A ROMANESQUE PAINTED ARCH c.1100 AT ST MARY'S CHURCH OLD LINSLADE

RICHARD GEM AND EMILY HOWE

Recent detailed study of the chancel arch in Old Linslade church has shown that it retains elements of a scheme of painted decoration, applied to the masonry of the arch soon after its construction, sometime in the period between c.1080 and c.1110. The decorative scheme employs chevron and pelta motifs, simply executed in white on a yellow ground; while an outer red band is executed in more sophisticated pigments. The patron responsible for the building and its decoration is identified as Hugh de Beauchamp, a Norman baron with significant land holdings in the region.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014 a visit to St Mary's church at Old Linslade by members of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society during the Society's annual 'church crawl', led by Michael Hardy, occasioned new interest in the painted decoration on the chancel arch. This was followed up in 2017 when Richard Gem invited David Park of the Courtauld Institute to visit and assess the potential interest of the painting. He recommended that a conservator's report should be obtained from Emily Howe, and in 2018 this was commissioned by the Linslade Parochial Church Council, assisted by grants from the Friends of St Mary's Church, from the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, and from Church Care with financial support from the Pilgrim Trust; the wall painting department of the Courtauld Institute afforded access to their analytical facilities.[1]

PART I: THE CHURCH AND ITS SITE

The topography of the site at Old Linslade (RG)

The parish of Linslade lay historically in Buckinghamshire, but in 1965 was transferred to Bedfordshire. The site of St Mary's church lies at NGR SP910268. The bedrock here is sandstone of the Woburn Sands (formerly termed Lower Greensand) formation.[2] This local sandstone provided much of the material for the construction of the church. As the ground slopes down eastward from the church, the bedrock is overlain by river-terrace deposits of sand and gravel, beyond which are alluvial deposits along the river Ouzel floodplain. The river follows a meandering course and at this point loops around the site, which forms a sort of peninsula above the floodplain, marked by a bluff along its south side, but sloping more gently to the north-east. Today the site is separated from the river and its floodplain by the Grand Union Canal (Fig. 1).

The church stands within a rectangular churchyard. On the 1884 Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Buckinghamshire XX SE, surveyed 1880) the churchyard is shown as a rectangular enclosure, having its long axis running north-west and south-east, with the church standing on the high ground at its south-east end.[3] Subsequently the churchyard has been extended along its south-west side. The churchyard today is enclosed by a brick wall of apparently 19th-century construction, while its earlier form is uncertain. To the east of the church on lower ground lies Manor Farmhouse, an early 18th-century building, together with its outbuildings of different dates.

The fabric of the church (RG)

In plan the church comprises an unaisled nave, a rectangular chancel, a west tower and a south porch (Fig. 2).[4] The high-walled nave is an irregular rectangle in plan: 13.8m (45ft) long; 6m (19ft 8in) wide at the east end, and 5.5m (18ft) wide at the west. The chancel is a simple rectangle 7.3m (24ft) long and 3.7m (12ft) wide, but its axis diverges northward from that of the nave. The chancel arch (described below) is the earliest identifiable feature in the nave and chancel. There are no other features ostensibly contemporary with it

FIGURE 1 Aerial photograph of the site of the church and manor, bounded by loop of the Grand Union Canal (Mike Farley)
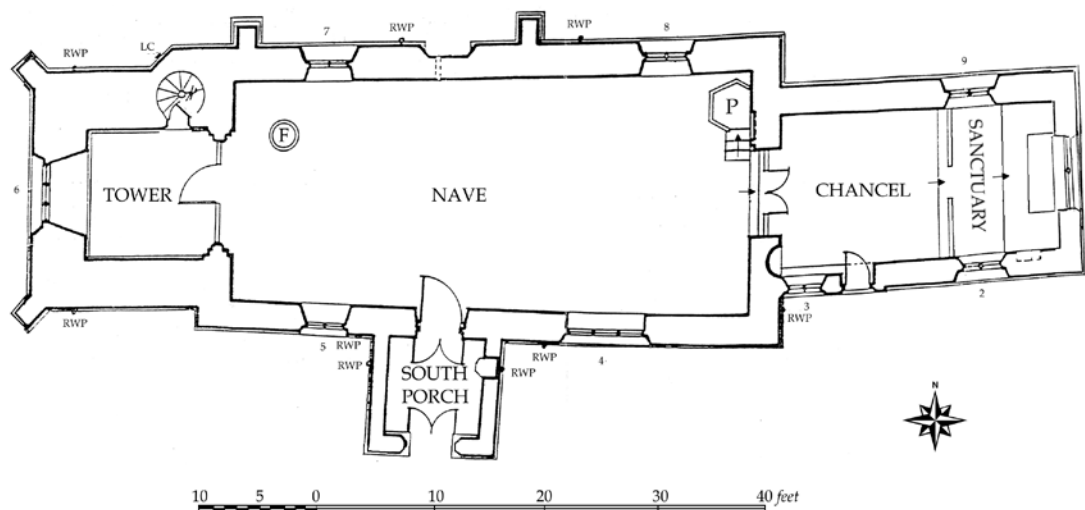

FIGURE 2 Plan of the church (H.A. Rolls & Partners)

FIGURE 3 Exterior of the nave from the NE (RG)

FIGURE 4 Exterior of the church from the SE (RG)

internally or externally; the external walls provide no evidence of former windows or of breaks in the fabric. Despite this, it may be conjectured quite reasonably that the main fabric of the nave is contemporary with the chancel arch.

The basic form of the church was not altered significantly in later centuries, but there were additions and new fenestration. There is a 14th-century window and blocked doorway in the north wall of the nave (Fig. 3). In the 15th century a west tower and south porch were added, and new windows were inserted in the nave. A substantial remodelling of the chancel around 1500 is indicated by the three windows in its eastern half, and by the priest's door and adjacent low window further west in the south wall, as well as by the timber roof (Fig. 4). Restorations of the church in the late 19th century saw the renewal of much of the masonry on the external faces of the windows, the rebuilding of the south porch, and the re-roofing of the nave.

PART II: THE CHANCEL ARCH AND ITS POLYCHROMY

The construction of the arch and its date
(RG & EH)
The chancel arch is of a single rectangular order, constructed in sandstone with ashlar voussoirs of varying sizes, and with fairly thick mortar joints between the voussoirs (Fig. 5). Between the two ashlar faces, the rendered core of the wall is exposed on the soffit of the arch (Fig. 6). However, the joints between the voussoirs and the masonry of the soffit have been respectively re-pointed and re-rendered at a modern date. The west face of the arch comprises twenty-two voussoirs which, for ease of reference here, have been ascribed numbers running sequentially from north to south. The surface of the stone is dressed with fine diagonal striations and, on eight of the ashlars, there are some lightly scored radial lines, the purpose of which is unclear (Fig.7).[5] These lines are irregularly spaced and bear no apparent correlation to the original scheme of painted decoration; they may instead be connected with the setting out of the stones on the ground before erection. An isolated collection of shorter free-hand striations on voussoir 10 is most likely a mason's mark (Fig. 8).

