To M. Salomon Reinach
with Philip H. Newmans compts & thanks
Nov 19 12

The Ancient Paintings in the Hastings and Oxenbridge Chantry Chapels, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle

By W. H. St. John Hope, Esq., M.A.
and
P. H. Newman, Esq., F.S.A.

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HASTINGS CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL I. ST. STEPHEN PREACHING

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V.—*The Ancient Paintings in the Hastings and Oxenbridge Chantry Chapels, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.* *By* W. H. St. John Hope, *Esq., M.A., and* P. H. Newman, *Esq., F.S.A.*

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I. The Chantry Chapels: *By* W. H. St. John Hope, *Esq.*

The great chapel of Saint George within the royal Castle of Windsor, founded by King Edward IV for the most honourable and noble Order of the Garter, stands immediately to the west of the original chapel of the Order, formed by King Edward III within the older building of King Henry III.

The new chapel was formally begun by the appointment, by letters patent of 19th February, 1472-3, of Richard Beauchamp, bishop of Salisbury, as master and surveyor of the works, but it was not until 12th June, 1475, that further letters patent were issued empowering the bishop to clear the site for it.

The actual building was begun, at the east end, in 1477, and the quire was sufficiently advanced by 1480 to receive its wooden roof. 'Vowtyng stone' was also bought the same year for parts of the aisle vaults, but these were not completed until the reign of King Henry VII. The contract for the quire vault was made in 1506.

The stall-work for the new quire was begun, apparently in London, at the same time as the building, and part of it was set up in 1480. The remainder was all in place, at any rate as regards the canopied stalls, and of course the panelling behind them, in 1483.

In April of that year King Edward IV died, and was buried in the new quire, in the place of honour as founder, under the first arch immediately north of the high altar. The first and second bays of the aisle behind were to serve as a chapel, and upon the vault above was to be a second chapel or closet, with an altar and the King's tomb, with his effigy of silver-gilt, or at the least of copper and gilt.

The arch in the third bay of the aisle originally contained the upper entrance into the quire; and under the fourth arch was, and is, the chantry chapel of William lord Hastings, which brings us more nearly to the subject of this paper.

The chapel fills up all the space under the arch, and consists on three sides of an enterclose of stone, built up against the wooden enterclose at the back of the quire stalls, which thus forms the fourth or south side. It is about 12 ft. long, and $15\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high externally, and of three bays across the north front. The chapel stands upon a marble step, and has a moulded plinth and panelled base, above which is a row of traceried window openings grated with iron. These windows consist of two tiers of three cinquefoiled lights with battled transoms, surmounted by crocketed ogee canopies springing from clustered buttresses between the bays. Similar buttresses are placed at the outer corners. The canopies run up through a range of twelve small housings for images, four in each bay, and there are other housings for eight taller images at the outer corners of the chapel. The whole is finished off with a simple cornice and cresting, having in the middle a finely carved atchievement of Lord Hastings's arms with his mantled helm and crest, a black bull's head encircled by a rich crown. In the third or westernmost bay is a four-centred doorway with carved spandrels. The door, like all those in St. George's chapel, has solid panels in the lower half and traceried openings above, filled with wide iron gratings.

The interior of the chapel has a floor area of $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by 5 ft., nearly all of which is taken up by a large but plain grave-slab of Purbeck marble. The east wall has plain ashlaring for a height of 6 ft., with traces of an altar 3 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. high above the floor, and lead plugs for fixing a *tabula* or reredos. Over this is a frieze of five angels, beautifully carved, clothed in feathers and wearing jewelled diadems; they hold between them shields carved with the arms of Lord Hastings, *silver a maunch sable*. From a cresting above the angels rise one larger and two lesser canopied niches with stools for images, flanked by two narrower niches. The west wall is similarly treated, but its ashlared lower half bears traces of having been painted with a rich baudekin pattern. The angels of the frieze also hold shields of the Hastings arms, and over them are two larger and two lesser niches for images. The north side has plain ashlar below the windows, but all its flat surfaces were decorated with painting, and with stamped figures in gesso of the Hastings maunch and bull's head.[1] The chapel is covered with a lierne vault with the field painted blue, and most of the stonework is now painted white.

