TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

THREE ENGLISH CATHEDRALS: NORWICH, LINCOLN, WELLS

An educational video directed by Georgia Wright

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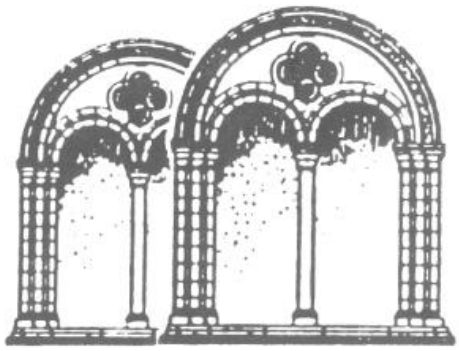

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HISTORY

Georgia Wright

When William of Normandy invaded England, he did so with the approval of the pope because William had reformed the churches of Normandy and promised to do the same for those of England. He was assisted in this task by some remarkable men, in particular Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury. The reform was not heavy-handed. William knew he would receive support only if he respected English customs and institutions. But as English bishops were peers or high nobles of the realm and councilors to the king, William found it convenient, or necessary, to appoint men from the Continent, frequently monks from monasteries active in the reform, to bishoprics that became vacant.

Cathedrals were rebuilt or built on new sites all over England, and many were larger than any on the Continent. These enormous new buildings, visible from miles around in the case of Lincoln, dominating the entire city in the case of Norwich, appear to have been intended to impress the Anglo-Saxons with the wealth and power of the Normans, as well as with their technical wizardry.

Monks and Canons

Some of the new bishops established priories (monasteries) with monks to serve the cathedrals. This was an extremely rare occurrence on the Continent but common in pre-Conquest England. The cathedral of East Anglia, established in the seventh century perhaps at Dunwich and moved thereafter to (North) Elmham and then Thetford, had been served by monks. When Herbert de Losinga transferred the site to Norwich around 1092, perhaps to put some distance between his cathedral and the powerful abbey of Bury-St-Edmunds, he continued the custom of having a community of Benedictine monks to serve the cathedral. Herbert came from the Benedictine monastery of Fécamp in Normandy so that this is not too surprising.

Also from Fécamp was Remigius, who came to England with William the Conqueror, whether as monk or warrior we do not know. He received the diocese of Lindsey/Leicester/Dorchester in gratitude for his help. He established a chapter of canons at the new see of Lincoln. (Cathedrals served by canons rather than monks are sometimes called secular cathedrals.) Canons were almost always priests, or in minor orders studying to be priests. Most were supported by prebends, that is, income from land and other assets, attached to their canonries, and they had obligations elsewhere. (The brass plates you see on the stalls of

Lincoln name the town or region of the prebend as well as the first line of the psalm which that canon was responsible for singing.)

Canons, like monks, were charged with singing services seven or more times a day. Canons were also celibate and worked together like monks, but they did not live according to a rule as monks did. Many canons at Lincoln taught at Oxford or served in the courts of the king and the barons. The residentiary canons were supported by a common fund and lived in houses in the close. In the 13th century Lincoln had 44 non-resident canons and only 12 in residence, a not unusual ratio. Twelve men could hardly fill such a huge building with their voices or carry on all the duties of running a cathedral. In order to bring the choir up to strength for services, and to do the necessary tasks, each non-resident canon appointed a vicar to take his place. (The word *vicariously* comes from the same Latin stem.) These men were chosen for their ability to sing, but they were also expected to lead a celibate and communal life in the Vicars Choral. Many became priests.

A prior and sub-prior managed the chapter of monks and a dean managed the chapter of canons. Both types of chapter had several officers as well, called dignities: a chancellor who supervised the grammar school for the boys of the choir, a precentor who kept the calendar of services and assigned the celebrants, and a treasurer in charge of the church plate and other treasures. The cathedrals also maintained large staffs of masons and carpenters as they do today, as well as guardians, bell-ringers, cooks, stable-hands, and so on. The cathedral was a major economic force in the city and surrounding lands.

On Sundays the monks or canons and their vicars held a chapter meeting. Business included the announcement of fines for those who had been negligent in attendance at services, the publishing of the calendar of services and the list of celebrants for the coming week, a report on the fabric of the cathedral and the funds for that, reports on the possessions or prebends of the cathedral chapter, discussion of the chancellor's administration of the grammar school, and perhaps an announcement of the appointment of a priest to a living in the gift[2] of the canons or monks. The common funds would be distributed to the canons in residence; the vicars were given a stipend by the canons they replaced.

The monks slept in a dormitory, ate in a refectory, and spent a good deal of the day singing the services. Their expenses were paid out of the income of communal property, which might be land, rents, and fees as well as churches that produced income. Norwich Cathedral had many churches from which it received income and to which the bishop had the right to nominate priests.

By the twelfth century, there were in England nine monastic cathedrals and nine secular cathedrals with chapters of canons. Wells was not among these. While

served by canons, it had lost the see[1] to the abbey of Bath in 1088. In the course of time, however, the administration of a diocese began to demand more direct supervision outside the close. Secular cathedrals were better able to provide this. The canons of Wells, moreover, were eager to see the bishopric reestablished at Wells, and they worked toward this end. In 1244 the see was removed from the abbey of Bath and established at Wells, and the bishop was, and still is, called the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

The Role of the Bishop

The bishop had little to do with the daily work of his cathedral. He was expected to lead Easter services and perhaps appear a few more times during the year. His property, that belonging to his office, was kept separate from that of the chapter. When a bishop died, the income of that property came to the king until he appointed another bishop. It was essential, then, that the monks' or the canons' communal property be kept separate from the bishop's so that the income might not be taken by the king. At the time of the earthquake in 1185, Lincoln was without a bishop. It was to the king's advantage not to appoint a new bishop soon after a death because the income from the bishop's lands came to the king. Lincoln in particular suffered from long vacancies of its see, and a diminution of income.