The arch springs from imposts of a plain quirked and chamfered form (Fig. 9). Parts of the ashlar blocks for these imposts have been renewed, while parts appear original. Below the imposts, the original jambs do not survive: they may have been originally of plain rectangular section – though it cannot be excluded that they included half-columns.

Various alterations to the arch and its jambs have taken place at dates subsequent to its original construction. Deep keying on some of the voussoirs of the arch on the northern side may relate to the application of a later plaster layer to the chancel wall (Fig. 7). It is also notable that voussoirs 1-3 and 20-22 have been cut back at some point to facilitate the installation of a screen, and this may correspond to the same phase of work (the current timber screen incorporates 15th-century work). The original jambs below the imposts have been entirely destroyed or encased in later masonry, possibly when the opening was narrowed to provide more space for lateral altars against the east wall of the nave – as indicated by the altar niche of c.1500 on the north side.

In assessing the date of the arch from the surviving elements, it may be concluded that the very plain detailing of the stonework, in combination with the thick joints between the ashlar voussoirs, is suggestive of a date of construction in the late 11th century or very early 12th century: say, between c.1080 and c.1110.

The surviving polychromy (EH)
A considerable amount of painted decoration survives on the west face of the chancel arch, in particular on voussoirs 6 to 20. Careful examination and subsequent sample-based analysis has enhanced our understanding of what appears to be an original scheme of decoration, and has assisted in establishing the chronology of paint fragments from at least three later schemes.[6]

The earliest paint layers belong to a decorative scheme which is presumed, on technical and stylistic grounds, to be coeval with the construction of the arch in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The scheme divides the surface of the arch into three distinct bands (Figs 10, 11). The inner and central bands have both been treated in yellow, possibly in emulation of the colour of the local iron-rich sandstone. This wholesale application of colour would not only have served to heighten the impact of the overlying decorative detail, which is achieved exclusively in white, but

FIGURE 5 The chancel arch from the W, later altar niche to left (RG)

also to disguise the differently-coloured mortar joints, thereby minimising visual disturbance of the scheme.[7] Around the innermost band, a form of chevron pattern is achieved using stacked diagonal lines, whilst the central band features a simple pelta motif. The outermost band is rendered in a darker colour which now appears almost black;

new evidence suggests that this field was, in fact, originally a bright red. A fine white line runs along the inner edge of this band; while in the centre of the band, in some areas, it is possible to discern diagonal white lines which may form part of a simple foliate motif (Figs 12, 13).

Small, localised fragments of up to three subse-

FIGURE 6 The soffit of the chancel arch (RG)

FIGURE 7 Detail of voussoir 5 showing: dressing of the ashlar, incised radial line, and later keying (EH)

FIGURE 8 Detail of voussoir 10, showing free-hand vertical incisions, perhaps a mason's mark (EH)

FIGURE 9 Detail of one of the chancel arch imposts (RG)

FIGURE 10 Overall view of surviving polychromy on central section of the arch (EH)

FIGURE 11 Detail of original polychromy on voussoirs 7, 8 & 9 in three distinct bands, with small patches of later overpainting in red and black (EH)

FIGURE 12 Detail of S side of arch, showing distinctive dark outer band of original scheme, with a fine white line along its inside edge. Red on the inner areas belongs to a later painting scheme (EH)

FIGURE 13 Detail of voussoir 19, showing the original dark outer band, with diagonal white lines that may belong to a foliate motif, demarcated from a yellow inner band by a fine white line (EH)

quent paint schemes survive in the central section of the arch, separated by successive layers of limewash. These later paint layers comprise a more varied palette than the original decorative scheme, and include areas of a rich red, a brighter lemon yellow, and a bluish green.[8] The latest discernible paint layer, in black, is also ultimately obliterated with limewash. While there is no evidence of original painted decoration on the underside of the chancel arch, there are multiple limewash layers and localised patches of a dull brown colour which probably corresponds to a later painting scheme. Fragments of the later red and black decorative schemes also survive along the returning edge of the arch.

The materials and technique of the primary scheme (EH)
Analysis of paint samples taken (see Appendix 2) has revealed that, in the primary decorative scheme, a layer of finely ground iron oxide yellow was applied directly to the stone in the central and inner bands of the arch, and the chevron and pelta patterns applied over this using calcium carbonate white including a proportion of chalk (Fig. 14 and Appendix 2: samples 01, 02 and 04). An important observation is the absence of dirt particles or a limewash layer between the sandstone support and this first system of coloured paint layers: this suggests that the original scheme of painted decoration was undertaken soon after the chancel arch was constructed.

The outer band of the scheme, by contrast, which is now blackish in appearance, has been found to comprise an admixture of vermilion and iron oxide pigments in a matrix of altered red lead (Fig. 15 and Appendix 2: samples 03, 05 and 07). The latter has almost completely darkened to form brown plattnerite (lead dioxide). This type of alteration is generally thought to be triggered by unfavourable environmental conditions including high alkalinity and humidity.[9] As in the adjacent yellow-painted bands, details including a fine inside line and possible foliate motif were painted on top of this layer using calcium carbonate white.

The primary scheme of polychromy in context (EH)
The investigation of the polychromy on the chancel arch at St Mary's makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the painted treatment of architecture in England at this early date, for which we have a relatively limited body of comparative material. What up till recently has been considered a predominantly Cistercian tradition of painting in white (in particular, white masonry pattern) is well chronicled.[10] But this is an area of research that has been revisited recently by David Park in the light of an increasing number of examples from *non*-Cistercian buildings of the period. He cites the white interlaced circles on a window splay in the parish church at Tysoe, Warwickshire,[11] and the white pelta pattern on the underside of the chancel
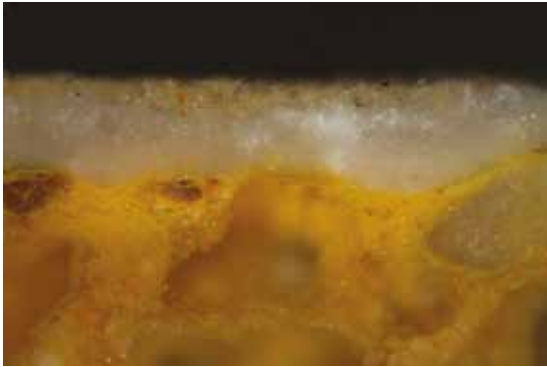
FIGURE 14 Paint sample 01 (voussoir 8), taken from pelta pattern, showing: an iron oxide layer applied over the stone support, with pelta pattern in white (EH)

FIGURE 15. Paint sample 05 (voussoir 14), taken from the dark outer band, originally in red. In some places, detail was applied over this in calcium carbonate white (EH)

