies in the History of Art 20 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 93.

39. Edmund Tyrrell-Green, *Parish Church Architecture* (London: SPCK, 1924), 100–1.

40. John Philip McAleer, *The Romanesque Church Facade in Britain* (New York: Garland, 1984), 277–78, 289; McAleer, "Particularly English? Screen Façades of the Type of Salisbury and Wells Cathedrals", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 141, no. 1 (1988): 124–58.

41. Nikolaus Pevsner and Priscilla Metcalf, *The Cathedrals of England: North and East Anglia* (London: Folio Society, 2005), 79; McAleer, *Romanesque Church Facade in Britain*, 308–11.

42. Lisa A. Reilly, *An Architectural History of Peterborough Cathedral* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 69; Fernie, *Architectural History of Norwich Cathedral*, 153–54; Fernie, *Architecture of Norman England*, 273. The inside walls of the ambulatory at Norwich between sanctuary and aisle are also interlaced.

43. Paris (1160–), Soissons south transept (1176–92), Chartres (1194–), Bourges (1195–), and Soissons's choir and nave (c. 1200–) have plain dados that would be conspicuous in any English great church. There are exceptions. The choir chapels are dado-arcaded at Early Gothic Noyon (c *.*1148–) and St Germain de Pres (1163–), as are the transepts at Noyon. Sens (1140–), Laon (1150–), St Remi, Reims (1170–), Reims (1211–), Le Mans (1217–), and Amiens (1218) have fully dado-arcaded choirs.

44. In addition, the plinth is stepped up very high at Reims Cathedral to the point it would be impractical (but not impossible) to sit on.

45. For the English William's paradoxically more French manner than William of Sens, see Francis Woodman, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London: Routledge, 1981), 108–9, 125–30. Wells has very lavish arcading in its north porch; see Peter Draper, *The Formation of English Gothic: Architecture and Identity* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 93–94, a feature also found at Salisbury.

46. Richard Gem, "The English Parish Church in the 11th and Early 12th Centuries: A Great Rebuilding?", in *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition, 950–1200*, ed. John Blair (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), 21–22.

47. Binski, *Gothic Wonder*, 22–24. I also owe much of this thought to the draft of Hoey's book left unfinished at his death; Laurence Hoey, "Tradition, Innovation, and Creative Adaptation: The Medieval Rebuilding of English Church Architecture, 1066–1530" (unpublished draft of book-length project, 2000), which I thank Richard Plant for sharing with me.

48. Geoffrey Fairbank Webb, *Architecture in Britain: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 23, 37–38; Jean Bony, "Durham et la tradition saxonne", in *Etudes d'art médiéval offertes à Louis Grodecki*, ed. Sumner McKnight Crosby (Paris: Ophrys, 1981), 79–85. Also; Fernie, *Architecture of Norman England*, 34; Jane Geddes, "Ideas and Images of Britain, 600–1600", in *The History of British Art*, Vol. 1: *600–1600*, ed. Ayers, 32.

49. Neil Stratford, "Notes on the Norman Chapterhouse at Worcester", in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Worcester Cathedral*, ed. Glenys Popper, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 1 (Leeds: Maney, 1978), 51–70.

50. The medieval bench was destroyed by 1641 to accommodate bookcases, and is now modern; Stratford, "Notes on the Norman Chapterhouse at Worcester", 56.

51. Stratford thinks this number reflects the dramatic increase from scarcely twelve monks to fifty described before 1089, further increased to 62 c. 1104; Stratford, "Notes on the Norman Chapterhouse at Worcester", 68–69. Thirty spare seats is an over-provision beyond that of later chapter houses such as those at Lincoln, Salisbury, Wells, and York; John Zukowsky, "The Polygonal Chapter House: Architecture and Society in Gothic Britain" (PhD diss., State University of New York, Binghamton, 1977), 40–41.

52. Stratford, "Notes on the Norman Chapterhouse", 63.

53. Reading, Durham, Lewes, Rochester, Castle Acre, Wenlock, St Albans, Kenilworth, and Keynsham are listed in John McNeill, "The Romanesque Fabric", in *The Medieval Art, Architecture and History of Bristol Cathedral: An Enigma Explored*, ed. Jon Cannon and Beth Williamson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 51–53. Of these, Reading is the only one that has no definite evidence for blind arcading. For Bristol; see McNeill, "Romanesque Fabric",

33, 44–46. The total number of seats at Bristol would again outnumber the community, which probably never exceeded thirty, but would leave places for guests and visitors; see Catherine Oakes, "Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture", in *Bristol Cathedral, History and Architecture*, ed. John Rogan (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), 82.

