

The Anglo-Saxon
Church of All Saints
Brixworth
Northamptonshire

Survey, excavation and analysis
1972–2010

by
David Parsons
and
D. S. Sutherland

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS,
BRIXWORTH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



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Rosemary Cramp, Richard Gem, P. S. Barnwell and David Hall

specialist reports by

Ian Bailiff, Andrew Millard, Paul Blinkhorn
and other contributors

Text by David Parsons except where otherwise stated

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAA	British Archaeological Association
BARC	Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee (‘the Committee’)
BGS	British Geological Survey
BL	British Library
BLINS	Brick–Limestone–Igneous–Northampton Sand–Sandstone (basic building assemblage by petrological characteristics)
BM	British Museum
CASSS	Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture
D	Diameter
EDM	Electronic Distance Measurement/Meter
GPR	Ground-Penetrating Radar
H/L	Height/Length
HMSO	Her Majesty’s Stationery Office
NAS	[Archdeaconry of] Northampton Architectural Society
NAU	Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NPL	Northamptonshire Public Libraries
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
OS	Ordnance Survey
RCHME	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
TL	Thermoluminescence
VCH	Victoria County History
W	Width

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FOREWORD I

by The Reverend J. N. Chubb, Vicar of Brixworth, 1969–81 (†2012)

Only a few weeks after being installed as Vicar of Brixworth, in April 1969, I received a telephone call from Dr H. M. Taylor asking if he could bring a party from Cambridge and would I please be able to show the group round the church. I just about knew his name and that he had recently, in 1965, published with his wife the then definitive first two volumes of his work *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (the third volume was to be published in 1978). I said that I would be delighted to receive the group, but could I please listen to him as he knew much more about the church than I did.

From that moment it was a steep learning curve for me as I discovered more about the church I had inherited and how many people from all over the world, academics and other interested folk, would want to visit and learn about this fascinating place.

A little later I met John Hurst, who was at that time investigating the medieval village of Wharram Percy on the Yorkshire Wolds, while he was visiting another interesting archaeological site (now the church car park) in Brixworth. During our conversation he mentioned that, if I wanted to explore the archaeology of Brixworth church further, the person to contact would be Rosemary Cramp, then the Professor of Archaeology at Durham University.

To my great delight she accepted the invitation to set up a committee to work on a project which would take at least 10 years. From that moment things did not look back, and this volume is the result of the hard work put in by all the academics who over the years have spent time and energy sharing their knowledge and expertise. Not least among these are Dr Diana Sutherland and Dr David Parsons, the principal authors of the present volume. Dr Sutherland brought her

geological skills to interpret stone structures of the building at an early stage in the life of BARC, and it is due to her efforts that other academics have been able to ask searching questions about other early buildings. She spent many hours on scaffolding examining each stone and produced a report which amazed all who read it. She has continued to show a close interest in all that concerns Brixworth. The present writer is greatly indebted to her for stimulating his interest in the structure of buildings of similar antiquity. Dr Parsons has been involved with Brixworth from his base in Leicester University for many years. He became the Committee's research co-ordinator, and later also Hon Treasurer of the Trust which helped finance the project. Without his devotion (hardly too strong a word) to the project it would not have progressed so successfully.

The full list of those who have been willing to give time and energy is considerable. The names of those who formed the original research committee are recorded in a footnote to Rosemary Cramp's 1977 publication on the early work of the Committee, and her Preface (below, p. xxi) refers to the working group reformed in more recent times and to the many bodies and individuals who have contributed to the project since my incumbency. I thank them all.

Although I left Brixworth in 1981 to take up other work in London, my successor has continued to encourage the project. His reflections are recorded below in Foreword II.

I am delighted and honoured in my retirement to be asked to write this Foreword to the present volume. Brixworth will always have a central place in my affections and my gratitude extends to all those who expended time, energy and expert knowledge over almost four decades.

FOREWORD II

by The Reverend A. J. Watkins, Vicar of Brixworth 1981–2012

During my long incumbency at All Saints', Brixworth (with Holcot), I have often felt that the parish church of Brixworth deserves a much higher profile than it receives in the history of our nation and its treasures from the past. It is in many ways a truly baffling building to interpret, not least because of the accretions added and subsequently removed since its ancient foundation, as well as the notable labours of my 19th-century predecessor (of the same name but unrelated to me), who did much to make the Anglo-Saxon features of the building more obvious.

This compendium of research at Brixworth in the last

hundred years or so should do much to kindle the interest of many more people who know little about its heritage. The contributors are all distinguished specialists in their specific fields of scholarship and have given very generously of their time and expertise without any financial remuneration to make this venture possible.

It is my hope and prayer that the contents of this volume will be much studied by a variety of people with or without detailed knowledge of Brixworth church and draw many more in the future to appreciate and investigate its architecture and place in the history of this land.

PREFACE

*by Rosemary Cramp
(Chairman 1972–2009; President 2009–)*

This volume is the fruit of a campaign of research which has endured (with a reduction in the momentum during the 1980s and early 1990s) for nearly 40 years, and has indeed been a major part of the life's work of the principal authors, David Parsons and Diana Sutherland. Since the Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee (BARC) was officially founded, in 1972, the basis of knowledge and techniques of analysis have changed substantially in the fields of medieval architecture and archaeology. But despite changing perspectives the importance of this building and its environment has not diminished. Moreover, the detailed analysis of its fabric and the archive it has produced are a unique and enduring contribution to the study of the early medieval period.

The contributions of the many people involved in the project have been noted above in the first of two Forewords by the Vicars of Brixworth whose incumbencies have spanned the period of research to publication. A short account of the work of the Committee up to 1977, together with two excavations, is to be found in Cramp (1977a). The committee membership was initially quite large, including as it did the leading Anglo-Saxon architectural historians and archaeologists of the day, and representatives from the Brixworth Parochial Church Council and Local Authorities (Cramp 1977a, 52, n1). These were the people who supported the formation of a Trust to help fund the research (the many Funding Bodies which have supported the work of the Committee are detailed in the Acknowledgements). The project was initiated by a stone-by-stone drawing of the building by David Parsons and his team, and Diana Sutherland's single-handed petrological identification of each stone (Sections 5–6). In this initial period also significant rescue excavations were carried out around the church and published by Everson, Hall and Audouy respectively (Section 8).

But when, after a period when less new work was taking place and few meetings were held, the Committee was reconstituted, the aim was to ensure that the extensive record and analysis which had been carried out by Parsons and Sutherland should be published, together with some of the associated research, and that the publication should focus on the building in its immediate environment rather than within the larger landscape as originally envisaged. A small executive committee was therefore formed in 2004 comprising the two main authors of this volume, the Vicar of Brixworth and a representative of the PCC, as well as two surviving members of the original Committee – Gem

and Cramp. The Committee has been lucky in maintaining throughout the support of Richard Gem, by reason both of his outstanding knowledge of the architectural history of this period in Britain and Europe and his more recent role as Secretary of the Committee. Previously David Parsons had served as both Treasurer and Secretary of the Brixworth Archaeological Trust and Research Committee, for a period aided in this by Mark Phythian-Adams, who helped us greatly at a critical time. Paul Barnwell also joined the Committee to fill the much-needed role of historian, and finally David Hall, who had been involved in excavations at an early stage, rejoined the current working group.