The bishop was scheduled to celebrate mass at certain major feasts. If he were in the city at other times, he would have services in his own chapel near his palace. He might only be in the cathedral a few times during his tenure of office, yet he might also raise funds for building campaigns or contribute to them from his own income.

Founder-bishops like Herbert de Losinga of Norwich and Remigius of Lincoln were necessarily involved in building their cathedrals with income from the large grants of land they received with their offices. Herbert not only gave generously to build his cathedral, but he built other churches and the town of King's Lynn. He may have been more than usually involved with services; his palace appears to have been connected to the north gallery of the nave so that he could enter the cathedral without ceremony, although how he proceeded to climb down the narrow stairs in the crossing pier with any dignity, we do not know.

Remigius appears to have been involved in the building of Lincoln from its foundation in 1073. He certainly labored long and hard to keep the Archbishop of York from taking Lincoln away from Canterbury and into his archdiocese. Poor Remigius died in 1092 the day before his cathedral was consecrated, and no part of his church remains.

When we say “Bishop Hugh built the presbytery of Lincoln,” this is a convenient, but inaccurate generalization. After the founding of the cathedral, the chapter of canons would assume control of the building. The clearing of the ruins of Lincoln after the earthquake of 1185 appears not to have been started until after Hugh was appointed in 1186, and indeed not until 1192, perhaps because there was little money left in the coffers after the long vacancy. The break in the building campaign after the presbytery and canons' choir, a break signaled by the end of the overlapping arcades on the east wall of the south transept, may have occurred because of Hugh's death in 1200, which was followed by another long vacancy and later by the long absence of Bishop Hugh II of Wells (1209-35), who left England under the Papal Interdict. (He signed Magna Carta in 1215.) While the chapter was responsible for the fabric of the cathedral, the absence of a bishop might still make fund-raising and decision-making difficult.

In spite of what would appear to be an arm's length relationship to their cathedrals, bishops were often generous donors. Bishop Lyhart of Norwich (1446-72) paid for the new vault in the nave; several nave bosses are carved with a deer (hart) reclining, the rebus of his name. Bishop Goldwell (1472-99), whose tomb is glimpsed in the presbytery, followed suit, paying for the vaults of the presbytery and embellishing each vault with a gilded well! Bishop Bekynton (1443-65), whose tomb we see at Wells (1450), built the bridge, called the Chain Gate, between the cathedral and the Vicars' Close, which was constructed by an earlier bishop.

One of the most famous bishops of this period was Grosseteste of Lincoln (1235-53), known for his scientific and theological treatises. He was the first chancellor of Oxford. He came to Lincoln late in his career where he antagonized the dean and canons by demanding the right of visiting the chapter to examine and reprimand any canons who might be delinquent in their duties. The dean claimed the bishop could not interfere with the chapter, and the battle went on for three years, with letters from both parties to the archbishop of Canterbury and to the pope.

Relics, Saints, and Miracles

One of the attractions of a cathedral in the Middle Ages was its hoard of relics: the bones or possessions of saints. Altars could only be used after a relic was encased within them, a relic that might merely be a cloth that had touched a saint's bone. The most valuable relic a cathedral could possess was the body of one of its own bishops who had been canonized.

The canons of Lincoln campaigned in Rome for years to obtain the canonization of the founder, Remigius. In the 1240s they commissioned for the sanctuary a pair of tombs, the Easter Sepulchre or empty tomb of Christ, and, continuing it to the left, one for Remigius! But Remigius may have fought at the Battle of Hastings, an act not so easily forgiven by thirteenth-century prelates, and so he was never canonized.

Bishop Hugh (1186-1200) was another story. His life was exemplary for the twelfth century. He had been a devout Carthusian, the most rigorously ascetic of monastic orders. He was known to fast, to wear a hair shirt, and to withdraw from the world on annual retreats. He was a fair judge and kind to those in his power. The fact that he stood up to King Henry, and denied the king the standard gift in return for appointing him bishop, was cited in his favor. The miracles reported after his death accelerated the canonization process so that he was sainted in 1220.

Lincoln needed a saint and relics to insure a good number of pilgrims with offerings. All levels of society believed in the power of relics. Even though the canons of Lincoln appear to have been more than willing to promote the candidacy of almost any dead bishop for the prestige and income his holy relics would bring, even promoting Grosseteste after his death, they, too, no doubt believed that relics caused miracles. Bishop Hugh, his secretary and biographer tells us, unwrapped a relic of Mary Magdalene at the Abbey of Fécamp in Normandy, and bit off a piece of the finger bone to the horror of the monks. He said they should not be scandalized as he bit the body of One greater than she whenever he celebrated Mass, an assertion which could hardly have mollified the monks for the loss of a piece of her relic. Hugh wanted it not for Lincoln but for his own ring, where it joined a piece of another saint, purloined from the abbey of Peterborough. His biographer relates these stories evidently as proof of Hugh's devotion to the saints.

After the Reformation of Henry VIII, Puritans and sometimes soldiers set about destroying (or stripping) devotional images of precious metal, which were considered idolatrous, as well as breaking up sculpture and glass. Monasteries were disestablished, the buildings destroyed, and the valuables collected by the king. In consequence the record of sculpture, glass, and metalwork is woefully incomplete, even more so than in France after the Revolution.