54. Attempts have been made to link this work with Bishop Roger of Sarum, who built the adjacent castle, and like St Mary's, St John in Devizes was built to house a clerical community as discussed above with regard to Avington; Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry, *Wiltshire*, The Buildings of England, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 206; Blair, "Clerical Communities and Parochial Space", 277; Malcolm Thurlby, "Minor Cruciform Churches in Norman England and Wales", in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2001*, ed. John Gillingham, Anglo-Norman Studies 24 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 256. However, the fact that the churches are not mentioned in King Stephen's dispute over the town with the Bishop, and also stylistic advancements, such as chevron curving round the soffit, pointed arches in the transept, and the less refined execution of the architectural sculpture compared to the castle, suggests a date well after Roger's death; see Stalley, "A Twelfth-Century Patron", 81–83.

55. The whole east wall has been much rebuilt as it was knocked through for a three-light Perpendicular window, visible in John Britton, *The Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain*, Vol. 2 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809), 5, plate I following.

56. The literature on Stow concentrates on its monumental pre-Conquest Romanesque fabric, but its history only illustrates its importance; Fernie, *Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons*, 124–27.

57. Christopher Wilson, *The Gothic Cathedral: The Architecture of the Great Church, 1130–1530*, 2nd edn (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 82, 191.

58. Paul Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, revised P. Crossley (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 101; Webb, *Architecture in Britain*, 77; Folke Nordstrom, "Peterborough, Lincoln, and the Science of Robert Grosseteste: A Study in Thirteenth Century Architecture and Iconography", *The Art Bulletin* 37, no. 4 (1955): 259–62; Draper, *Formation of English Gothic*, 133, 145. For Lincoln as a crucial building in the development of the distinctive "Early English" Gothic style, see Draper, *Formation of English Gothic*, 125–45.

59. The nave is usually dated to the 1220s due to Hugh de Wells's will of 1233 mentioning much timber, presumably for its roof; see Pevsner and Metcalf, *Cathedrals of England: North and East Anglia*, 136–38; Draper, *Formation of English Gothic*, 139–40.

60. The chapter house appears to have been begun before 1220, as is it is mentioned in the Metrical Life of St Hugh, written 1220–30, and completed by Hugh de Wells (d. 1235). While the upper parts may be 1235 or later, the closeness of the dado to the nave may indicate building proceeded rather slowly until the nave was complete; Pevsner and Metcalf, *Cathedrals of England: North and East Anglia*, 164–67.

61. Draper, *Formation of English Gothic*, 93–94.

62. Worcester: Ute Engel, *Worcester Cathedral: An Architectural History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007), 112–67; York: Lawrence Hoey, "The 13th-Century Transepts of York Minster", *Gesta* 25, no. 2 (1986): 227–44; Beverley: Hoey, "Beverley Minster in its 13th-Century Context", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 43, no. 3 (1984): 209–24.

63. Richard Fawcett, "The Architecture of Tynemouth Priory Church", in *Newcastle and Northumberland: Roman and Medieval Architecture and Art*, ed. Jeremy Ashbee and Julian Luxford, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 36 (Leeds: Maney,

2013), 171–92. Uneven joins between the adjacent arches suggest to me that the unusually deep and large sedilia at Tynemouth were added in the first quarter of the thirteenth century and were not part of the original build. Jennifer S. Alexander, "The Construction of the Gothic Priory Church at Hexham", in *Newcastle and Northumberland: Roman and Medieval Architecture and Art*, ed. Jeremy Ashbee and Julian Luxford, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 36 (Leeds: Maney, 2013), 115–40.

64. Lincoln: Peter Kidson, "St Hugh's Choir", in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Lincoln Cathedral*, ed. Veronica Sekules and T. A. Heslop, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 8 (Leeds: Maney, 1986), 29–42; York: Hoey, "13th-Century Transepts of York Minster"; Fountains and Durham: Peter Draper, "The Nine Altars at Durham and Fountains", in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. Nicola Coldstream and Peter Draper, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 3 (London: Routledge, 1980), 74–86.