The long gestation of this volume has produced both negative and positive outcomes. Because of the changes in the organisation of conservation work in Northamptonshire since the published archive of the Committee's work was deposited in the Northampton Museum and Northamptonshire Record Office, it has been difficult to gain access to the archive of finds from the excavations, some of which would have benefited from reassessment, though it has been possible to review the pottery from two of the excavations. On a more positive note, however, digital advances have enabled us to synthesise and present the data in a more effective way than was possible when the project began. The addition of Christina Unwin to the team, as illustrator, has not only enhanced the appearance of the publication, but advanced our thinking whilst she patiently explored the Committee's emerging ideas concerning the original appearance of the church.

The project has benefited also from the specialist help freely provided by the staff, research students and undergraduates of several universities. The University of Leicester contributed students to the survey team and through its Engineering Department and Photographic Unit made possible the processing of the field drawings. The University of Bradford undertook the first resistivity and magnetometer surveys around the church and contributed a major chemical study of the bricks; Nene College (now the University of Northampton) assisted with analyses of the mortars; the Universities of Durham and Oxford have undertaken thermoluminescence dating; Oxford and the British Museum radiocarbon dating; and, most recently, Durham University radar prospecting, inside and outside the church. The conclusions of this scientific research have informed discussions throughout the book.

The objectives of BARC originally included an extensive study of the surrounding landscape and settlements as well

as of Brixworth village, the assembly of all discoverable illustrations, descriptions and excavations of the church, electronic survey of the churchyard and surrounding areas, and further excavation to test hypotheses. Some of this research, as already noted, has been scaled down or omitted from this volume, but the wider background to our study has

been taken into consideration in the evaluations of Part II of the volume, and Section 13 distils the Committee's thinking on possible research directions for the future. It is indeed to be hoped that, in raising the profile of this important church, this study will encourage a new generation of researchers to explore its significance further.

SUMMARIES

SUMMARY

All Saints' serves as the (Anglican) parish church of the village of Brixworth in Northamptonshire, which lies some seven miles north of the county town. The core of the church is Anglo-Saxon, but with later medieval additions and modifications. The Anglo-Saxon building is one of the most important of its period surviving in England and the research project published here has embraced a range of studies which identify the fabric as belonging to two distinct early periods. The studies, taken together, suggest a date for the building of the main body of the church towards the end of the 8th century, and for its remodelling with a western tower and stair turret and with a polygonal apse before the end of the 9th. It is therefore certain that Period I is later, and probable that Period II is substantially earlier, than previous studies have suggested.

This research project takes its place within a long history of study of the church. It was first drawn to scholarly attention by Thomas Rickman, who visited it in 1823 and added an account of it to his synoptic *Attempt to Discriminate ...*, with a separate publication in the journal *Archaeologia*. From then on it attracted much antiquarian interest, especially on the part of topographical draughtsmen, a selection of whose output is discussed in this monograph. Many of the early 19th-century drawings are crucial to the understanding of the church before the major restoration in the mid-19th century.

In 1832 the Reverend Charles Frederick Watkins became Vicar, a post he held until his death in 1873. His interest in the historic fabric of the building, along with archaeological discoveries, both deliberate and adventitious, led him to attempt the reconstruction of the original Anglo-Saxon church in the course of a thorough restoration project in 1865–66. The nave had originally been surrounded by side chambers, or *porticus*, which were entered through arcades of four large arches in the north and south walls of the nave. When these chambers were demolished, by AD 1200 at the latest, the arcade arches were infilled flush with masonry, through which windows were cut in the later Middle Ages. At the eastern end of the church most of a polygonal apse had been demolished and its surrounding underground ambulatory filled in to enable

the construction of a long square-ended chancel; this probably took place in the 14th century. Watkins decided to reverse most of these changes. He had the late medieval windows removed, the arcade arches made good, and the infilling reduced in thickness, so that the profile of the arches became clearly visible; he did not, however, proceed to reconstruct the side chambers. The late medieval chancel was removed, and the missing parts of the apse rebuilt; the ambulatory was excavated and left open to the sky. From then on, the church had much the same appearance as it does today.

Many of Watkins's successors as vicar and many reputable archaeologists and art historians have carried out local investigations, offered interpretations of the Anglo-Saxon church and put forward suggestions for dating its two periods of construction. These culminated in the discussion in H. M. Taylor's *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, published in 1965. Much remained uncertain, however, and some of the earlier interpretations were contentious. The Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee, founded in 1972 to co-ordinate archaeological investigations in the village as a whole, decided to embark on an in-depth project devoted specifically to the archaeological and historical study of All Saints'.

A limited programme of excavation was carried out as rescue opportunities arose, but with the addition of a small research element. Two sites outside the churchyard revealed evidence for the former extent of the cemetery area, which included the garden of the former vicarage, while to the north of the church the two most easterly *porticus* were studied in detail, along with the northernmost chamber of the western forebuilding (previously referred to as the narthex). The foundations of this structure were found to cut a ditch, whose fill contained 8th-century material, indicating that the Period I church must have been built at a later date. This served to correct the erroneous attribution to the 7th century which had previously been accepted. Radiocarbon dates from these excavations, together with charcoal extracted from construction mortar in the church fabric, including new determinations, have confirmed this chronology.

Resistivity (and more recently ground-penetrating radar) surveys gave mainly disappointing results, and the Committee concentrated its efforts on a complete stone-by-stone survey of the standing fabric, accompanied by petrological identifications of the very varied building materials. The distribution of the different stone types complemented the internal archaeological evidence of the fabric (its vertical 'stratigraphy'), leading to a refined appraisal of the construction sequence. The identification of randomly distributed fire-reddened stones, along with the recognition of 'exotic' stone types and the Roman date of bricks used in arch heads and elsewhere (confirmed by

luminescence research), made it clear how much of the building material was reused from earlier buildings, some of them as far afield as Leicester, about 25 miles (40km) north of Brixworth. This has implications both for the state of the building-stone industry and for the existence of a viable transport system in middle Anglo-Saxon England.

The archaeological, geological and laboratory findings have been amplified by contextual studies placing the church against its archaeological, architectural, liturgical and historical background, with detailed comparisons with standing and excavated buildings of similar age in north Europe and Italy.