Cathedral and City

Cathedrals provided a large market for the produce of the surrounding lands as well as a source of employment in construction, maintenance, and domestic services. The bishop or the chapter might lease out large tracts of land, rent out buildings in the city, control certain market fairs, and administer justice in the

cathedral lands. All of these activities were potential sources of friction with the city, especially if the city were toying with forming a commune in order to be free of such encumbrances. The narrator of the video mentions the attack on Norwich in 1272, which, while not unique, was the most serious attack on a cathedral at this time. Norwich priory collected certain rents and controlled the market. It had the right of high justice (for serious crimes) and low justice in its lands, which were extensive, and it had usurped some cases to itself to which it had no right. (Trials brought money to the court that held them.) When a guard attached to the priory shot an arrow over the walls of the close that killed a passerby, the leading citizens of the town called for an attack on the cathedral. The townspeople burned almost all the monastic buildings and damaged the cathedral itself. All bishops were alarmed by this dreadful precedent. The king visited Norwich to institute the trials, and as the judges were almost all churchmen, many of the perpetrators were hanged and many citizens imprisoned.

But this was not typical. Many townspeople were proud of the cathedrals that gave their cities prestige and attracted pilgrims and tourists. While they would be baptized, married, and buried at their parish churches and attend services there, they might reserve considerable gifts in their wills for masses at the cathedral. To this day it is the townspeople in England who provide great numbers of volunteers as guides and in other capacities at their cathedrals.

ARCHITECTURE

Mary Dean

The three cathedrals introduced in this video are good examples of the Romanesque and Gothic styles of architecture, illustrating the universal elements of those styles such as rounded or pointed arches, flying buttresses, and bar tracery. They also incorporate features of design which are peculiar to English medieval architecture. Some of the more interesting of these are their long and low proportions, extensive surface patterning, thick or double walls, screen façades, and certain types of buildings that originally served the cathedrals, especially the octagonal chapter house.

Norwich

Norwich Cathedral has preserved most of its original, Anglo-Norman or English Romanesque form. The church was begun about 1096 by Herbert de Losinga after he established the see or seat of this bishopric in this eastern city. Like all the cathedrals, Norwich has suffered natural disasters—fires and collapses—and its bishops have been aware of changes of fashion. But while elsewhere these factors often inspired remodeling, wholesale rebuilding, or elaborate additions, at Norwich the patron bishops usually contented themselves with only limited changes. The character of the original building can thus still be seen.

For example, when a hurricane blew down the tower spire in 1352 and damaged the presbytery, the area reserved for the officiating priests, this was rebuilt without modernizing the whole. The lower parts were left unchanged so that beneath the new Gothic windows in the upper story (the *clerestory*) of the curved eastern wall of the cathedral, we see two levels of round Anglo-Norman arches, and we can still walk around the original ambulatory and into most of the original chapels. This portion of the building had already survived the ambitions of a mid-thirteenth-century bishop who wanted the whole new east end in the Gothic style, but who managed to complete only a grand eastern Lady Chapel, now destroyed.

The nave of Norwich preserves even more of the original *elevation* or design of the wall. On the lower story, huge *piers* alternate between those with three shafts and those with one shaft facing into the central space of the nave, an alternation which gives this long space some variety. These shafts divide the wall vertically into *bays*. Above the main *arcade* between nave and aisle is another broad and tall arch which allows us to see into the gallery, here a tall *tribune*, a full story with paved floor and outer windows. At the east end this tribune, like a second aisle on

top of the first, allowed monks in procession to reach the upper chapels. Above the tribune gallery is the clerestory, with a single window and, on the inside, a row of arches. A diagonal view shows a passageway behind these arches, right in the thickness of the wall. At Norwich the stone vaults are not original. The Anglo-Norman nave had a wooden ceiling, which was destroyed by fire in 1463.

Romanesque buildings were often monumental in scale and vaulted—the word Romanesque comes from these Roman-like characteristics—and in the late eleventh century, England, like the continent, began to experiment with heavy stone vaults that demanded substantial support. As at Norwich, however, massive piers and thick walls were often a stylistic choice, employed even when they carried only a wooden ceiling.

When the clerestory of the east end was rebuilt in 1362, it was made twice as high and filled with Gothic windows, which made the wall less stable, but again this end was just covered with a wooden ceiling. (You can still see the mark of the original gable roof inside, on the east side of the crossing tower: look for it in the shot of the length of the church taken from the eastern gallery.) When the nave was vaulted after the fire in the fifteenth century, however, the east end, the most important part of the building, could no longer be left in so old-fashioned a condition. The Gothic clerestory wall could not withstand the thrust of stone vaulting, so *flying buttresses* had to be added to the exterior to carry the lateral thrust of the new vaults.

Norwich Cathedral was not just the seat of the bishop but served a community of monks, as well. The monks' living quarters were connected to the church by the *cloister*, an open courtyard surrounded by a covered walkway that led to the dormitory, refectory, and other buildings including the *chapter house*, where the monks met to discuss the business of running the cathedral. At Norwich little survives of the monastic buildings. After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, most monastic buildings were abandoned, ruined, sold for building materials, or incorporated into houses. In the video we saw two of the portions which remain at Norwich, a wall of the Romanesque refectory and the magnificent Gothic cloister, built after the original was burnt in 1272.

The bishop did not live in the monastery. He was a great feudal lord with public responsibilities. At Norwich the Bishop's Palace has always been on the opposite side of the church from the cloister so, as the monastic records say, his work “should not cause disturbance to the peace of the monks.” The palace of Bishop Salmon, built in the early fourteenth century, was as grand as that at Wells; portions of it, too, can still be seen.

Lincoln

Lincoln Cathedral sits majestically on top of a hill, its enormous length balanced by the height of its towers. English medieval cathedrals are among the longest church buildings in the world. Norwich Cathedral nave alone stretches to fourteen bays and is over 250 feet long. In addition to long naves, it was common for these cathedrals to have a transept and a large presbytery. In the Gothic period the eastern portion of the church was often further enlarged and enriched. Lincoln expanded eastward twice, each time so far that the city wall had to be breached and rebuilt. Its first Gothic plan not only had a choir and east end with ambulatory and chapels, but it followed the example of Canterbury Cathedral in adding a second, smaller transept to the design. Less than seventy years later the canons remodeled the east end again with a retrochoir, the Angel Choir, to house the relics of their sainted Bishop Hugh. A *retrochoir* is an area behind the high altar. Wells Cathedral has a retrochoir, too; there its purpose is to link the eastern Lady Chapel with the sanctuary.