FIGURE 16 Coombes parish church, West Sussex, pelta pattern painted in white on soffit of chancel arch, c. 1100 (© Crown copyright. Historic England Archive)
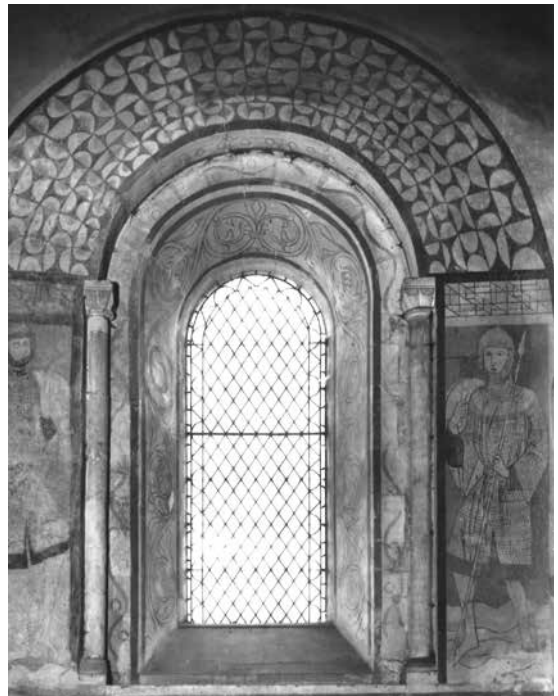

FIGURE 17 Copford, St Michael & All Angels, Essex, window in N wall of nave with pelta pattern surround to arch, c.1125–30 (By permission of Historic England Archive)

arch at Coombes, West Sussex (Fig. 16), both of which date from *c*.1100.[12] He suggests that the Cistercians were, quite probably, working within a long-established tradition of monochromatic decoration which, by the later 12th century, had evolved into an approach in which white was combined with other colours.

It is regrettable that so little scientific analysis has been undertaken to characterise the painting techniques employed at these sites. However, the small number of investigations of early-medieval wall plaster and polychrome sculpture that has been commissioned in England has identified a range of pigments broadly comparable with those at Old Linslade, including iron oxide reds and yellows, charcoal black and calcium carbonate white.[13] One particularly apposite example, a wall painting fragment excavated from the foundations of the New Minster in Winchester and thought to date from the end of the 9th century, features the heads of three figures bordered by a black and white pelta pattern.[14] Analysis reveals the paint layer to comprise 'earth colours of red ochre and yellow, with white and black'. As at St Mary's, this decorative scheme also seems to have been applied directly onto an un-primed stone substrate.

More recent technical studies of the early 9th-century painted beast heads in St Mary's church at Deerhurst, and the slightly later Lichfield Angel sculpture, have further enhanced our understanding of Anglo-Saxon painting traditions and evoke the deployment of materials and techniques very similar to those identified at Old Linslade.[15] The continued use of these technologies, but with a palette enhanced with more expensive and less-locally-available pigments such as red lead and vermilion, has been charted in analysis of a small number of parish schemes dating from the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as those in St Michael and All Angels' church in Copford, Essex (Fig. 17).[16] Viewed in this wider context, we can conclude that the original scheme of decoration on the chancel arch at Old Linslade is entirely in keeping with other prestigious parish schemes of its time.

Chevron: painted and carved (RG)

The decoration of the arch raises an interesting question about the interrelationship of chevron ornament in painting and in sculpture. Chevron in the medium of carved stone appeared in England around 1100 and perhaps somewhat earlier in Normandy.[17] There are also buildings where carved chevron was painted as part of an integrated polychromatic scheme, such as at Kempley (Gloucestershire) c.1130–40, a generation later than Linslade. But is the Linslade example of chevron painted on a flat surface to be understood simply as a skeuomorph of carved chevron? It is quite plausible to think that chevron could have had a prehistory as a painted motif around arches before it was given depth by carving into the stone.[18] But if clear evidence to substantiate or to negate such an origin for Anglo-Norman chevron is hard to find, the polychrome decoration at Linslade certainly gives weight to the possibility that traditions of painted and of carved chevron coexisted alongside one another, and require us to reconsider any supposition that painted chevron is derivative from the carved form.

Part III: The Historical Context of the Church (RG)

Linslade as a royal manor in the 10th century

It has been suggested that perhaps Linslade may be identified with the site of the Anglo-Saxon *burh* recorded by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as having been built by King Edward the Elder in 917 at *Wigingamere*.[19] Be that as it may, the first reference to the place as Linslade occurs in a Latin charter of 966, by which King Edgar made a lifetime grant to his kinswoman Ælfgifu of 10 *cassatae* of land at *Hlincgelade*, including the meadows, pastures and woodland there.[20] The place-name is thought to incorporate the elements *hlinc*, 'a bank', and *gelād*, 'a difficult river crossing'.[21] The charter includes, in Old English, a perambulation of the boundary of the estate, which correspond more or less with that of the parish of Linslade as it has continued into modern times. Its eastern boundary stretched along the left bank of the river Ouzel, from *Hlincgelade* itself in the north, back upstream to *Yttingaforda* in the south; the southern and western boundary of the estate followed a line contiguous with that of the (later recorded) parishes of Wing and Soulbury.

By her subsequent will, Ælfgifu bequeathed back to King Edgar her estate at Linslade (together with her adjacent estate at Wing, and other estates elsewhere).[22] Thereafter, down to the end of

the Anglo-Saxon kingdom, Linslade apparently continued as a royal estate; for, as recorded in Domesday Book, it belonged in 1066 to Queen Edith, and was held from her by a tenant. The situation changed, however, following the Conquest, when William I granted Linslade to Hugh de Beauchamp as a tenant-in-chief – though it may be asked whether perhaps this was not until after Edith's death late in 1075.

Linslade in Domesday Book
The Domesday entry for Linslade reads in translation:

25. LAND OF HUGH DE BEAUCHAMP.

In Cottelsoe Hundred.
HUGH de Beauchamp holds LINSLADE. It is assessed at 15 hides.
There is land for 16 ploughs. In demesne are 5 hides, and there are 2 ploughs, and there could be 3 more.
There 22 villans with 6 bordars have 11 ploughs.
There are 5 slaves, and 1 mill rendering 20s, and a meadow for 2 ploughs.
All together it is worth £10; when received 100s; in the time of King Edward £10.
This manor Alwin, a man of Queen Edith, held and could sell.[23]

Linslade was one of two manors in Buckinghamshire that Hugh owned and held in demesne, while a third estate of his in the county was sub-tenanted. At the same time, Hugh owned a great swathe of estates across Bedfordshire, forty-three in all; while he also had one outlier in Hertfordshire.[24] Among all these holdings, Linslade was the second most valuable, worth £10 per annum. This was exceeded only by Stotfold, Bedfordshire, worth £25. In all, the estates that Hugh as tenant-in-chief held in demesne were worth some £95 per annum, while those sub-tenanted from him were worth some £99; in addition to these, he was himself sub-tenant of a number of manors. Hugh was clearly a wealthy man.