SOMMAIRE

'All Saints' sert d'église paroissiale (anglicane) au village de Brixworth, dans le comté de Northamptonshire et se trouve à quelques 7 miles de la préfecture. Le coeur de l'église est anglo-saxon mais avec par la suite des ajouts et modifications médiévaux. Le bâtiment anglo-saxon est l'un des plus importants de cette période subsistant en Angleterre et le programme de recherches publié ici a embrassé une série d'études qui identifient le bâti comme appartenant à deux périodes anciennes distinctes. Les études, prises dans leur ensemble, suggèrent une date pour la construction du corps principal de l'église proche de la fin du VIII^e siècle, et pour sa transformation, avec une tour et une tourelle abritant un escalier à l'ouest, et avec une abside polygonale, avant la fin du IX^e siècle. Il est donc certain que Période 1 est plus récente, et que probablement Période 2 est notablement plus ancienne que ne l'avaient laissé penser les études précédentes.

Ce programme de recherches trouve sa place dans une longue histoire d'études de l'église. Elle fut pour la première fois portée à l'attention des érudits par Thomas Rickman, qui l'avait visitée en 1823 et en avait ajouté un compte-rendu à sa synoptique Tentative de Discrimination ..., également publié séparément dans la revue *Archaeologia*. A partir de ce moment-là, elle fut l'objet d'un grand intérêt de la part des amateurs d'histoire, plus particulièrement des dessinateurs topographiques, dont nous discutons une sélection des oeuvres dans ce monographe. Un grand nombre des dessins du début du XIX^e siècle jouent un rôle crucial dans la compréhension de l'église avant l'importante restauration du milieu du XIX^e siècle.

En 1832 le Révérend Charles Frederick Watkins en devint le pasteur, un poste qu'il occupa jusqu'à sa mort en 1873. Son intérêt pour la construction historique de l'édifice, en plus de ses découvertes archéologiques, à la fois délibérées et accidentelles, l'ont conduit à tenter de reconstruire l'église anglo-saxonne originale dans le cadre d'un minutieux projet de restauration en 1865-66. La nef était à l'origine entourée de petites salles latérales ou *porticus*, dans lesquelles on pénétrait par des arcades de quatre grands arcs dans les murs nord et sud de la nef. Quand ces salles furent démolies, au plus tard d'ici 1200 ap. J.-C., les arcs de l'arcade furent comblés au niveau de la maçonnerie, dans laquelle on perça des fenêtres

dans la deuxième partie du moyen-âge. A l'extrémité est de l'église la plus grande partie d'une abside polygonale avait été démolie et le déambulatoire souterrain qui l'entourait fut comblé pour permettre la construction d'un long chevet à extrémité carrée ; ceci eut probablement lieu au XIV^e siècle. Watkins décida d'inverser la plupart de ces transformations. Il fit enlever les fenêtres de la fin du moyen-âge, remettre en état les arcs de l'arcade et réduire l'épaisseur du matériau de remplissage de manière à rendre clairement visible le profil des arcs, toutefois il n'entreprit pas de reconstruire les salles latérales. Le chevet de la fin du moyen-âge fut enlevé et les parties manquantes de l'abside reconstruites, le déambulatoire fut excavé et laissé ouvert aux éléments. A partir de ce moment-là, l'église avait pratiquement acquis l'aspect qu'elle a maintenant.

Beaucoup de ceux qui succédèrent à Watkins comme pasteurs et de nombreux archéologues et historiens de l'art de renom ont entrepris des recherches localement, proposé des interprétations de l'église anglo-saxonne et mis en avant des suggestions pour la datation de ses deux périodes de construction. Celles-ci culminèrent avec la discussion dans *Architecture anglo-saxonne* de H. M. Taylor publiée en 1965. Il reste, cependant, beaucoup d'incertitude et certaines des interprétations les plus anciennes sont sujets à controverse. Le Comité de Recherches Archéologiques de Brixworth, créé en 1972 pour coordonner les recherches archéologiques dans l'ensemble du village, a décidé de s'embarquer dans un projet approfondi spécifiquement consacré à l'étude archéologique et historique de All Saints.

Un programme limité de fouilles fut entrepris au moment où des occasions de sauvetage se présentèrent, mais avec en plus un petit élément de recherche. Deux sites à l'extérieur du cimetière ont révélé des témoignages de l'ancienne étendue de la zone du cimetière qui comprenait le jardin de l'ancien presbytère, tandis qu'au nord de l'église on a étudié en détails les deux *porticus* les plus à l'est, ainsi que la salle la plus au nord du bâtiment en avancée à l'ouest (antérieurement appelé le narthex). Nous avons découvert que les fondations de cette structure traversaient un fossé dont le remblai contenait des matériaux du VIII^e siècle, ce qui indiquait qu'on avait dû construire l'église de la Période 1 plus tard. Cela a servi à corriger son attribution erronée au VII^e siècle qu'on avait auparavant acceptée. Les

datations au C14 de ces fouilles, ainsi que du charbon de bois extrait du mortier de la construction du bâti de l'église, y compris de nouvelles déterminations, ont confirmé cette chronologie.

Des relevés de résistivité (et plus récemment de radar à pénétration de sol) ont surtout donné des résultats décevants et le Comité a concentré ses efforts sur un relevé complet, pierre après pierre de la structure debout, accompagné d'identifications pétrologiques des matériaux de construction très divers. La répartition des différents types de pierres est venue compléter les témoignages archéologiques internes du bâti (sa 'stratigraphie verticale'), aboutissant à une évaluation affinée de la séquence de construction. L'identification de pierres rougies au feu réparties au hasard, ainsi que la reconnaissance de types de pierres 'exotiques' et la datation

romaine de briques utilisées dans parmi les claveaux et ailleurs (confirmée par des tests de thermoluminescence), ont clarifié quelle quantité des matériaux de construction a été récupérée de bâtiments antérieurs, certains venant d'aussi loin que Leicester, à environ 25 miles (40 km) au nord de Brixworth. Ceci a des implications à la fois pour l'état de l'industrie de la pierre de taille et pour l'existence d'un système de transport viable dans l'Angleterre anglo-saxonne moyenne.

Les découvertes archéologiques, géologiques et en laboratoire ont été amplifiées d'études contextuelles replaçant l'église dans son arrière-fonds archéologique, architectural, liturgique et historique, avec des comparaisons détaillées avec des bâtiments debout et fouillés d'âge similaire dans l'Europe du nord et l'Italie.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Allerheiligen ist die (anglikanische) Gemeindekirche des Dorfes Brixworth, das etwa 11 km nördlich des Grafschaftshauptortes Northampton in der gleichnamigen Grafschaft liegt. Die Grundsubstanz der Kirche stammt aus angelsächsischer Zeit, sie weist aber spätmittelalterliche Ergänzungen und Veränderungen auf. Das angelsächsische Bauwerk ist eines der wichtigsten, das aus dieser Periode in England erhalten ist, und das hier publizierte Forschungsprojekt umfasst eine Reihe von Untersuchungen, die zeigen, dass sich seine Bausubstanz zwei unterschiedlichen frühen Perioden zuweisen lässt. Zusammengefasst legen diese Untersuchungen eine Datierung des Hauptteils des Kirchengebäudes gegen Ende des 8. Jh. nahe, während die Umbauten, in deren Zuge ein Westturm, ein Treppentürmchen und eine polygonale Apsis errichtet wurden, vor dem Ende des 9. Jh. stattfanden. Damit ist sicher, dass Periode I später, und wahrscheinlich, dass Periode II deutlich früher anzusetzen ist, als frühere Studien nahegelegt hatten.