The Anglo-Norman church at Lincoln has been almost entirely replaced, but we know that it was formidable. Both surviving evidence and the chronicle of Giraldus Cambrensis tell us that by the mid-twelfth century it had been entirely vaulted, and the façade featured three deep arches with arrow loops and other features of true castle defense. The Romanesque façade, later incorporated into a wide Gothic screen façade, is the only part of the earlier building to survive.

In 1192 the present Gothic church was begun by Bishop Hugh with an extraordinary new eastern end. Not only was the plan extensive and unusual, but the design of the interior was unprecedented in its surface effects. A love of surface patterning is characteristic of many English medieval buildings. Norwich Cathedral is a good example. There a typical Anglo-Norman pattern of interwoven arches as well as other decorative forms can be seen on the tower and walls. This taste for decorative richness has been traced in England to Anglo-Saxon times, and it continued to distinguish English Gothic architecture in the thirteenth century and later.

The architect of St. Hugh's choir produced some of the richest and most inventive patterning of all, with contrasting superimposed arcades on the aisle walls and a vaulting design so eccentric it was never copied. He also made the most of colonettes of polished dark stone, creating linear patterns on the surface of walls and piers. (This stone is often called *Purbeck marble*, but at Lincoln it is in fact neither marble nor from the island of Purbeck.) The records suggest that the architect's name was Geoffrey de Noyers. His most remarkable achievement was

the high vault over the choir, where he used a longitudinal *ridge rib* and a radical, syncopated pattern.

The nave of Lincoln also employs an “architecture of black and white,” but it does not exactly copy the choir. Rather than sculptural display, it emphasizes spaciousness. Its piers are tall and widely separated. At gallery level, paired arches lead into what looks like a tribune story but is just the dark space under the aisle roof. The clerestory level is low and shows the continuing native taste for the *thick wall* or double wall with clerestory passage, but the wall mass is dissolved into delicate column screens and wide windows. Geoffrey's zig-zag ‘crazy vaults’ are abandoned, but the idea of the ridge rib was incorporated into a symmetrical pattern of multiple ribs, a formula that dominated English vault design for some decades.

The Angel Choir, begun around 1256, introduced another innovation, *bar tracery,* in which individual bars of stone are set in patterns in the void of the window. The design of the great eastern window is of French inspiration, but its scale goes far beyond the French models: on the inside it completely replaces the wall. Further, in English hands tracery now invades every area. There are two identical planes of tracery in the clerestory, that of the window repeated in the screen on the interior side of the wall passage. The gallery openings and aisle arcade display more tracery patterns. Bar tracery made it possible to treat windows with the linear patterning already apparent on walls, piers, and vaults.

Notice that the Angel Choir still displays the thick wall with passage. Flying buttresses were then available and indeed used here to transfer the thrust of the vault away from the clerestory. The thick wall was not necessary for stability. We may well wonder why it persisted. Was it tradition or taste, structural conservatism or a preference for the linear and sculptural richness of column screens and deeply moulded arches?

Secular canons such as those who served Lincoln Cathedral lived in private quarters rather than communally like monks, but even secular cathedrals often had a cloister attached to the church. At Lincoln, the cloister leads to the canons' chapter house. Most chapter houses were rectangular halls, but in England there was an extraordinary group of round or polygonal examples. About thirty survive or are known from excavations. Lincoln's had ten sides; most later examples were octagonal. Like other inventive features of English medieval architecture, the inspiration for this design and the reasons for its popularity are the subject of spirited discussion.

Wells

The present buildings at Wells Cathedral were begun around 1178, perhaps as part of a plan to regain the see from Bath Abbey. (Around 1200 the canons commissioned tombs for the Saxon bishops of Wells to illustrate the antiquity of their claim.) The first part of the work, the east end, has been rebuilt; the oldest part seen in the video is the nave.

The interior of this building looks very different from Lincoln. The thick piers are carved into a multitude of shafts, and there is no use of separate dark colonettes. The middle story, a low *triforium* gallery or passage in the thickness of the wall, is decorated with arches without capitals, an unusual element which was imitated by the engineer who designed the scissors arches to stabilize the crossing tower in the early fourteenth century. Whereas vertical shafts divide the elevation at Norwich and Lincoln into bays, here the shafts terminate high on the wall so that the pattern of the gallery continues as an unbroken horizontal band down the nave. The clerestory (the tracery is a later addition) does not disguise the thickness of the wall. The vault has a simple, classic four-part design. This is an example of early Gothic architecture in England's West Country.

The glory of Wells is its façade, begun about 1240. Like a number of other examples in England, including Lincoln, it is a *screen façade*, that is, wider than the church behind and independent of the church in design. On a screen façade the placement of towers—if any—and doors does not necessarily correspond to the divisions of the interior, and decoration is often spread across the surface rather than being confined to the portals, as in France.

The example at Wells is like no other in being conceived as a continuous openwork screen of niches, dark colonettes, and sculpture. This concept so dominated the building that the portals, the most prominent feature of French Gothic façades, are here comparatively insignificant in size. At Wells (and at Lincoln, too) the façade played an important role in the Palm Sunday procession, when singing was heard coming from it, as if from angels above.

Later work at Wells included the late thirteenth-century chapter house, which is clearly dependent upon the style of the Lincoln Angel Choir. Tracery forms are everywhere, in the doorway, the walls, and the windows. The interior view shows the way most octagonal chapter houses were vaulted, using the central pier for support. At Wells the number of vault ribs has become so great that the pier, though quite thick, cannot accommodate them all. The ribs seem to melt together as they descend to the pier.