The south side, as already noted, is formed by the enterclose at the back of the quire stalls. This is plain for a height of 6 ft., and is there surmounted by a battled parapet. Above this the enterclose is divided by buttresses into panelled compartments corresponding to those forming the backs of the stall

[1] These have been systematically destroyed, but two maunches and a bull's head are left on the wall immediately south of the niches over the altar.

HASTINGS CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL II. ST. STEPHEN BEFORE HEROD

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canopies, but the buttresses have been altered to bring their height within the chapel, and at the base of each is a shield of the Hastings arms.

The three panels, and part of a fourth, which are enclosed by the chapel, are decorated with a series of contemporary paintings of the story and passion of St. Stephen, with explanatory texts beneath, but before describing these a few words must be said as to the date of the chapel.

William lord Hastings was an ardent Yorkist. His father, Sir Leonard Hastings of Kirby, died in 1455, and his son was sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire the following year, when he was only about twenty-six years old. On the accession of King Edward IV in 1461 he acquired the castle, barony, and honour of Hastings, and was made Baron Hastings of Hastings. In 1462 he was elected Knight of the Garter. From 1461 till the King's death in 1483 he was chamberlain of the household, and in high favour with his sovereign. On the 27th June, 1481, Lord Hastings made his will, which contains the following instructions as to his burial:

> And forasmoche as the Kyng of his abundant grace for the trew service that I have doon, and at the leest entended to have doon to his grace, hath willed and offred me to be buryed in the Church or Chapel of Seynt George at Wyndesore, in a place by his grace assigned in the which College his highness is disposed to be buryed: I therefore bequeth my simple body to be buryed in the sayd Chapell and College in the said place, and woll that there be ordeigned a tumbe convenient for me by myne executors; and for the costs of the same I bequeth c marks.

After bequeathing to the dean and canons of Windsor a jewel of gold or silver of the value of £20 for a memorial of him, he continues:

> Also I woll that my feoffees by the oversight of myne executors gif and amortize lands to the yearly value of xx. li. over all charges to the Dean and Chanons aforesayd, and to their successors, to the intent that they shall perpetually fynde a preste to say daily masse and divine service at the awter next to the place where my body shall be buryed in the sayd Chapell or College.

As is well known, William lord Hastings was peremptorily beheaded without trial by order of Richard duke of Gloucester on 13th June, 1483, and he was buried at Windsor in the place he had appointed.

The foundation of his chantry did not take effect until twenty years after his death. An indenture was then made on 21st February, 18 Henry VII (1502-3), between Katherine, late wife and executrix of William lord Hastings, on the one part, and Sir Edward Hastings, lord Hastings and Hungerford, his son, and Christopher Urswick the dean, and the canons of Windsor on the other part, founding a chantry for one priest 'to sey daily his divine service when he is disposed to sey masse at thautre within the chapelle wherein the body of

the seid late Lord lyeth buried in the seid churche.' The deed provides that the dean and canons shall keep and maintain all the necessary ornaments. 'And over that the seid Deane and Chanons and their successours shal kepe mainteyn and susteyne for ever a chaumbre with a chymney and a draught in the same which is bilded and edified by the said Lord Hastinges and Dame Kathyrine called the Lord Hastings Chauntery prestes chaumbre within the seid free chapell and college for the said Chauntrey prest and his successours to lye in..... and the same chaumbre to be called the Lord Hastinges Chauntrey Prestis Chaumbre.'