Das hier vorgelegte Forschungsprojekt reiht sich in die lange Liste von Untersuchungen dieser Kirche ein. Sie wurde erstmals durch Thomas Rickman zum Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher Aufmerksamkeit, als dieser anlässlich eines Besuchs im Jahre 1823 einen Bericht in seinen synoptischen „Attempt to Discriminate...“ aufnahm und einen gesonderten Artikel in der Zeitschrift „Archaeologia“ veröffentlichte. Von da an stand die Kirche wiederholt im Mittelpunkt altentumskundlichen Interesses, vor allem von topographischen Zeichnern; eine Auswahl von deren Arbeiten wird in der vorliegenden Monographie diskutiert. Viele der im frühen 19. Jh. angefertigten Zeichnungen sind für die Kenntnis des Zustands der Kirche vor den umfangreichen Restaurierungsarbeiten in der Jahrhundertmitte äußerst wichtig.

Charles Frederick Watkins trat 1832 die Stelle des Gemeindepfarrers an, die er bis zu seinem Tode 1873 innehatte. Sein Interesse an der historischen Substanz des Gebäudes, nebst zielgerichteten sowie zufälligen

archäologischen Entdeckungen, veranlassten ihn zum Versuch einer Rekonstruktion der ursprünglichen angelsächsischen Kirche im Rahmen eines umfangreichen Restaurationsprojekts in den Jahren 1865–66. Das Hauptschiff war ursprünglich von Seitenräumen, sog. *porticus*, umgeben, die in der Nord- und Südwand des Schiffs durch Arkaden mit vier weiten, hohen Bögen zugänglich waren. Nach dem Abbruch dieser Räume, spätestens um 1200, wurden die Arkadenbögen bündig zugemauert, und im späten Mittelalter wurden diese Mauerabschnitte mit Fenstern durchbrochen. Am Ostende der Kirche wurde eine polygonale Apsis fast vollständig abgetragen und die sie umgebende Umgangskrypta verfüllt, um die Errichtung eines langrechteckigen Chorraums zu ermöglichen; dies fand vermutlich im 14. Jh. statt. Watkins entschied, die meisten Veränderungen rückgängig zu machen. Er ließ die mittelalterlichen Fenster beseitigen, die Arkadenbögen restaurieren und die Stärke des Füllmauerwerks verringern, sodass das Profil der Bögen wieder deutlich sichtbar wurde; die Seitenräume ließ er jedoch nicht wieder errichten. Der spätmittelalterliche Altarraum wurde entfernt und die fehlenden Teile der Apsis wiedererrichtet; die Umgangskrypta wurde freigelegt und unter freiem Himmel belassen. Somit erhielt die Kirche in etwa ihr heutiges Aussehen.

Viele von Watkins' Nachfolgern als Gemeindepfarrer sowie zahlreiche angesehene Archäologen und Kunsthistoriker haben Untersuchungen vor Ort durchgeführt, Interpretationen der angelsächsischen Kirche unterbreitet und Vorschläge für die Datierung ihrer zwei Bauphasen gemacht. Diese gipfelten in H. M. Taylors 1965 veröffentlichter „Anglo-Saxon Architecture“. Dennoch blieb vieles unsicher, und einige frühere Deutungsansätze waren umstritten. Das Archäologische Forschungskomitee Brixworth, 1972 zur Koordinierung archäologischer Untersuchungen im gesamten Dorf gegründet, entschied sich zur Aufnahme eines umfangreichen, speziell der archäologischen und historischen Untersuchung der Allerheiligen-Kirche gewidmeten Projekts.

Es wurde ein begrenztes Ausgrabungsprogramm durchgeführt, wann immer sich Möglichkeiten für Rettungsgrabungen ergaben, aber das Programm enthielt auch ein kleines Forschungselement. Zwei Bereiche außerhalb des Friedhofs erbrachten Hinweise zur ursprünglichen Ausdehnung des Bestattungsareals, das den Garten des ehemaligen Pfarrhauses einschloss, während nördlich der Kirche die beiden östlichsten *porticus* sowie der nördlichste Raum des westlichen Vorbaus (ursprünglich als Narthex bezeichnet) detailliert untersucht wurden. Die Fundamente dieses Gebäudeteils schnitten einen Graben, dessen Verfüllung Material des 8. Jh. enthielt, was bedeutet, dass die Kirche der Periode I zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt errichtet worden sein musste. Aufgrund dieser Erkenntnis konnte die bis dahin akzeptierte Datierung ins 7. Jh. korrigiert werden. Radiokarbondatierungen von diesen Untersuchungen sowie an Holzkohle aus dem Mörtel des Kirchenmauerwerks haben diese Abfolge bestätigt.

Bodenwiderstandsmessungen (und in jüngerer Zeit auch Bodenradar) erbrachten überwiegend enttäuschende Ergebnisse, weshalb sich das Komitee auf eine vollständige, steingerechte Aufnahme der aufgehenden Bausubstanz konzentrierte, in deren Zuge auch petrologische Bestimmungen des sehr

verschiedenartigen Baumaterials durchgeführt wurden. Die Verbreitung der verschiedenen Steinarten ergänzte die auf archäologischem Wege ermittelten Ergebnisse zur Bausubstanz (seine vertikale „Stratigraphie“), was zu einem verbesserten Verständnis der Bauabfolge führte. Anhand der Entdeckung von zufällig verteilten feuergeröteten Steinen, in Verbindung mit der Identifikation von „exotischen“ Steinarten sowie der römischen Datierung von Ziegeln in einigen Bogenköpfen und an weiteren Stellen (durch Lumineszenz-Untersuchungen bestätigt), lässt sich zeigen, wie viel Baumaterial von älteren Gebäuden wiederverwendet wurde, und zwar aus einem Umkreis, der bis in das ungefähr 40km nördlich von Brixworth gelegen Leicester reicht. Dies erlaubt Schlussfolgerungen sowohl auf den Zustand der Baustein-Industrie als auch auf die Existenz eines leistungsfähigen Transportsystems im mittel-angelsächsischen England.

Die archäologischen, geologischen und labortechnischen Befunde wurden durch weitergehende Studien ergänzt, die die Kirche in ihren archäologischen, architektonischen, liturgischen und historischen Kontext setzt und detaillierte Vergleiche mit noch erhaltenen sowie ausgegrabenen Bauten vergleichbarer Zeitstellung in Nordeuropa und Italien ermöglicht.