New eastern parts of Wells were added in the early fourteenth century, first a Lady Chapel and retrochoir with plenty of room for processions. The Lady Chapel

is an irregular octagon, another experiment with polygonal shapes. New types of vaulting ribs and patterns disguise, even suppress, the geometry of the vaults, because it was preferable to have a flatter surface upon which to display the network patterns then in fashion. The east end of Wells is full of novelty and complexity. The spaces interpenetrate and the elevation becomes a nichework screen. The last English Gothic style, the Perpendicular Style, even makes an appearance in some details of the eastern window. Wells, like Lincoln and Norwich, illustrates the fact that the most sacred areas of the church were often treated with the most elaborate and precious ornamentation in the most up-to-date style.

English cathedrals were the work of masons, carpenters, and laborers who played an active role in the life of the religious community. At Lincoln, for example, we hear of a mason who spoke to Bishop Hugh one Christmas morning, asking for absolution for his brother who had died in the night. Twelfth-century Lincoln carpenters had many responsibilities in addition to building maintenance, such as hanging curtains and providing water for washing altars.

Cathedral churches were also the spiritual homes of communities of religious men. The area of the choir reserved for them originally extended well into the nave, where services began in the dark of night and continued throughout the day. Their processions brought many other parts of the church and precincts into the service of the liturgy. However abstractly beautiful, the architecture of cathedrals cannot be seen merely in terms of design. It must be considered as it served the uses of this community as well.

SCULPTURE

Jean Givens

Sculpture—and decorative richness—highlighted the most important parts of cathedrals: the doorways and the sanctuary. The Last Judgment portal of Lincoln and the west façade of Wells alert visitors to the sanctified nature of the spaces that lie behind them. Elaborate sculpture on the interiors also indicates the precious status of the sanctuary at Lincoln and Wells, where the Eucharist or Mass is celebrated. The Angel Choir at Lincoln, which includes the sanctuary and the space behind it that once housed St. Hugh's tomb, is much more elaborately decorated than the nave or the canons' choir (commonly called St. Hugh's Choir because he was bishop when it was built). The most elaborate windows, wall tracery, and moldings are found here.

The cathedrals of Norwich, Lincoln, and Wells were certainly intended to communicate a number of messages to the medieval visitor, lay or religious. These visitors must have responded to the abundance of decorative carving and have sought to interpret the subjects. Some of these subjects would have been familiar, such as the figures of Synagogue and Christian Church at Lincoln or the figure of Saint Luke with the ox at Norwich. Figures like these appear frequently elsewhere in sculpture and painting and formed part of an old, established language of images. But other subjects such as the seemingly secular imagery of the teacher on a misericord at Norwich or the fruit thieves on the capital at Wells pose a problem. Were some or even all of these allegorical, pointing a moral? As some of them are found nowhere else, how would viewers know how to interpret them?

On the technical level, English building records indicate that fine details such as the tracery at Lincoln or the ribs of Norwich were carved by the same workmen who carved the figures, rather than by the masons who carved the building blocks. A fine textured stone called ‘freestone’ was used for this work, all of which required a high level of carving skill. Students of Gothic architecture have wondered whether *roof bosses* at the crossing of the ribs and capitals were carved in place or carved first and then hoisted carefully overhead. The evidence suggests that the bosses and capitals were carved first despite the risk of damage, much as was done when cathedrals like these were repaired after World War II.

Norwich

The roof bosses on the cloister vaults at Norwich that are seen in the video comprise only a tiny fraction of an elaborate series. Although some represent familiar biblical subjects like the Dance of Salome, other such as the illustrations of the Apocalypse would probably have been intelligible only to the monks who frequented this part of the building, and then only to the more educated among them. The nave vault bosses, over the heads of the lay people, represent familiar episodes from the life of Christ, but they are so high up as to be unidentifiable for the most part.

The Norwich *misericords*, little ledges under the seats of the choir stalls upon which the standing monks could lean, illustrate something of the wide range of subjects depicted in wood carvings of this type. Some of them, like the teacher spanking a student, seem to illustrate the kind of moralizing stories pictured in the margins of manuscripts. Others seem whimsical or incongruous. At Norwich these include a woman chasing animals from her kitchen and a man drinking while riding a pig. Considering where these carvings are found, the representation of the Virgin and Child seems even more incongruous!

Lincoln

The *Easter Sepulchre* depicts the Roman soldiers who fell asleep while guarding Christ's tomb, according to Scripture. The sepulchre may have figured in a drama performed Easter morning by clergy, who took the parts of the Holy Women who visit the tomb and the angel who tells them that Christ is not here but arisen. There is no written manuscript evidence that this play, so popular on the Continent, was performed in England, but there are many references to wooden sepulchres of Christ in church inventories, and these would seem to have been props for the play. If the Lincoln sepulchre was not used in a play, it must have been carved as a permanent reminder of Christ's resurrection as well as a none too subtle compliment to Bishop Remigius, whose tomb continues the design of the superstructure to the left.

Many of the carved angels in the Angel Choir hold musical instruments, instruments associated with secular music. The angel expelling Adam and Eve, angels alluding to the Last Judgment and holding the instruments of Christ's Passion, and a group of the Virgin and Child are located above the sanctuary, while angels with musical instruments which may allude to Paradise are found further east, around the area of St. Hugh's tomb (called the retrochoir). Perhaps this arrangement is intended to suggest that the road to salvation and Paradise is

promised by the resurrection and the Eucharist, and attained after the Last Judgment.

At the center of the Judgment Portal is the seated figure of Christ. To either side are female figures representing the Synagogue or the Old Testament and the Christian Church, called Ecclesia in this allegorical representation, or the New Testament. Curiously Synagogue in this instance is on Christ's right, the more honorable position. According to one scholar the designer of the portal reversed the usual placement in order to put Ecclesia on the east, closer to the tomb of St. Hugh. If this is so, then this doorway was designed specifically to set the stage for the medieval worshipers' pilgrimage to the saint's shrine.