Concerning this structure Ashmole writes: 'On the North side of St. *Georges Chappel* stands a little house, built for the habitation of this Chantry Priest, having over the Door (cut in stone) the Lord *Hastings's Arms*, surrounded *with a Garter*.'[1]

Now the chapel in which Lord Hastings is buried cannot be older than the wooden enterclose against which it is built. An account roll of the works of St. George's chapel for the period 11th January, 1480–1 to the same day in 1481–2 shows that the setting up of the entercloses on both sides of the quire was completed in that interval, but the enterclose on one side seems to have been ready the year before. This was most likely the north, since the King's chapel, etc., were on that side.

Now in Lord Hastings's will, made in June, 1481, mention is made of 'the awter next to the place where my body shall be buryed'. This place had already been assigned him by King Edward, and the wording implies that the altar had been already set up. It is conceivable therefore that Lord Hastings drew up the directions as to his burial-place because he had just set up about it his chantry chapel. It is true that he makes no mention of it, but the foundation deed of his chantry refers to the house for the chantry priest 'bilded and edified by the said Lord Hastinges and Dame Kathyrine' his wife, and if he had built the house why should he not have built the chapel in which the priest was to minister? There is nothing either in the architecture of the chapel or its decoration to indicate a later date, and the costumes in the St. Stephen pictures are certainly not after 1485. The chapel might of course have been built immediately after Lord Hastings's death by his widow and son, but that is hardly likely to have happened under the rule of the same Richard who had ordered his death.

In the account of the treasurer of the College for 1498–9[2] are payments, 'Johanni Freman carpentario pro factura unius Schaffold pro ly peynting Armorum domini de hastynges per diem vj^{d}. Et solut. Nicholao Deryk pro ly peynting Armorum domini de Hastynges ex mandato magistri decani xiij.s. iiij^{d}.'

[1] p. 150.

[2] Roll xv. 34. 71.

HASTINGS CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL III. MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN

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This entry may refer to the painting of the arms over the chantry priest's house, or of the atchievement surmounting the chantry chapel, but a third and most likely alternative is that it refers to the painting of the broad key or boss of the aisle vault immediately in front of the Hastings chapel. This is carved with an angel holding a shield of the arms of Hastings, and four small shields of the same arms within the Garter alternate with the carved ornaments round it.

In the south aisle of the quire is another chapel, of similar construction, size, and appearance to that of Lord Hastings, from which it was obviously copied, but differing from it in a few minor details.

This is the chantry chapel of master John Oxenbridge, who became canon of Windsor in 1509, and died in 1522. His chapel for some obscure reason does not stand opposite to that of Lord Hastings, but is placed in the next bay westward. It has over the windows shields of the arms of Saint George and of Oxenbridge (*silver a lion rampant gules and a border vert*). The cornice has an ornamental cresting with figures corbelled out from the corners, of angels holding shields of St. Edward and St. George, and in the middle are the royal arms and supporters of King Henry VII with a rich crown above. The spandrels of the doorway are carved with an ox accompanied by the letter ᴎ, and with a bridge, in both cases with trees behind, forming a rebus on the name OXENBRIDGE. The interior arrangements closely resemble those of the Hastings chapel, but the shields borne by the angels are blank, and the carving is decidedly inferior.

II. The Paintings: *By* P. H. Newman, *Esq.*

It is with considerable diffidence that I approach the description I have to give of the two pictures, and premise that it is rather with the hope that their presentment may elicit from fellows of the Society of Antiquaries that information upon so interesting a subject which is necessarily desired, than with any idea of saying the last word upon it myself.

Having been requested by the dean and chapter of Windsor to examine and report upon these paintings (indications of decay being manifested in both instances, to which I shall refer later), I saw them for the first time about five years ago. They occupy the back wall of the chapels, in the case of the Hastings chapel for its entire length, and in the Oxenbridge chapel for about five-sixths of its length. The base of each picture is about six feet from the floor, and compactly framed into, and apparently forming part and parcel of, the backs of the stalls of the Knights of the Garter, *de facto* the quire stalls of St. George's chapel. Each painting is about four feet in height, and extends to the vaulting of the chapels already described by Mr. Hope.