SOMMARIO

La chiesa di Ognissanti ospita la parrocchia anglicana della cittadina di Brixworth nel Northhamptonshire, circa 7 miglia (10km) a nord del capoluogo di contea. Il nucleo della chiesa è di origine anglosassone, ma presenta aggiunte e modifiche realizzate durante il tardo Medioevo. L'edificio anglosassone costituisce una delle testimonianze più importanti del suo periodo conservate in Inghilterra. Il progetto di ricerca qui pubblicato ha abbracciato un'ampia serie di studi, che hanno permesso di identificare due distinte fasi costruttive per questa struttura. Tali studi, infatti, valutati nel loro insieme, suggeriscono per la costruzione del corpo centrale della chiesa una datazione risalente alla fine dell'VIII secolo; la sua ristrutturazione invece, che consiste nell'aggiunta della torre occidentale, della torretta con scala a chiocciola e dell'abside poligonale, sarebbe avvenuta prima della fine del IX secolo d.C. Risulta dunque chiaro che la prima fase costruttiva sia più tarda e, probabilmente, la seconda più recente di quanto proposto da ricerche precedenti.

Tale progetto di ricerca prosegue la lunga storia di studi dedicati a questa chiesa. L'edificio fu, infatti, portato all'attenzione del mondo accademico per la prima volta da Thomas Rickman, che visitò il monumento nel 1823 e ne inserì notizia nel suo compendio "Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture", dedicandovi inoltre una pubblicazione separata nella rivista *Archaeologia*. Da quel momento in poi l'edificio suscitò grande interesse da parte di antiquari, in particolare disegnatori e progettisti: una raccolta di tale produzione scientifica è discussa nella presente monografia. Molti dei disegni elaborati nei primi anni del XIX secolo sono fondamentali per comprendere la

struttura della chiesa precedente al massiccio rifacimento operato a metà XIX secolo.

Nel 1832 il reverendo pastore Charles Frederick Watkins divenne vicario di Ognissanti, carica che ricoprì sino alla sua morte nel 1873. Il suo interesse per la storia architettonica dell'edificio, assieme alle scoperte archeologiche, avvenute sia intenzionalmente sia casualmente, lo indussero a tentare la ricostruzione dell'originale nucleo anglosassone nel corso di un accurato progetto restaurativo condotto tra il 1865 e 1866. La navata centrale era originariamente affiancata da camere laterali, o *porticus*, cui si accedeva attraverso una successione di quattro archi realizzati nelle pareti settentrionale e meridionale della navata. Quando queste camere porticate furono demolite, al più tardi intorno al 1200, i relativi accessi ad arco furono tamponati a filo in muratura. In seguito, nel tardo Medioevo, in tali tamponamenti furono ricavate delle finestre. All'estremità orientale della chiesa la gran parte dell'abside poligonale fu demolito e il deambulatorio sotterraneo circostante fu completamente riempito, per permettere la costruzione di un lungo coro di forma quadrata; tali variazioni avvennero probabilmente nel corso del XIV secolo. Watkins decise di riconvertire la maggior parte di tali trasformazioni. Fece, infatti, rimuovere le finestre tardo medievali e restaurò il porticato, riducendo in spessore il riempimento, in modo tale che il profilo degli archi fosse di nuovo chiaramente visibile. Non procedette in ogni caso al rifacimento delle camere laterali. Il coro tardo medievale fu rimosso e le parti mancanti dell'abside ricostruite; il deambulatorio fu riscavato e lasciato a cielo aperto. Da quel momento sino ai giorni nostri l'aspetto della chiesa è rimasto in gran parte invariato.

Numerosi vicari, successori di Watkins, archeologi e storici dell'arte di chiara fama condussero ricerche sul sito, fornendo interpretazioni sulla struttura dell'edificio anglosassone e suggerendo possibili datazioni per le due fasi costruttive individuate. Tale interesse culminò nel dibattito descritto nell'opera di H. M. Taylor, "Anglo-Saxon Architecture", pubblicata nel 1965. Molto rimase da chiarire comunque, e alcune delle prime interpretazioni furono particolarmente controverse. La Commissione per le Ricerche Archeologiche a Brixworth, fondata nel 1972 per coordinare le indagini archeologiche effettuate nell'intera cittadina, decise di intraprendere un approfondito progetto di ricerca dedicato in particolare allo studio archeologico e storico di Ognissanti.

Fu messo in atto un programma di scavi limitato alle emergenze che si presentavano di volta in volta, affiancato però da un piccolo elemento di ricerca. Due siti all'esterno del cimitero rivelarono, infatti, evidenze dell'antica estensione dell'area cimiteriale, che includeva il giardino della precedente canonica, mentre a nord della chiesa le due *porticus* più orientali furono studiate in dettaglio, assieme alla camera posta più a nord del corpo occidentale anteriore (prima indicata come narcece). Fu scoperto che le fondazioni di questa struttura tagliavano un fossato, il cui riempimento conteneva materiale di VIII secolo, indicazione del fatto che la chiesa di prima fase doveva essere stata edificata in un periodo successivo. Questo servì a correggere l'erronea attribuzione al VII secolo che era stata in precedenza accettata. Datazioni al radiocarbonio ottenute dal materiale di scavo, assieme al carbone estratto dalla malta impiegata nella

costruzione della chiesa, hanno confermato tale cronologia apportando nuovi dati.

Indagini geofisiche sulla resistività del terreno (e più recentemente indagini condotte con GPR) hanno dato principalmente risultati deludenti e la Commissione ha concentrato i propri sforzi sull'analisi dettagliata, pietra dopo pietra, dell'edificio ancora intatto, accompagnata dall'identificazione petrologica dei molteplici materiali edilizi utilizzati. La distribuzione dei differenti tipi di pietre ha integrato le evidenze archeologiche interne all'edificio (la sua stratigrafia verticale), portando ad una più precisa definizione della sequenza costruttiva. L'identificazione di pietre arrossate dal fuoco distribuite casualmente, assieme al riconoscimento di pietre di tipo "esotico" e alla datazione al periodo romano dei mattoni usati nelle volte degli archi e altrove (confermata dall'analisi mediante termoluminescenza), ha reso chiaro quanto del materiale edilizio fosse stato in realtà preso e riutilizzato da edifici più antichi, alcuni dei quali tanto lontani quanto Leicester, circa 25 miglia (40 km) a nord di Brixworth. Tale scoperta presenta interessanti implicazioni, sia per quanto riguarda lo stato dell'industria dei blocchi lapidei da costruzione, sia per ciò che concerne l'esistenza di un vitale sistema di trasporto nell'Inghilterra medio anglosassone.

Le scoperte archeologiche, geologiche e di laboratorio sono state amplificate dallo studio del contesto che ha permesso di inserire la chiesa nel suo orizzonte archeologico, architettonico, liturgico e storico, grazie a dettagliati confronti con edifici coevi, ancora intatti o riportati alla luce da scavi archeologici, in nord Europa ed in Italia.