Wells

The four hundred or so figures and reliefs on the west façade of Wells include a wide range of subjects. At the top and center is Christ, below him the Twelve Apostles, and below them the nine orders of angels. On this level, at the sides, men and women rise from their coffins and graves. In niches all across the façade and around the comers of the towers are statues representing kings, queens, knights, ladies, bishops, and other clerics. One or two of these figures can be identified as saints by their attributes (one cleric carries the top of his skull, indicating his martyrdom, but that attribute is common to several saints). Because more kings are represented than had been canonized, these figures cannot have been intended to be identified as individuals, like those on French cathedral portals, recognized by what they hold or by the scenes beneath their feet. With this vast façade to fill, the designer of the sculptural program may have decided to represent classes of the blessed, although the lack of peasants, the ‘third order,’ is odd.

Closer to the viewer are scenes from the Old and New Testament which together serve as lessons about God's wrath (the expulsion of Adam and Eve; the Flood), and his promise of salvation in the birth of Christ. Unlike the portal at Lincoln, where a mouth of Hell is represented under Christ's feet, Wells has no such representation of Hell. The large figures and resurrection of the dead must represent the Second Coming of Christ, a scene depicted on façades in the West of France but rarely elsewhere because the end of the world loses something of its threatening aspect when Hell is not represented.

In its original state the façade of Wells would have been painted in bright colors with some metal fittings. If recent analysis is correct, its design was determined in part by the requirements of the Palm Sunday procession, when in a remarkable theatrical moment, the carved angels would have seemed to sing in the voices of the boys' choir.

Figured capitals are rare in England so those at Wells are well-known, if problematic because of their subjects. The theft of the fruit, in three episodes, the man with a toothache, and the thorn-puller are carved at the top of piers in the south transept, an area originally reserved for the clergy until the choir screen was moved to the far side of the crossing. Did these scenes of secular activities have allegorical or moralizing meaning? The thorn-puller was at one time a symbol of paganism: the motif was derived from a famous Hellenistic statuette of a nude youth removing a thorn from his foot. In this form it is found on a twelfth-century tomb beneath the feet of the statue of an archbishop, who stabs it with his crozier. But the motif might have traveled independently of this meaning, especially as the Wells figure is not nude, and therefore inappropriate as a representation of paganism.

The man who seems to suffer from a toothache has been interpreted as referring to the evil that comes out of the mouth, or words. Perhaps that would have been obvious to the canons even if not to us. But how do we interpret the scenes of theft from the orchard (and the capture of the thief)? Or another capital in the aisle showing a cobbler with a last?

In the case of biblical or other text-based imagery, the range of interpretation is narrowed by the texts as well as by other examples. We might be puzzled by the capitals showing a man shot full of arrows and a group of dogs finding a head, on the north porch at Wells, if we had no other examples and no story to indicate that this is King Edmund. With the interior capitals, the heads in the Chapter House, and the misericords we are in the realm of unusual and often unique images.

Bishop Bekynton (died 1450) ordered his tomb during his lifetime and installed it in a chantry chapel in front of an altar where a priest would say Mass for his soul, perhaps once a day. The bishop is represented in his robes with his crozier, eyes open although in a reclining pose. For several centuries a depiction of the deceased in his role in life combined with allusions to death in the reclining pose and the pillow (used when the figure was laid out for the vigils) had satisfied patrons. Then the image of the decaying corpse was added beneath this ‘lively image,’ a *memento mori* or reminder of death, addressed to the priest and passerby. Some of these grisly figures bore the inscription, “As I am, so shall ye be. Pray for the soul of the departed.”

MUSIC IN THE MEDIEVAL CATHEDRAL

Richard Crocker

Cathedrals provided a place to perform the Roman Catholic rituals that went on all over Europe throughout the Middle Ages. The principal ritual, the Mass (or Eucharist) was performed with full ceremony and elaborate singing in the morning on Sundays and numerous feast-days throughout the year; it might involve a dozen priests and acolytes, and a dozen or more singers, standing or moving around the high altar in the extensive space provided in all cathedrals.

At intervals throughout the day and night other rituals were sung: the *Night Office* was very long, while Lauds, Vespers, Compline, and four others (Prime, Terce, Sext, and None) were shorter. These daily services (the Office) all involved prayers and singing Psalms, and some had more elaborate singing as well as lengthy Scripture readings. The daily services (which could total several hours) were sung by a staff of canons attached to the cathedral, in conjunction with the choir. In some English cathedrals a monastery was attached to the cathedral, and in that case the monks sang the daily services.

The daily services were sung by all the canons or monks together, standing in the long rows of stalls that faced each other in the architectural choir; this might form the main part of the cathedral space, separated from the nave by the choir screen or the *rood screen* (the rood is the cross that surmounted the screen). The daily services did not involve the altar, nor was there much moving around. Before and after any of the rituals of Mass or Office there might, on special occasions, be a procession from one part of the cathedral to another, or outside around the cathedral grounds; such processions usually involved special music.

Layfolk did not participate in the daily services, and if they attended, they remained in the nave, listening; this is what they did at Mass. Opportunities to participate were provided only by the processions to chapels and statues at various places within the cathedral. Popular devotions with prayers and singing could be held before or after regular services, especially Mass, Vespers, and Compline in the evening.