The subjects depicted in the Hastings chapel are incidents in the life and

death of St. Stephen, while the picture in the Oxenbridge chapel illustrates incidents in the life and death of St. John the Baptist. The incidents in each case are separated by rather ornamental pinnacled buttresses, really the framework of the stalls, the subjects in the life of St. Stephen being divided into four panels, while those of St. John the Baptist occupy only three, the end division on the left hand in this instance being unpainted. Opinion is divided as to it ever being comprised in the picture; it should be noted, moreover, that architectural fitness has been entirely disregarded in respect to the paintings and the roofs of the chapels, as in no case do the pendentives of the vaulting align or coincide with the buttresses or framework of the panels, leading to the inference that painting in the present position had not been originally contemplated.

I have said that there are no means of proving that these pictures are painted on the actual entercloses of the stalls or not without removal, but as removal would further injure the works, already damaged by damp, heat, and the piercing of nails and screws attaching the armorial stall-plates to the backs of the stalls, one must rely upon observation of the painted surfaces. I find that the panels, in the Oxenbridge painting certainly, have been cut to fit the vaulting, and that there is a space beyond the thickness of the panels themselves, since a pointed implement put into a hole can touch the back of a stall-plate. I must apologize to the Society for going into these structural details so particularly, but it is necessary, it will be found, not only in considering the actual position of the pictures, but also in regard to their attribution or origin. It is now agreed, I think, that the paintings are on panels, but separated by an intervening space from the actual backs of the stalls.

Now as to attribution or origin. It has been suggested to me, and is I gather a matter of belief, that the works were painted *in situ*, and with this assumption diligent search has been made through records at Windsor Castle, to endeavour to trace, by payments made, who painted the pictures. I am told that no record whatever exists in the royal archives throwing any light upon the subject whatever. Nevertheless, the painting *in situ* theory was so firmly believed in that I gave time to the search for name or charges at the Record Office. Moreover, not trusting to myself in the matter of deciphering the writing of the period, which inexperience rendered more difficult to me than the black letter of an earlier time, I obtained the expert assistance of our colleague, Mr. W. Paley Baildon, who most kindly looked into the matter during my absence from England.

Mr. Paley Baildon, availing himself of several clues with which I was enabled to provide him, and to which I will further refer, reports to me that he can find no trace within reasonable dates of any payments for the paintings in question.[1]

[1] Why search should have been in the chapel records or royal archives has never been made clear to me. It would seem as useless as it has proved to make search in such records for that

HASTINGS CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL IV. DEATH OF ST. STEPHEN

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We are thus thrown entirely upon conjecture for the origin of these works; they bear no name, signature, or monogram upon them. It perhaps would be matter for surprise if they did, as although of great interest from an antiquarian point of view, they are of inconsiderable artistic importance. Nevertheless, failing individual attribution one looks for a school or place of origin, and for myself I venture to think that the painting in the Hastings chapel, illustrating incidents in the life and death of St. Stephen, is so associated in style with English mediaeval screen paintings as to leave little doubt that it is a product of an artist of that class of work. The painting in the Oxenbridge chapel is of a later period, and clearly suggestive of several styles. This in itself is interesting, and certain evidences prompted me to assume that the treatment of the subjects in the life and death of St. John Baptist indicated a Low Country origin. German and Italian influences are distinctly observable, especially in the architectural backgrounds and accessories. Columns, pilasters, and ornaments indicate that the painter, whoever he was, had a knowledge of and was influenced by the Italian Renaissance, while the ceiling above the preaching-scene bears a striking resemblance to that pointed out to me in the British Museum in one of the subjects of Albert Dürer's life of the Virgin. The figures in this composition have unquestionably German reminiscence, both in type and costume. Although these are for the most part of a mean and jejune type, the heads in most cases being excessively large lead to an impression of dwarfed deformity; on the other hand, there is much dramatic action and directness in the composition, even if it is on the whole grotesque.