PART ONE

THE PRESENTATION OF THE EVIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

THE CHURCH AND ITS SETTING

The church of All Saints, Brixworth, is an historic building of outstanding importance both nationally and internationally. Built in a number of stages during the late 8th and early 9th centuries, it is one of a small number of churches in England surviving above ground from that relatively remote period and is one of the most complete; furthermore, it is still in use as a place of Christian worship. Its layout and general appearance are strikingly different from others in the region, which is rich in churches of the later Anglo-Saxon period; there are few comparanda nationally which are contemporary with the first period of construction at All Saints', and the present interpretation of its subsequent rebuilding suggests that even the Period II church predates the general run of late Anglo-Saxon churches. Both its size and a later literary tradition indicate that it was originally of higher status (royal patronage is suggested) and greater significance than the simple parish church that it subsequently became: probably it was intended to be a 'minster' church served by a community of monks or priests. It bears comparison with foundations of the high aristocracy in Carolingian Europe. The historical importance of this ancient church has been recognised for at least 200 years and its unique features have often been explained away by the proposition that it is a Roman rather than an early medieval building. The complexities of its structure and the striking variety of its building materials have time and again challenged archaeologists and historians to investigate its origins and to understand more fully its physical development. The research reported here has led to a reassessment of the date of the original structure, now firmly placed in the late 8th century or very early in the 9th, and a recognition of the European context in which it was built. It is argued that the later remodelling of the church took place earlier than has been previously thought, perhaps before the end of the 9th century.

All Saints' church was first described in detail by the antiquary and self-taught architect Thomas Rickman in the 1825 edition of his seminal *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England from the Conquest to the Reformation*. Rickman did not apply the term 'Anglo-Saxon' to All Saints', but by referring to changes to the fabric carried out from the Norman period onward claimed it by implication as pre-Conquest in date. (It may be noted in passing that the conquest of England in 1066 by the Normans of northern

France is perceived in historical and art-historical thinking as a watershed; in the history of art and architecture it tends to be used as a somewhat inaccurate and contentious indication of the transition between the styles known elsewhere in Europe as pre-Romanesque and Romanesque.)

From the time of Rickman's publication the church became the object of antiquarian attention, and large numbers of drawings and eventually photographs were produced, many of which are of importance for the study of All Saints' today (see Section 4). Interest in the church and its history accelerated with the incumbency of the Reverend Charles Frederick Watkins (1832–73), who, within a decade of taking up office, had embarked on a series of observations and interventions, which culminated in an extensive restoration in 1865–66, aimed at returning the building to what he understood as its Anglo-Saxon form. He published an account of his investigations and interpretations in 1867 as *The Basilica ... and a Description and History of the basilican Church of Brixworth*. His activities and conclusions are discussed in Section 4.

Since the time of Watkins the historical significance of the church has not been in doubt, though not all the interpretations of its fabric have been sustainable. Many learned persons have contributed to its study – famous names like J. T. Micklethwaite and Sir Henry Dryden are prominent – and it has figured largely in major works of architectural history by such eminent writers as Professor G. Baldwin Brown, Sir Alfred Clapham, Dr and Mrs H. M. Taylor and Professor Eric Fernie. Despite recent discoveries, from the excavated church at Cirencester to the Lichfield Angel, All Saints' Brixworth retains its importance in the study of Anglo-Saxon architecture. Over eighty years ago it was characterised as 'the most imposing architectural moemorial of the seventh century yet surviving north of the Alps' (Clapham 1930, 33), and while it is now clear from both archaeological and architectural evidence, which was not available at the time, that the proposed date was incorrect, this much-quoted assessment of All Saints' remains a measure of its historical and cultural significance.

All Saints' church now serves the parish of Brixworth, a settlement in the centre of the Midland county of Northamptonshire. Figure 2.1 shows its location in relation to the geography of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia and some of its principal sites. The positions of the parish within



Figure 2.1: Brixworth, Northamptonshire: location within Mercia, after Stafford, *East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (1985, fig. 36).

the traditional administrative divisions of Northamptonshire and of the church within the parish are shown in Figures 12.11 and 12.1 below. Brixworth village has been considerably expanded from its traditional core, especially to the south, where several residential estates have been built in the last half century. Its original centre lies at SP 748 709 and the present village occupies the western slope of a spur of high ground on the eastern side of a northern tributary of the River Nene, which is fed by a dendritic ‘fan’ of brooks. The brooks have cut down through Jurassic strata of the Northampton Sand Formation to the underlying Upper Lias Clay that forms the valley floor (see Section 6 for a full account of the local geology). The highest ground away from the valley is overlain with Boulder Clay (see Fig. 6.1). Medieval settlement generally preferred the ironstone exposures lying between the Lias heavy clays and Boulder Clay, and Brixworth conforms to this pattern, being sited on sandy ironstone, near the head of a small brook fed by water issuing at the base of the permeable strata. The site therefore has the benefit of a ready water supply lying adjacent to good agricultural soils.

There are several sites of archaeological and historical interest in the parish, including an excavated Roman villa, three or four Anglo-Saxon cemeteries with cremations and furnished inhumations, and a recently excavated Anglo-Saxon settlement site (see Section 12, subsection *The Archaeological Context*).

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE AND ITS PROGRAMME

The First Decade

The fame of the church was not the sole reason for the foundation of the Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee (BARC) in 1972. The expansion of the village referred to above took place in the context of the designation of certain towns as overspill areas. In the immediate area two such New Towns were established, with their own Development Corporations, at Peterborough and Northampton. Only seven miles north of Northampton, Brixworth was a prime candidate for expansion. The eminent archaeologists who formed the core of the original Committee, and who are referred to in the Foreword and Preface, saw their task as safeguarding the history and archaeology of the whole parish, and in the early days considerable efforts were made to investigate sites designated for development. Many of these investigations proved negative. The Committee’s remit did not include the more general investigation of unthreatened sites, but one of its members, David Hall, with the aid of local fieldworkers, undertook privately a considerable programme of fieldwalking and topographical research, which led to the recognition of many potential occupation or settlement sites from the prehistoric to the medieval periods. Understanding of Anglo-Saxon Brixworth has been considerably furthered by his efforts, the significance of which for the study of the church is assessed in Section 12, subsection (a) *The Archaeological Context*.