Hugh de Beauchamp
Hugh de *Belcampo* or Beauchamp perhaps took his name from the village of Beauchamps in the south west of the Cotentin peninsula of Lower Normandy, and he presumably came to England at the Conquest or soon afterwards.[25] His presence in Normandy is evidenced as a witness to a pancarta of King William I to the abbey of Lessay in the Cotentin on 14 July 1080, granted at Bonneville-sur-Touques and later confirmed at Caen: however, further signatures were added subsequently to the charter over a period of some decades, and Hugh's signature may have been among these additions.[26] Lessay, it may be noted, lies only some 30 miles from the village of Beauchamps.

More extensive evidence for Hugh's career comes during the reign of William II and relates to England. In a royal writ of 1087x1089 he was addressed by name, along with Peter de Valognes, among the sheriffs of those shires in which St Albans Abbey owned lands: but in which of those shires Hugh held office at that time is uncertain; it may have been in Buckinghamshire or Bedfordshire.[27] In a writ of 1091x1095 he was addressed by name and as first among all the king's barons in Buckinghamshire; so presumably he was sheriff of Buckinghamshire at the time.[28] Hugh's name also appears as a witness on a number of other documents during the reign of Rufus.[29]

Hugh's career continued into the early years of the reign of Henry I. He witnessed a royal charter in 1100.[30] The following year on 10th March he was named as a surety for Henry in the treaty concluded between the king and Count Robert of Flanders.[31] In a writ perhaps to be dated to 1103 the king gave notice that he had exchanged an estate (un-named) that had been given by Hugh to the priory of Bermondsey for another estate elsewhere.[32] The Cluniac priory of the Holy Saviour at Bermondsey had been established in the 1080s and attracted various donations even before its foundation was confirmed by William II c.1093x1097.[33] Hugh's donation, therefore, could have been made any time between 1082 and c.1103. Possibly somewhat later, but only datable to c.1100x1118, a writ of Henry I gave notice that he had given the manor of Stanbridge (Bedfordshire) to his wife, Queen Matilda, and with his consent she had given it to Hugh de Beauchamp, who now held it.[34] Hugh's son Simon de Beauchamp first appears as witness to a writ of Henry I in 1114, and perhaps by then, or not long after, his father had died.[35]

Hugh it seems was married to one Mahald (Maud/Matilda), since she was recorded c.1126

as the mother of Simon de Beauchamp, his son.[36] It has been suggested that this Mahald was the daughter and heiress of Ralph Taillebosc or Taillebois and of his wife Azelina; she was the daughter of Hubert de Ryes, and the sister of Eudo Dapifer and of Adam, one of the commissioners for the Domesday survey.[37] In 1086 Azelina, by then widowed, held land in Soulbury, Buckinghamshire, from the king; she was also tenant-in-chief of several manors in Bedfordshire and one in Cambridgeshire: she had presumably inherited these from her husband. Ralph's death is recorded in Domesday Book under the manor of Stotfold in Bedfordshire, where a valuation is given for 'the day on which Ralph Taillebois died'. The manor of Stotfold by 1086 had passed to Hugh de Beauchamp, and there were other Bedfordshire manors that had also passed to Hugh from Ralph Taillebois. During his lifetime Ralph is documented on a few occasions. Between 1070 and c.1085 King William issued a writ to Ralph Taillebois, Peter de Valognes and all officials in those shires where St Alban's Abbey held lands: Ralph and Peter (whose wives, Azelina and Albreda, were sisters) clearly held office as sheriffs.[38] In the blundered text of another writ of William I, the king asked '*pio R. Talibosc*' to return to the abbot of Coventry a

pledge he had taken as security.[39] Then in 1075/6 Ralph is recorded as a witness to the inventory made of the treasures of Ely Abbey on the death of Abbot Theodwine.[40]

Although Hugh's own family background is not recorded he, through his marriage to Mahald, joined the circle of some of the most important barons in England during the reigns of William I, William II and the early years of Henry I. Any patronage that he extended towards building projects, therefore, is of considerable interest.

It has been suggested that Hugh de Beauchamp may have received a grant of custody of the royal castle of Bedford.[41] However, the first documentary evidence for a Beauchamp connection with the castle dates from 1137/8 when Miles de Beauchamp is reported by the *Gesta Stephani* to have been custodian of the castle by royal permission, while having a duty to render it up when so ordered; Miles, however, claimed that possession of the castle was due to him and his family by paternal right.[42] Speaking of the same event, Orderic Vitalis says that the castle was held by the sons of Robert de Beauchamp and that they feared to lose their whole inheritance when they heard that the king had bestowed Simon de Beauchamp's honour on Hugh 'the Poor' de Beaumount, the husband of
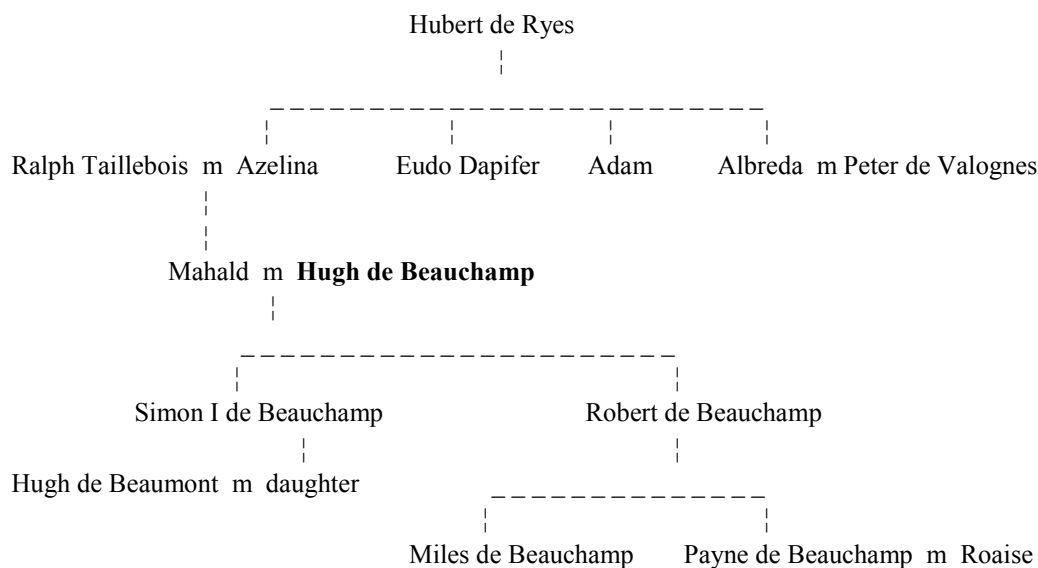