The basic repertory of music for Mass and the daily services consisted, throughout the Middle Ages, of Gregorian Chant. It was melody only, sung by a soloist or a small group of men (three or four up to a dozen) with or without a choir of boys. Gregorian Chant for Mass included very elaborate, sometimes melismatic chant (a *melisma* is a group of notes—from five or six up to several dozen, sung to

a single syllable, and in very elaborate chant many of the syllables would have such groups). The most melismatic chant was sung by a soloist, or several soloists singing together, but some of the music for the choir of men was melismatic, too. Some of the chants for Mass, and many for the daily services, were much simpler. In the daily services, especially the long Night Office, there was much singing of the complete Psalms from the Bible Psalter; typically a Psalm was sung to a short melodic formula that was repeated for each verse, with only a single note for each syllable. Short melodies called *antiphons* similarly were in a simple style, with only one, two, or three notes per syllable.

A large repertory of chants, simple as well as complex, was established by about 900 and carefully maintained throughout the Middle Ages. In the beginning the melodies of this repertory were not written down, but rather learned by heart (as were many of the words, especially the Psalms). After ca. 900 the chant books contained musical notation, but the books were small in size and the notation very fine, suitable only for reference; the repertory was still learned and sung by heart. In the late Middle Ages, when the traditions of singing declined, the chant books became much larger, large enough to be set on a lectern so that the choirs could read them while singing. But until that time, cathedrals choirs learned and reproduced this repertory in performance with the same care exercised by the priests in maintaining the sacred rituals. The English cathedrals came to have "song schools" attached to them, for the express purpose of training canons and choristers to sing the daily service.

The core repertory of Gregorian Chant was extensive enough to provide special music for every day during much of the year, and this repertory was repeated year after year with very little change. The repertory included, for Mass, the chants called introits, graduals, alleluias, offertories, and communions; for the daily services, antiphons and responsories. To this core repertory were added, first, a great many more chants, still melody only, in a wide variety of styles, both melismatic and syllabic; the most important new kinds were called sequences, hymns, tropes, Kyries. Most of these were added to the Mass, but to the daily service were added many hymns, antiphons, and responsories. Unlike the Gregorian repertory, these chants varied greatly from place to place, and the repertories changed greatly over the centuries.

Then, from roughly 1000 on, there was gradually added a different kind of singing that sounded richer and fuller. It involved a stream of sonorities each using two, three, or four different pitches at once; we call it *polyphony*, but in the Middle Ages it was called by several more specific names, the most common being *discant*. This new kind of singing (sung by the same choir that did the chant) was

first used to supplement the chant repertory, especially for the popular devotions after Mass and Vespers.

One of the most important kinds of polyphonic music was the motet; antiphons and hymns, sometimes tropes, were often set in polyphonic style. A frequent and favorite event for layfolk was the procession after Vespers or Compline to the Lady Chapel, or to a statue of the Virgin; hymns might be sung during the procession, and the climax would be the singing of an antiphon or motet before the statue. Eventually, by the end of the Middle Ages, the new polyphonic music was used extensively at Mass, replacing the old monophonic chant that had been used for Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Credo in unum deum, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei.

The polyphonic music varied from a style that sounded merely like very thick, sonorous melody to a style in which two or three melodies seemed to be sounding at once; and this style might sound as if two different melodies were being sung at the same time, or, alternatively, as if the same melody was being sung at slightly different times. Polyphonic music was often sung by boy choirs; but whether by boys or men, the sound was very clean and bright, often brilliant. Typically it moved in a regular, repetitive kind of rhythm, often at a fast pace, with an effect very different from the Gregorian style and even from the more recent energetic styles of chant that came after the Gregorian. But where the monophonic chant (of all kinds) resonated splendidly through the vast spaces of a cathedral, bouncing off the stone walls, and filling the space because supported by the echo, the polyphonic music—especially as it became thicker and more intricate in texture, tended to generate too much resonance, and to become muddy. At any rate, by the time polyphony replaced monophony as standard repertory, Renaissance architecture replaced the Gothic and provided a different, more appropriate acoustic environment.

Notes

1. The term “see” may refer to the seat of authority of a bishop or archbishop or to the territory under their jurisdiction.
2. The term “gift” here refers to the chapter’s power to bestow a benefit. In this case the benefit is a “living”: income from a church within the chapter’s jurisdiction .