Excavation

Some rescue archaeology was carried out in the early days, but all in the context of the church and its immediate environs. The site of a new vicarage was excavated in 1972 (Everson 1977), which identified the probable extent of the early burial ground, and a small excavation by Hall when mains water was being introduced into the church yielded valuable information about the structure to the immediate west of the nave (Hall 1977). By the second half of the 1970s, however, it appeared that monitoring the expansion of the village would not yield the expected archaeological dividends, and the Committee concentrated its efforts on the study of the church. Ironically, it was only after the abandonment of this early objective that fieldwalking by others on the site of the proposed A508 by-pass identified an Anglo-Saxon settlement site in the south of the parish. Threatened by the construction of yet another housing estate, it was excavated in 1994, revealing a number of Anglo-Saxon timber buildings (Ford 1995). Meanwhile, however, BARC had set up a project to investigate the church, initially by non-destructive survey, as described in Section 5, including the then innovative recording of the petrology of the standing fabric (interim report by Sutherland & Parsons 1984, and see Sections 6 and 10 below). Water once again offered the opportunity for archaeological excavation when the church’s retained architect advised that a French drain along the north wall of the church was necessary to counteract penetrating and

rising damp. The line of the proposed trench was investigated by the then Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit in 1981 and generous grant aid enabled the dig to be extended for research purposes into early 1982, with important results for the study of the church (Audouy *et al.* 1984, and see below, Section 8). The most obviously significant of these was the discovery of a ditch pre-dating the church, into which the foundations of the *porticus* to the north of the present tower had been dug. Eighth-century material from the fill of this ditch made it clear that the date of the surviving structure could not be as early as the previously assumed late 7th century, a date inferred from the scant historical evidence, the reliability of which is discussed in Section 12d. This has led to a fundamental rethinking of the chronology of the church building and its position in architectural history.

The Surveys and their Results

The Committee's ongoing commitment was to survey, however. The establishment of an accurate ground plan was the first essential, and a new plan survey was carried out for BARC by the then church architect, Mr E. A. Roberts. This was subsequently refined by the excavation and survey teams and then replaced entirely by a more accurate EDM survey by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in the late 1980s, whose plan forms the basis for all the diagrams in this monograph.

The RCHME had already carried out a photogrammetric survey at the beginning of the Committee's activities and the supplementing of that by hand-drawn surveys of the church's elevations became the centre of the programme of work from 1976, when the first short season of drawing took place (described in detail in Section 5). Seasons of recording took place annually until the early 1990s, by which time the following had been drawn to scale: all the external elevations with the exception of the west and south walls of the south-east chapel (the former being newly built in the 19th century and the latter having been included in the photogrammetry); the interior faces of the arches of the nave arcades; and the interior elevations of the tower walls, excluding areas covered by the clock case and its weight shaft and by the bell frame and other minor fittings. These stone-by-stone records, with the addition of the petrological coding, both of which required close observation of the fabric of the church, have made it possible to see the fine detail of the construction process, especially the complex sub-phases of the Period I structure, and to propose a completely new interpretation of the series of chambers to the west of the nave. Since these rooms are likely to have had a different function from the *porticus* flanking the nave, it is now proposed to refer to them by the more neutral term 'compartments'. Similarly, the part of the church which they comprise is referred to in this publication as the west forebuilding, avoiding terms such as 'narthex', which have specific functional or liturgical implications (see Section 11).

Geophysical survey has been carried out on three separate occasions: first by Dr Arnold Aspinall, assisted by members of the Committee and survey team (1985); then a limited

exercise by Paul Beavitt with undergraduates from Leicester University in 1992–93; and finally a ground-penetrating radar survey by Alex Turner and Dr Sarah Semple in 2008. These and their results are discussed in Section 8. Conditions for this type of survey, either in the churchyard or within the church itself, are not ideal, and hopes that domestic and other buildings associated with the church in its supposed 'monastic' phase might be revealed have not been realised. Many other features have been identified, however, some of which are on a clearly different alignment from the church, and thus possibly precede it. These remain somewhat enigmatic, but further survey and excavation in the future may show their full significance.

Conclusion of the project

The Committee scaled down its operations in the 1990s, but remained in existence. Renewed activity since the turn of the millennium has been principally directed towards the publication of this research monograph, but opportunities for further investigation or the refinement of previous conclusions have been seized whenever they have occurred. Examples of this include the ground-penetrating radar survey mentioned above, the radiocarbon testing of samples not previously submitted, and the retesting of earlier ones. With the publication of this book the Committee's work is concluded for the time being, but future opportunities for investigation will undoubtedly arise, and will be taken, perhaps by another agency (see Section 13 for recommended research directions). Even as this paragraph was being drafted (April 2010), one such occasion arose: the internal wooden vestibule inside the south entrance to the church, which had long obstructed the view of the most westerly arch in the south arcade, and of the famous eagle carving, was about to be replaced by a glazed internal porch. The wooden structure had just been removed, and BARC took the opportunity to record photographically the arch, the eagle and the interior of the late Romanesque south doorway while there were no obstructions.

Archaeological investigation and interpretation are never complete, but the Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee's work over almost four decades is offered here as a significant contribution to the continuing study of the church which was initiated by Rickman and Watkins almost two centuries ago. For an outline of the chronology as presently understood, see the summary Table 9.1 (below, p. 143). In broad terms, what has been established is as follows. The earliest identifiable feature on the site was a cemetery of greater extent than the present (closed) churchyard, which appears to have preceded the church building that exists today. Excavations both to the west and the south of the churchyard have revealed burials succeeded by various medieval structures. The area of inhumations was delimited to the west by a substantial ditch, and the material recovered was consistent with – but did not prove – a date of first use in the late 7th century. Whether this cemetery had a church or mortuary chapel is not known, though geophysical prospection in the present churchyard

has indicated the presence of features earlier than the primary fabric of the existing church. The present building, however, dates from the end of the 8th or possibly the beginning of the 9th century on the evidence of material from a ditch cut by its foundations and of stylistic comparisons with other churches, both at home and abroad. The features of the Period I church are discussed in detail below, but one of the salient features of its design was a series of chambers ranged around the north, west and south sides of the nave and overlapping the choir. Before the end of the 9th century the chambers to the west of the nave had been remodelled, leaving only the central compartment intact, on which part of the present tower was built, together with an attached stair-turret. At the east

end of the church, the apse – assumed to be a stilted semi-circle in Period I – was rebuilt or refaced as a seven-sided polygon. This Period II church probably retained some or all of the side chambers to the north and south until the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, and perhaps even into the 12th century. In Period III, possibly as late as *c.* 1200, the church was finally reduced to a form similar to that of the present building. Subsequent developments from the 13th to the 19th century are relevant to the discussion in this monograph only insofar as they illuminate the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon place of worship and the present building, and they are not presented in detail here. They will be the subject of a separate publication (Parsons, forthcoming).

BRIEF GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

All Saints' church stands on rising ground at the northern edge of the village of Brixworth in the county of Northamptonshire (see Figs 12.1 and 12.11 below). The church now consists of an apsidal chancel, surrounded by a below-ground ambulatory or ring crypt, a choir, nave, south-east chapel, and west tower with a spire and a stair-turret attached to its west face. There are neither side aisles nor porch (Fig. 3.1). The walling is generally of rubble, mainly random and exhibiting a wide range of stone types (see Fig. 6.6), with dressings of either Northampton Sand sandstone or oolitic limestone; the spire is built of fine-jointed limestone. The roof of the nave/choir is covered with tiles and the apse roof is of Collyweston limestone 'slates', while the low-pitched roof of the south-east chapel is covered with lead.