FIGURE 18 Relatives of Hugh de Beauchamp mentioned in the text

Simon's daughter.[43] From this it appears that the sons of Hugh de Beauchamp, the brothers Simon and Robert, had held custody of the castle; so it is not impossible that Hugh might have done so before them – or even, perhaps, if he was sheriff of Bedford at the time, that he had been responsible for building the castle on behalf of the crown. The castle in the 1130s was described by the *Gesta Stephani* as 'surrounded by a very loft bank, encircled by a strong and high wall, fortified by a strong and unshakeable keep'.[44] Archaeological excavations have thrown light on the form of this important motte and bailey castle, but have not been able to finesse the date of its initial construction.[45]

Linslade church and manor

The existence of the church of St Mary at Linslade is first evidenced for certain at the time it was given by Simon II de Beauchamp to Chicksands Priory, Bedfordshire. This was a house of Gilbertine nuns that had been founded c.1146x1153 by Simon's parents Payne de Beauchamp (grandson of Hugh de Beauchamp) and his wife Roaise.[46] Simon's charter does not survive, but his donation of the *ecclesia de Lincelade, cum omnibus pertinentiis* was confirmed by his son William de Beauchamp in his charter to Chicksands of c.1206x1219.[47] Simon was a minor at the time of his own father's death c.1155/6 and succeeded to his inheritance c.1164/5; he was dead by 1206/7.[48]

Even before the donation of the church to Chicksands Priory, however, Simon had already given part of the tithes of Linslade to the priory of Augustinian canons at Newnham, Bedfordshire, which he founded c.1166.[49] At the foundation, he transferred to the canons regular of Newnham all the endowments of the secular canons of the ancient minster of St Paul in Bedford, adjacent to the castle; and he gave in addition parts of the tithes of various named places in his lordship, including Linslade.[50] The Ecclesiastical Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291 records that the church of Linslade as appropriated to Chicksands Priory was valued at £8, while Newnham Priory also held a portion valued at 13s – 4d.[51]

Since Simon could dispose of the church it must have belonged to the lordship of the manor of Linslade; and, since the church is clearly earlier than the time of Simon II, it is reasonable to suppose, both that he had inherited it, and also that one of his predecessors had built it. If on architectural-historical grounds the present church is to be dated c.1080x1110, that builder would have been Hugh de Beauchamp. There is no actual evidence for a church on the site earlier than the present building: although this does not mean there was not one. Be that as it may, at whatever point in time a manorial church was first built, it was probably established within the larger parish of the minster church at Wing. The provision of a font in the late 12th century (Fig.19) would seem to date from shortly after the donation of the church to Chicksands Priory, and indicates that by then the church had acquired baptismal rights.[52]

In 1535 the spiritualities of Linslade were recorded in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* as still held by Chicksands Priory and valued at £8; three years later in 1538 the priory was dissolved.[53] The late-15th-century remodelling of the chancel of St Mary's may have been the work of Prior John Atoun of Chicksands, whose mother Agnes is commemorated by a brass in the chancel.

As for the manor of Linslade, this remained with the male line of the Beauchamp family through six generations, until the death of the brothers William II in 1262 and John in 1265.[54] In 1251 William had received a grant of free warren (right to hunt game) in his demesne lands of Linslade, also a weekly market on Thursdays and an annual fair on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. On the death of John in 1265 an inquisition noted the existence of a capital messuage (dwelling house with outbuildings and land); this manorial dwelling house perhaps stood near the church. Thereafter, Linslade passed through the female line and was divided into two holdings. The main manor passed to Maud de Beauchamp and her descendants, but in 1376 the capital messuage there was found to be in ruins, although the liberty of a court still attached to the manor. The second manor passed to Maud's sister, Beatrice, and there (at Linslade-with-South-cott) a capital messuage was recorded in 1286.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS (RG & EH)

The construction of the church, it has been argued above, belongs to the generation of buildings erected in the period between c.1080 and c.1110. Combined with the evidence that the church was appurtenant to the manor of Linslade, the patron for its construction must have been almost certainly Hugh de Beauchamp, who held the manor from the

FIGURE 19 Old Linslade, St Mary,
late-12th-century font bowl (RG)

mid 1080s through to around the mid 1110s. The
church, as thus identified in its historical context,
is an important witness to the sort of building that
a Norman baron might erect at one of his main
manors in the early post-Conquest period.

The architecture, in its simplicity, contrasts with
the elaboration of some other churches of a compa-
rable scale that were contemporary with it. In some
of the latter, a patron aimed to reflect the Roman-
esque architectural style of more major buildings,
by engaging masons who either had worked on
such projects, or were willing to imitate them
while perhaps introducing their own innovations.[55]
Linslade, in distinction from these, represents a
more pared-down architectural mode, employing
the building technology of the new Norman archi-
tecture, but without invoking its stylistic vocab-
ulary except through the medium of painting. A
comparable mode of architecture was deployed
in very many churches of the last decades of the
11th century and the first of the 12th century; but
thereafter the adoption of the decorative vocabu-
lary of Romanesque sculpture became widespread.
Linslade is of importance, then, in anchoring

patronage of the simple architectural mode at the
social level, in this case, of a leading local baron.

The remains of four separate schemes of painted
decoration have been identified on the chancel
arch at Linslade, with the most extensive survivals
belonging to the original decorative scheme which
is thought to have been executed soon after the
construction of the new church. This relatively
simple scheme of polychromy, while using common
motifs, is nevertheless striking: comprising chev-
rons and pelta pattern, achieved exclusively in
white, upon a ground of yellow; and an outer band
of red, with possible foliate motifs in white upon it.
While the majority of the painting materials identi-
fied is in keeping with painting practices observed
at other sites in England at around this date, the
use of vermilion and red lead distinguish the deco-
rative scheme here as one of high prestige, befit-
ting the patronage of a wealthy landowner. Our
improved understanding of what survives of this
scheme makes an undeniably important contri-
bution to our knowledge of painting practices in
England in this relatively under-researched period.

APPENDICES (EH)

**Appendix 1: Condition overview of the chancel
arch polychromy.** See Figure App. 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3
Almost nothing is known of the physical history
of the various painting schemes which succes-
sively adorned the chancel arch of St Mary's,
Old Linslade. Based on information and images
captured in the course of the current study, however,
some broad observations regarding the painting's
current condition can be drawn. The majority of
the surviving polychromy is located in the upper,
more central section of the arch (voussoirs 6-22)
and, in general, the original Romanesque scheme
survives in a far better state of preservation on the
northern side. On the southern side, it is the second
scheme of red decoration, applied over a limewash
layer, which dominates the inner and central zones
of the voussoirs, while further out the dark outer
band of the original decorative scheme predom-
inates. Localised fragments of two subsequent
schemes survive predominantly on voussoirs 6 to
15, and preferentially along the inner edge of the
arch. Scant remains of limewash layers and a later
buff-coloured paint layer also survive on the under-
side of the arch. Despite the fragmentary nature of
the painting which survives on the chancel arch

and the vicissitudes to which these schemes have undoubtedly been subject, the condition of the polychromy is, on the whole, coherent and stable.