65. Jane Alison Cunningham, "Buildings and Patrons: Early Gothic Architecture in the Diocese of Durham, c. 1150–c. 1300", 3 vols. (PhD thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1995), 1: 131.

66. Cunningham, "Buildings and Patrons", 2: 24.

67. Nikolaus Pevsner et al., *Northumberland*, The Buildings of England, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 152–54; Cunningham, "Buildings and Patrons", 2: 25.

68. Bothal: Pevsner et al., *Northumberland*, 199; Cunningham, "Buildings and Patrons", 2: 65–66. At Bothal the sedilia have been mutilated by the destruction of the shafts after the raising of the seat with the floor level. Hartburn: Cunningham, "Buildings and Patrons", 2: 218; Pevsner et al., *Northumberland*, 304–5; Mitford: Cunningham, "Buildings and Patrons", 2: 307–8; Pevsner et al., *Northumberland*, 304–5.

69. Richard William Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 350–88. The earliest references to it as a liturgical standard are in 1223 at the Cathedral of St David, and more general references can be found by the 1270s; Pfaff, *Liturgy in Medieval England*, 377–78. It was not until the second half of the fourteenth century that the Use began to dominate the province of Canterbury; Pfaff, *Liturgy in Medieval England*, 412–44; Nigel Morgan, "The Introduction of the Sarum Calendar into the Dioceses of England in Thirteenth Century", in *Thirteenth Century England VIII: Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1999*, ed. Michael Prestwich, R. H. Britnell, and Robin Frame (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 179–206.

70. Virginia Jansen, "Lambeth Palace Chapel, the Temple Choir, and Southern English Gothic Architecture of C. 1215–1240", in *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. W. M. Ormrod, Harlaxton Medieval Studies 1 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 1985), 95–99; Jansen, "Salisbury Cathedral and the Episcopal Style in the Early 13th Century", in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Salisbury Cathedral*, ed. Laurence Keen and Thomas Cocke, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 17 (Leeds: Maney, 1996), 32–39. For commentary on the aesthetic current of Langtonism in the first half of the thirteenth century, as an essentially modern, de-Romanizing manner, and a critique of the question of patronal "mental habits", see Paul Binski, *Becket's Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England, 1170–1300* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 62–77. For more pointed scepticism, see Matthew M. Reeve, *Thirteenth-Century Wall Painting of Salisbury Cathedral: Art, Liturgy, and Reform* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 42–44.

71. Binski, *Becket's Crown*, 73.
72. Only the fine fifteenth-century crossing tower breaks the single-build, and this does not much affect the interior.
73. Potterne was the site of the Bishop of Salisbury's manor house. Elias is recorded to be holding the prebend in 1226. See N. D. McGlashan and R. E. Sandell, "The Bishop of Salisbury's House at His Manor of Potterne", *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* 69 (1974): 86; John Hooper Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects: A Biographical Dictionary down to 1550, including Master Masons, Carpenters, Carvers, Building Contractors, and Others Responsible for Design*, rev. edn (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1984), 81–82; Nicholas Vincent, "Master Elias of Dereham (d.1245): A Reassessment", in *The Church and Learning in Later Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of R. B. Dobson*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford, Harlaxton Medieval Studies 11 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), 128–59; Binski, *Becket's Crown*, 72–73. There is also thirteenth-century building recorded at two more of his churches, Harrow and Brightwalton; Vincent, "Master Elias of Dereham", 144–46.
74. Robert Washington, Shirley Ferrers, and Thomas Cocke, *Churches of South-East Wiltshire*, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (London: HMSO, 1987), 109.
75. As was noted above, twelfth-century Wells also eschews wall-arcading in the nave and what remains of the original choir. See Peter Draper, "Salisbury Cathedral: Paradigm or Maverick?", in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Salisbury Cathedral*, ed. Keen and Cocke, 23–24; Binski, *Becket's Crown*, 68. Also like Wells, lavish arcading is used in Salisbury's north porch. The cusping of the arches here suggests a date later than the east arm of the cathedral; see Tim Tatton-Brown and John Crook, *Salisbury Cathedral: The Making of a Medieval Masterpiece* (London: Scala, 2009), 69.

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