THE ANGLO-SAXON AND LATER MEDIEVAL CHURCH (FIG. 3.2)

The present fabric of the church is the product of several building campaigns and one or more phases of demolition. The initial period of construction, probably in the 8th or early 9th century, was responsible for the main fabric of the nave and choir, the lowest stage of the west tower, and possibly the apse and the (now unroofed) ambulatory. An arcade of four substantial arches in each of the nave side walls, now blocked, together with evidence from archaeological excavation, indicates that the church as originally built was surrounded to the north, west and south by a series of small chambers (those flanking the nave and choir are known as *porticus*). These were later demolished, with the sole exception of the central compartment of the west forebuilding, which survives as the lowest part of the tower. A second building campaign, probably in the mid-9th century, raised this compartment to form a tower with attached stair-turret. At first-floor level the earlier doorway into the nave, whose outline is visible inside the church, was replaced by a triple-arched window. The original west doorway was completely obstructed by the turret, so that entrance was henceforth through the westernmost bay of the south arcade, the position occupied by the present main door. Since the present door surround appears to date from the late 12th century, it must have

replaced an earlier, Anglo-Saxon, south entrance. This earlier entrance may have been contrived in the westernmost *porticus* in the southern range, which was possibly retained when the west forebuilding was removed, rather than in the arcade arch as at present. If so, the westernmost *porticus*, now converted into a *porticus ingressus*, could be seen as the forerunner of the porch which was erected in front of the late 12th-century doorway either in the same building phase or slightly later; its date of construction may have been as late as *c.* 1220. It was demolished in the 19th century. A great deal of building activity took place either side of 1300. The south-east chapel (the Verdun or Lady Chapel), originally of three bays, was added at this time; it may have been preceded by a vestry or chapel of one bay, since the eastern arch of the pair leading into the chapel is of mid 13th-century date, while the detailing of the western arch is 14th-century. Another significant change took place at this time, when the Anglo-Saxon openings in the common wall between the choir and the nave were destroyed by the insertion of the present double-chamfered two-centred arch; but remains of small openings survive high in the wall above the springings of the nave/choir arch (Fig. 3.3). Probably also in the 13th or 14th century much of the apse was demolished, the ambulatory was filled in, and a long rectangular chancel, typical of the period, built in its place (see Figs 4.4 and 4.15). The upper part of the tower was built or rebuilt in the 14th century and the spire added at an unknown date.

THE 19TH-CENTURY RESTORATION

The early modern period has left little immediate mark on the fabric of the church as it exists today. The first identifiable intervention is the rebuilding of the north-east corner of the choir between 1842 and 1863, including a three-light window matching the medieval one to its west. At the same time a high plinth was added to the entire north elevation, concealing much of the lowest 1.5m of the Anglo-Saxon masonry. The final major building campaign was the restoration of 1865–66, in the course of which the porch was demolished (along with much of the medieval chancel), the ring crypt was re-excavated, and the apse rebuilt as a seven-sided polygon, a form suggested by two sections of pre-Conquest walling

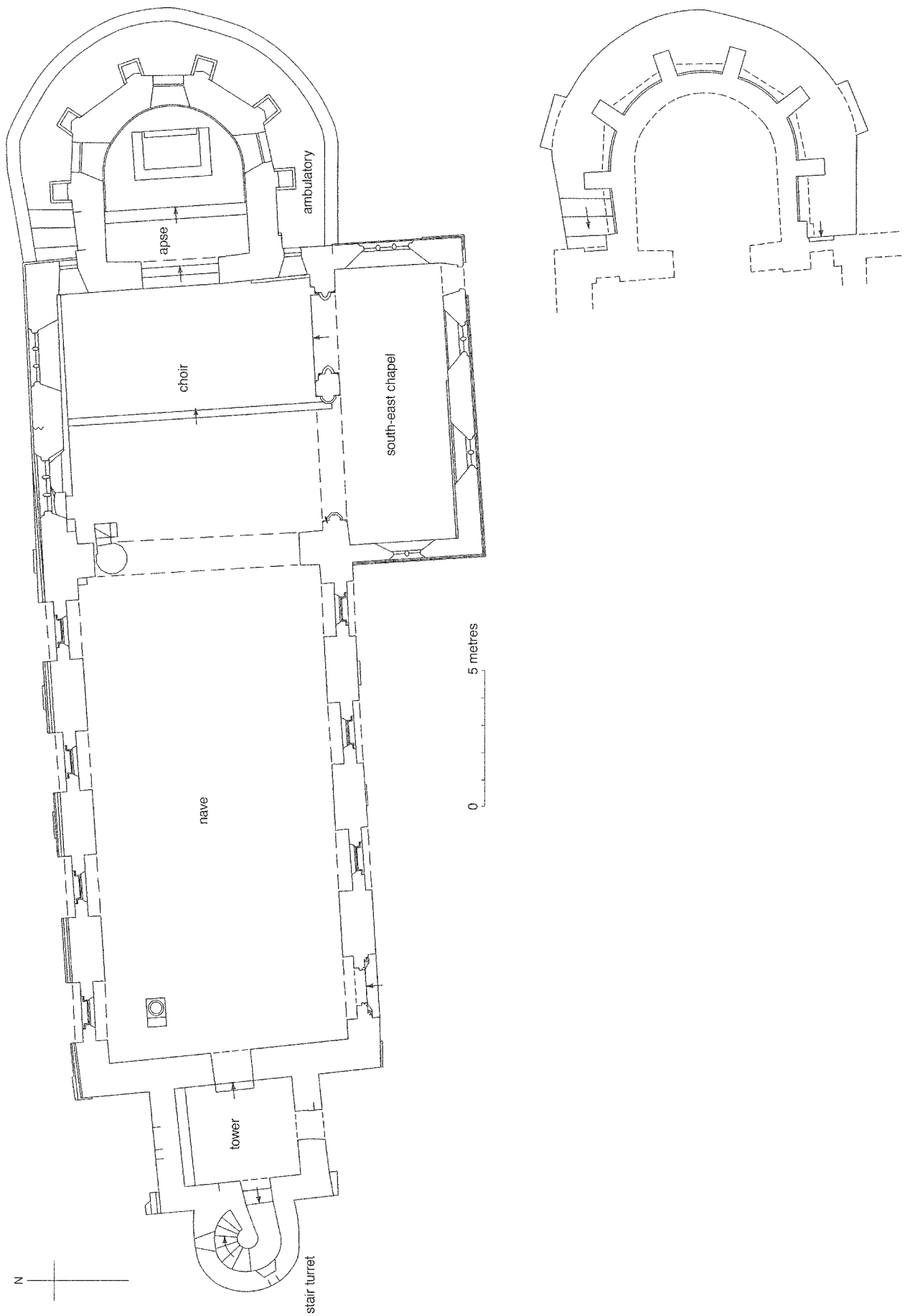


Figure 3.1: All Saints' Church: ground plan. After RCHME 1989, courtesy English Heritage.