Appendix 2: Analysis of the paint samples from the chancel arch. See Figure App. 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3
The paint samples were examined under a binocular microscope (10x to 40x magnification) and their stratigraphy documented. A portion was then mounted as a cross-section in polyester embedding resin (Tiranti™ clear casting resin) and examined with a Leica DMRX optical microscope (100x to 500x) in both visible light and under ultraviolet illumination in order to characterise the materials and painting stratigraphy.[56] Several of the paint layers were subsequently examined in dispersion in Meltmount™ (n=1.662), and their behaviour was recorded in incident and plane polarised transmitted light, and under crossed polars. Where necessary, microchemical tests were undertaken to identify characteristic metal ions and functional groups.[57] For some samples, elemental analysis was undertaken using SEM-EDX analysis.[58] The presence of organic binding media was assessed using histochemical tests capable of detecting oil- and protein-based media.[59] The location of each of the samples and a summary of the analytical findings is given in the following pages.

R. Gem and E. Howe

Voussoir 1

Voussoir 2

Voussoir 3

Voussoir 4

Voussoir 5

Voussoir 6

Voussoir 7

Voussoir 8

Voussoir 9

FIGURE Apx 1.1 Detailed images of voussoirs 1 to 9 (EH)

Voussoir 10   Voussoir 11   Voussoir 12

Voussoir 13   Voussoir 14   Voussoir 15

FIGURE Apx 1.2 Detailed images of voussoirs 10 to 15 (EH)

Voussoir 16

Voussoir 17

Voussoir 18

Voussoir 19

Voussoir 20

Voussoir 21

Voussoir 22

Underside of chancel arch

Note: *The slight redness of the images of voussoirs on the south side of the chancel arch is attributable to the proximity of wall-mounted radiant heaters which emit a red glow.*

FIGURE Apx 1.3 Detailed images of voussoirs 16 to 22 (EH), and underside of arch (EH)
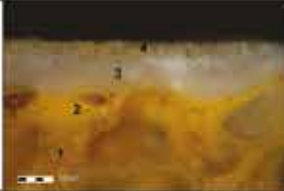
Sample	Location and description	Cross-section	Pigment identification and stratigraphy	
01	**Chancel arch, voussoir 8** Inner band with original paint scheme comprising impasto white chevron pattern over yellow ground		4	Dirt and limewash residue
			3	Calcium carbonate white
			2	Iron oxide yellow
			1	Sandstone support
02	**Chancel arch, voussoir 8** Central band with fragments of black overpaint, over the original paint scheme comprising a pelta pattern in impasto white on a yellow ground		9	Residual limewash and dirt
			8	Charcoal black layer
			7	Second limewash layer
			6	Fine orpiment yellow layer with scant particles of malachite
			5	Thick limewash layer
			4	Fine red layer comprising iron oxide red and vermilion
			3	Calcium carbonate white of pelta
			2	Iron oxide yellow
			1	Sandstone support
03	**Chancel arch, voussoir 9** Outer band with later red paint layer over an earlier blackish layer (to ascertain presence of underlying original paint scheme)		5	Lime wash residue and dirt
			4	Fine vermilion layer
			3	Calcium carbonate white or limewash
			2	Admixture of yellow iron oxide, vermilion and altered red lead
			1	Sandstone support
04	**Chancel arch, voussoir 9** Central band with fragments of later black overpaint, over the original paint scheme comprising a pelta pattern in impasto white on a yellow ground		9	Residual limewash and dirt
			8	Charcoal black layer
			7	Second limewash layer
			6	Fine orpiment layer with malachite over
			5	Thick limewash layer (applied in 3 coats)
			4	Trace of a fine red layer comprising iron oxide red and vermilion
			3	Calcium carbonate white of pelta pattern
			2	Iron oxide yellow
			1	Sandstone support

FIGURE Apx 2.1   Analysis of paint samples 01-04 (EH)

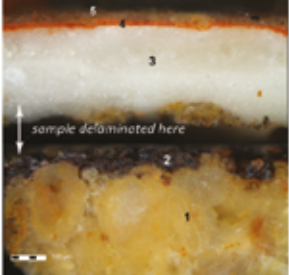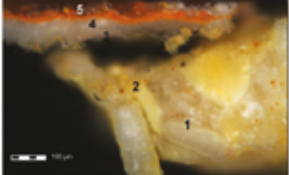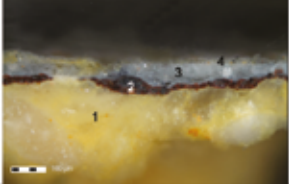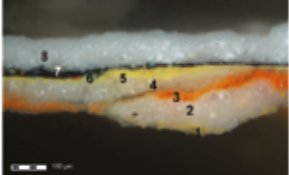| Sample	Location and description	Cross-section	Pigment identification and stratigraphy	
05	**Chancel arch, voussoir 14** Outer band with later red paint layer over an earlier blackish layer (to ascertain presence of underlying original paint scheme)	*sample delaminated here*	5 4 3 2 1	Lime wash residue and dirt Fine red layer comprising a proportion of vermilion Lime wash layer (applied in 2 coats?) Admixture of yellow iron oxide, vermilion and altered red lead Sandstone support
06	**Chancel arch, voussoir 14** Central band painted brick red (to ascertain presence of an earlier yellow paint layer)		5 4 3 2 1	Lime wash residue and dirt Fine red layer comprising vermilion mixed with iron oxide and lead red Calcium carbonate white or limewash Scant traces of iron oxide yellow layer? Sandstone support
07	**Chancel arch, voussoir 17** Outer band with impasto white stripe over black (to ascertain whether this is the original scheme)		4 3 2 1	Lime wash residue and dirt Impasto calcium carbonate (white stripe) Admixture of yellow iron oxide, vermilion and altered red lead Sandstone support
08	**Chancel arch, voussoir 15** Inner band painted with multiple later paint layers over brick red		8 7 6 5 4/3 2 1	Thick limewash layer Charcoal black with vermilion inclusions Fine malachite layer Fine orpiment layer Limewash layer over fine red layer Calcium carbonate white of chevron Traces of original iron oxide yellow

FIGURE Apx 2.2 Analysis of paint samples 05-08 (EH)

R EFERENCES

1. The authors are especially grateful to the following people, who encouraged and supported the work: Kate Crooks of the PCC, and Paul and Maureen Brown of the Friends of St Mary's. Sadly, Maureen passed away after this paper had been submitted for publication and it is now dedicated to her memory

2. A.M. Whiteley, *Strategic Stone Study: A Building Stone Atlas of Bedfordshire* (English Heritage 2011) online at: http://www.bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk/projects/Building%20Stone%20Atlas%20of%20Bedfordshire.pdf.