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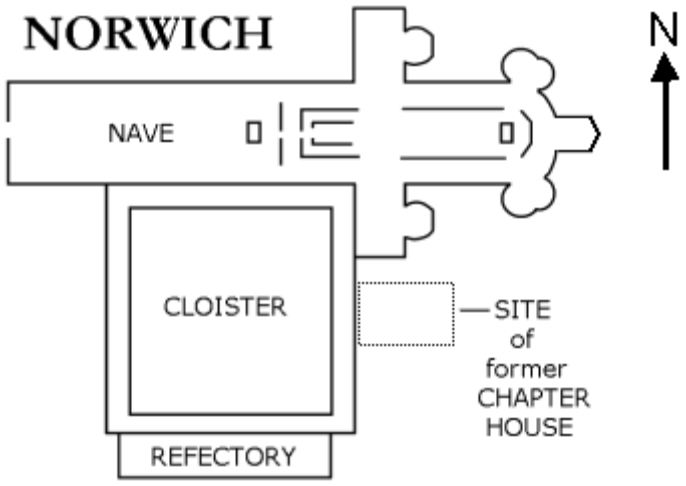
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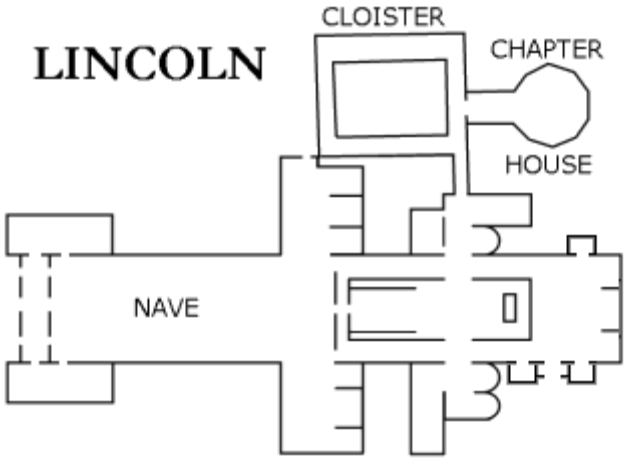
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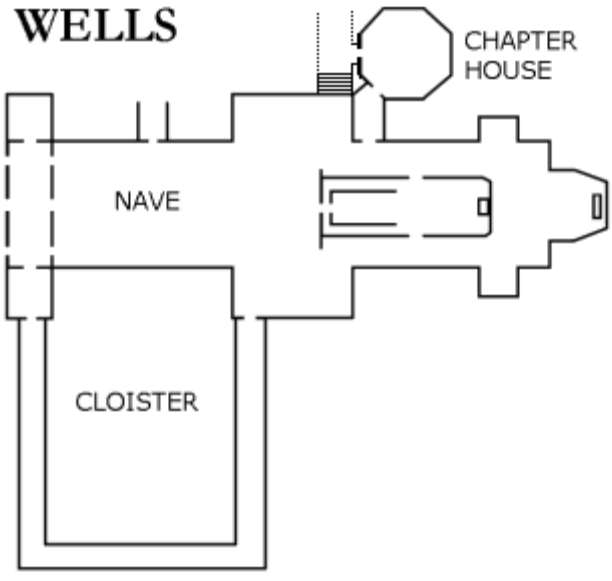
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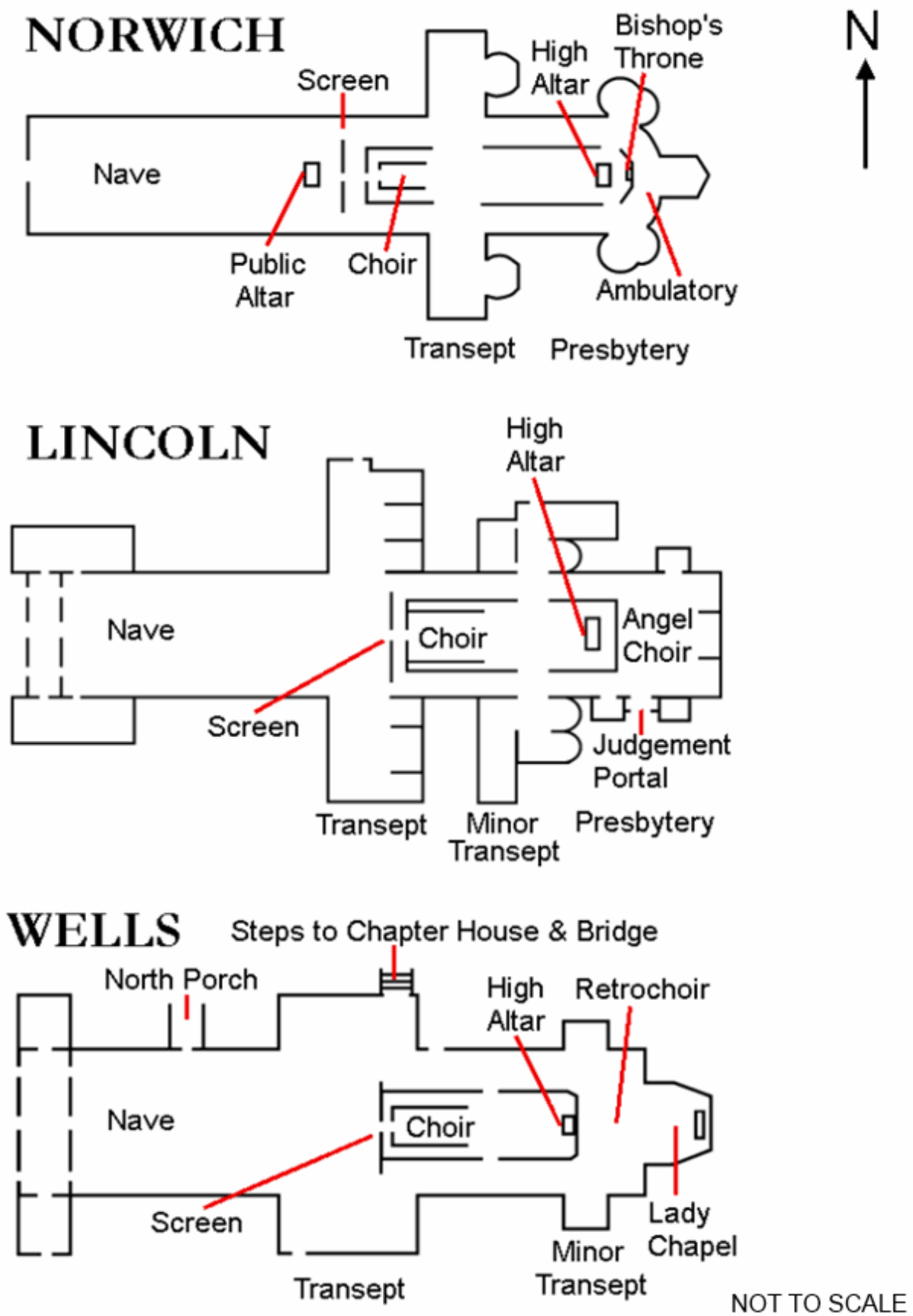
NORWICH
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High Altar
Bishop's Throne
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Nave
Public Altar
Choir
Ambulatory
Transept
Presbytery
LINCOLN
High Altar
Nave
Choir
Angel Choir
Screen
Judgement Portal
Transept
Minor Transept
Presbytery
WELLS
Steps to Chapter House & Bridge
North Porch
High Altar
Retrochoir
Nave
Choir
Screen
Lady Chapel
Minor Transept
Transept
NOT TO SCALE