3. Online at: https://maps.nls.uk/view/101568425.

4. Plan by H.A. Rolls and Partners, Architects, photocopy supplied by Maureen Brown: location of original not known – possibly among the firm's uncatalogued records held by Bedfordshire Record Office listed as: Z 889.

5. See voussoirs 5, 6, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19 and 20 in Appendix 1.

6. Detailed visual examination of the chancel arch was undertaken from a portable scaffold tower provided by the Parish, with the assistance of a strong white light source (Thorsman Goliath lamp with 3500 K colour temperature), and each of the voussoirs photographically documented (see Appendix 1). Eight minute paint samples were taken following a systematic sampling strategy to characterise the painting materials and techniques of each of the schemes. These samples were subjected to analysis using optical microscopy combined with microchemical tests, and confirmation of inorganic pigments sought using SEM-EDX analysis (see Appendix 2).

7. As previously mentioned, the present mortar joints are thought to date from a Victorian restoration, and thus retain no remnants of original colour.

8. See Appendix 2 for detailed analysis of the pigments employed.

9. On this alteration mechanism, which is well known in paintings from the period, see: H. Howard, *Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting* (London 2003), 184; G. Giovannoni, M. Matteini and A. Moles, 'Studies and developments concerning the problem of altered lead pigments in wall painting', *Studies in Conservation* 35 (1990), 21–25.

10. D. Park, 'Cistercian wall paintings and panel paintings', in C. Norton & D. Park (eds), *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (Cambridge 1986), 181–210, at 184–90.

11. The painting is as yet unpublished, save for a short entry in *Victoria History of the County of Warwicks*hire, V, (London 1949), 179.

12. Two other *non*-Cistercian examples from the twelfth century cited by Park, 'Cistercian wall paintings' (as note 10), 185, include: a white masonry pattern on the chancel arch of Heath Chapel, Salop., (Paine & Stewart Conservation, 'The Heath Chapel, Heath, Shropshire: a conservation report', unpublished report, July 1999, 4–5 and pl.22); and another on the arcade in the nave of All Saints, Claverley (see Paine & Stewart Conservation, 'All Saints Church, Claverley: condition survey of the wall paintings' (unpublished report, September 2000), 13). See also Norton & Park, *Cistercian Art and Architecture* (as note 10), republished with addition (2011), xxiv–v, where Park cites new material from Chartres (J. Michler, 'La cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres: reconstitution de la polychromie originale de l'intérieur', *Bulletin Monumental,* 147 (1989), 117–31) and from Picardy (G. Victoir, 'La polychromie de la cathédrale de Noyon et la datation des voûtes quadripartites de la nef', *Bulletin Monumental*, 163 (2005), 251–54).

13. See: Howe in R. Gem, E. Howe and R. Bryant, 'The ninth-century polychrome decoration at St Mary's Church, Deerhurst', *Antiquaries Journal*, 88 (2008), 109–164, 143; S. Cather, D. Park and P. Williamson (eds.), *Early Medieval Wall Painting and Painted Sculpture in England* (BAR British Series, 216; Oxford 1990); D. Park, 'Anglo-Saxon wall painting: the current state of research', in C. Sapin (ed.), *Édifices et peintures aux IVe-XIe siècles: Actes du 2e colloque CNRS, Archéologie et enduits peints,1992, Auxerre* (Auxerre 1994), 71–79.

14. M. Biddle, 'A late ninth-century wall painting from the site of the New Minster', *Antiquaries Journal* 47 (1967), 277–79.

15. The pigments identified comprised not only iron oxide reds and yellows, charcoal black, and lime white, but also, on the Angel, lead white. On the Deerhurst beast heads and

the Lichfield Angel see respectively: Howe on the painting technology in Gem *et al.*, 'Ninth-century polychrome decoration' (as note 13); and W. Rodwell, J. Hawkes, E. Howe and R. Cramp, 'The Lichfield Angel: a spectacular discovery of Anglo-Saxon painted sculpture', *Antiquaries Journal*, 88 (2008), 48–108.

16. See Howard, *Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting* (as note 9), 100, 127, citing T. Organ, A. Sawdy and T. Smith, 'St Michael and All Angels, Copford' (unpublished report, 1991). While vermilion and red lead were used extensively in monastic and cathedral schemes around this time, such as that formerly in Lewes Priory, Sussex (c.1090), and in the apse of St Gabriel's Chapel at Canterbury (c.1130), research to date suggests that use of these pigments at parish level was still relatively uncommon. Other examples include the scheme of c.1110 in the church of All Saints at Witley, Surrey, on which see H. Howard, 'All Saint's Church, Witley, Surrey: scientific examination of the Romanesque wall paintings' (unpublished report, Conservation of Wall Painting Dept. Courtauld Institute of Art, London, May 1992); also Howard, *Pigments* (as this note), 127, 240.

17. A. Borg, 'The development of chevron ornament' *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 30 (1967), 122–40; E. Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford 2000), 276–77.

18. See the discussion by R. Moss, *Romanesque Chevron Ornament: the Language of British, Irish and Norman Sculpture in the Twelfth Century* (British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 1908; Oxford 2009), 6–11.

19. J. Haslam, 'The location of the *burh* at *Wigingamere* – a reappraisal', in A.R. Rumble & A.D. Mills (eds), *Names, Places and People: an onomastic miscellany in honour of John McNeal Dodgson* (Stamford 1997), 111–130; J.McN. Dodgson, '*Wigingamere*', *ibid,* 383–89.

20. P. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an annotated list and bibliography* (Royal Historical Society Handbook; London 1968), no. 737; M. Read, 'Buckinghamshire Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries', in M. Gelling, *The Early Charters of the Thames Valley* (Leicester 1979), 173–76;

A.H.J. Baines, 'The Lady Elgiva, St Æthelwold and the Linslade charter of 966', *Records of Buckinghamshire* 25 (1983), 110–138.

21. M. Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London 1984), 73–76, 163–65; M. Gelling & A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford 2000), 81, 182.

22. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (as note 20), no. 1484; D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge Studies in Legal History; Cambridge 1930), 20–23, no. 8.

23. Translation as in A. Williams & G.H. Martin (eds), *Domesday Book: a Complete Translation* (London 1992), 413–14. For Latin text see J. Morris (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book*, XIII, *Buckinghamshire* (Chichester 1978), 150c.

24. See the entry for Hugh de Beauchamp in the Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, Domesday website, at: http://domesday.pase. ac.uk/Domesday?op=5&personkey=40408.

25. For the Beauchamp family see, C.G. Chambers & G.H. Fowler, 'The Beauchamps, barons of Bedford', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 1 (1913), 1–25; K. Faulkner, 'Beauchamp, de, family', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, IV (Oxford 2004), 586–87.

26. J.H. Round, *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France*, I, *AD 918–1206* (London 1899), 327–28, no. 919. Round included the names of three witnesses: *[H]ugone de Lafertet, Nigello de Lando, Hugone de Bellocampo.* He had compared the published text of the pancarta with certain originals and reasonably his evidence on these names may be accepted. However, the several known texts of the pancarta (surviving or destroyed in World War II) are very problematic; for discussions see: D. Bates, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I, 1066–1087* (Oxford 1998), 577–584, no. 175; E. van Turnhoudt, *Centralité et marginalité en Neustrie et dans le duché de Normandie: maîtrise du territoire et pouvoirs locaux dans l'Avranchin, le Bessin et le Cotentin (VIe-XIe siècles)* (Thèse de Doctorat, Université Paris Diderot (Paris VII); 2008), 953–59. I am grateful for the personal comments of Prof. Bates, who is intending to prepare a new study of the pancarta.

27. H.W.C. Davis, ed. C. Johnson & H.A. Cronne, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, II,

Regesta Henrici Primi (Oxford 1956), 399, no. 314b. J.A. Green, *English Sheriffs to 1154* (PRO Handbook, 24; London 1990), 28, dated the writ to 1070x1089, following the previous ascription of it to William I by H.R. Luard (ed.), *Matthaei Parisiensis, Chronica Maiora*, 7 vols (Rolls series, 57; London 1872–84), I, 34, n.1 – but the writ is not included in Bates, *Acta of William I*. Green suggested that Hugh may have been sheriff of Buckinghamshire and also Bedfordshire.

28. Mason, *Westminster Abbey Charters*, 42, no. 51. Previously, H.W.C. Davis, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, I, *Regesta Willelmi Conquestoris et Willelmi Rufi 1066–1100* (Oxford 1913), I, 95, no. 370, had dated the writ to 1087x1095.

29. Davis, *Regesta Conquestoris et Rufi* (as note 28), 105, no. 419; 110, no. 446; Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I* (as note 27), p. 407, no. 459a; Mason, *Westminster Abbey Charters* (as note 28), 318, no. 488

30. Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I* (as note 27), 3, no. 497.

31. Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I* (as note 27), 7, no. 515; J.A. Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge 2009), 61–62.

32. Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I* (as note 27), 35, no. 659.

33. The establishment of the priory from 1082 onwards is described in the *Annales Monasterii de Bermundeseia*, ed. H.R. Luard, *Annales Monastici*, III (Rolls Series, 36; London 1866), 425–35; for the foundation charter of William II see Davis, *Regesta Conquestoris et Rufi* (as note 28), 101, no. 398.

34. J. Godber, *The Cartulary of Newnham Priory* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 43, 1963–64), 32, no. 46; the document was not included in Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I*.

35. Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I* (as note 27), 18, no. 1062.

36. Johnson & Cronne, *Regesta Henrici I* (as note 27), 198, no. 1451; *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, ed. W.H. Hart & P.A. Lyons. 3 vols. (Rolls Series, 79; London, 1884–1893), I, 143; *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameniensis*. ed. W.D. Macray (Rolls Series, 83; London 1886), 255; Chambers & Fowler, 'Beauchamps of Bedford' (as note 25), 3–4.

37. Chambers & Fowler, 'Beauchamps of Bedford' (as note 25), 25; G.H. Fowler, 'Domesday Notes', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 1 (1913), 62–73, at 64–70.

38. Bates, *Acta of William I* (as note 26), 756, no. 249.

39. Bates, *Acta of William I* (as note 26), 382–83, no. 105.

40. *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake (Camden Society, 3rd ser., 92; London 1962), 196.

41. *Victoria History of the County of Bedford*, III (London 1912), 9–15; F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism* (Oxford 1932), 237–38. The castle of Buckingham appears to have been connected not with the Beauchamps, but with the Giffards: *Victoria History of the County of Buckingham*, III (London 1925), 476.

42. *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & trans. K.R. Potter with new intro. and notes by R.H.C. Davis, (Oxford 1976), 48–49: ... *possessione, ex paterno iure sibi et suis debita*.

43. M. Chibnall (ed. & trans.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1968–1980), VI, 510–11.

44. *Gesta Stephani* (as note 42), 48–49.

45. D. Baker, E. Baker, J. Hassall & S. Simco, 'Excavations in Bedford 1967–1977', *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*, 13 (1979); I am grateful to Jeremy Oetgen for information on subsequent excavations that have not yet been published.

46. For the history of the priory see *Victoria History of the County of Bedford*, I (London 1904), 390–93.

47. An abbreviated text of the charter (now British Library, Harley Charters, 45 I. 18) was published in W. Dugdale, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis & B. Bandinell, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6 vols. in 8 (London 1817–1830), VI, 950; see also G.H. Fowler, 'Early charters of the priory of Chicksand', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 1 (1913), 101–28, at 104–06.

48. Chambers & Fowler, 'Beauchamps of Bedford' (as note 25), 8–10.

49. For the history of the priory see *Victoria History of the County of Bedford*, I (London 1904), 377–81; G.H. Fowler, *The Story of the Prebends of Bedford, 1065–1840* (Bedford 1934).

50. J. Godber, *The Cartulary of Newnham Priory* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 43, 1963–64), 9–10, no. 5: *Concessi eciam eis [canonicis] has decimas, scilicet duas partes decimarum in molendinis et pannagiis et in ceteris dominiorum de ... ... Lincelade.*

51. *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicholai IV circa A.D. 1291* (Record Commission; London 1803), 33b; see also the online database: www.dhi.ac.uk/taxatio.

52. The font has a band of carved decoration around the top of the bowl. See Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, 'St Mary, Old Linslade, Buckinghamshire', online at: https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/3330/.

53. *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII auctoritate regia institutus*, IV, (Record Commission; London 1821), 194–95.

54. For the history of the manor see *Victoria History of the County of Buckingham*, III (London 1925), 387–88

55. R. Gem, 'The English parish church in the 11th century: a great rebuilding?' in J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches: the Local Church in Transition* (Oxford 1988), 21–30.

56. The microscope was equipped with Leica 10x and 20x PL Fluotar™ objectives and a 50x PL Apo™ objective. For UV examination, excitation filter BP340-380 nm, dichroic mirror (RKP 400 nm) and suppression filter LP 425 nm was used. Photomicrographs were taken with a Canon EOS 1100 camera at 50x to 500x.

57. The majority of these tests can be found in J. Plesters, 'Cross-sections and chemical analysis of paint samples', *Studies in Conservation* 2 (1956), 110–55.

58. Analysis was undertaken using a Jeol JSM-6480LV high-performance, Variable Pressure Analytical Scanning Electron Microscope with a high resolution of 3.0nm, along with EDS (Energy Dispersive System) and EBSD (Electron Backscatter Diffraction) using the Oxford Link system.

59. Staining was undertaken using Sudan Black B and Acid Fuchsin, respectively.