Not wishing to rely altogether on my own opinion as to the origin of this work, I consulted our honorary fellow M. Salomon Reinach on the subject, from whose letter to me, in reply, I quote the following extract:

'My opinion is that the painting with the story of the Baptist cannot be German, but rather the work of some very bad Dutch (not Flemish) craftsman. But few people know anything about those early or retrograde Dutchmen, who, though already influenced by Italy, not by great masters, continued to paint horribly. I should advise you to get the opinion of Mr. Jan Six, Amsterdam.'

Besides the partial confirmation of my own opinion this letter evidenced, I felt greatly interested in the matter, and moreover thought it only right to obtain the opinion of Mr. Six. Here again I met with cordial assistance and the utmost kindness, indeed that which I think should be recognized as an act of international courtesy of considerable moment. In reply to my queries and my recital of M. Reinach's opinion, Mr. Six wrote as follows:

which one would suppose was a private matter, having only concern with the families or executors of Lord Hastings and Canon Oxenbridge.

'M. Reinach is certainly right in finding a Dutch influence, perhaps even a Dutch hand, in your picture. Italian influence is of course to be found in all European art of the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the lesser Dutch artists of the period freely use Dürer's prints wherever they find occasion. But the peculiar types of the women leave no doubt that we have a Master from Holland before us, akin to Jacob Cornelisen van Oosterman, the well-known painter and wood-cutter at Amsterdam, and to Cornelis Engelbrechts of Leyden, the Master of Lucas van Leyden, I mean specially the Salome and her maid, where she carries the Baptist's head, and the woman more to the left in the middle compartment. The grotesques on the pillars remind me most of Jan Mostaert of Haarlem, but I acknowledge that a Flemish artist might have the same designs. Dirck Villert, for example, has very similar designs, but he has not these women's faces.

The garments have not the strongly broken folds of the cloth as in the work of Jacob Cornelisen and Cornelis Engelbrechts, which points to a later date. You ask for a "name that would fit"; may I venture a suggestion?

Von Mander tells us that the son of Cornelis Engelbrechts, Lucas Cornelisen, surnamed de Kock, as he was not only a painter but also a cook, born in 1495, went to England during the reign of Henry VIII, and was heard of no more in that land, but that one of his paintings was brought to Holland, and in after times some people that came to Holland with Leicester (1585) searched Leyden for his works that appeared to be appreciated in England. I have never seen any work of Lucas Cornelisen, and cannot be positive, but I think there is some presumption that being his father's pupil he would answer to the case, as I take it.'[1]

Of course the clues I gave to Mr. Baildon were derived from this interesting letter of Mr. Six, but as I have previously said, they have led to no discovery at the Record Office. I have not submitted them to the Windsor authorities for further search, because they have assured me that no mention of payment to any one for paintings in the Hastings or Oxenbridge chantry chapels can be found, except some record of payment for painting the arms of Lord Hastings mentioned by Mr. Hope. Moreover, there are to my mind strong and sufficient reasons why they are not likely to be found. In the first place it is borne in upon me by the ill-fitting, ill-contrived arrangement of the paintings in regard to their architectural surroundings that they were not painted *in situ*. If they had been, not only is the spacing out of the subject quite unnecessarily eccentric in not conforming to the structural requirements of the chantries themselves, but there is also the apparently insurmountable difficulty in regard to the one space unfilled.

I do not for a moment maintain that they could not have been painted *in situ*, and upon the actual stall panels, but my contention is that it was not so. They were not painted on the actual stalls: the paintings are upon panels cut and applied; this is distinctly traceable at the top and sides: the panels go behind a

[1] In Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters* Lucas Cornelisen is described as coming with his wife and family to England, where he received marks of favour from King Henry VIII, who appointed him his principal painter.

OXENBRIDGE CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL I. ST. JOHN BAPTIST PREACHING

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moulding at the bottom. Then as there is no record of money paid whatever for time spent in painting, these two reasons lead me to the inference that we have before us in these pictures the remains of work brought from elsewhere, and simply cut up to fit the places they were intended to decorate or adorn; nothing more likely, at least in the case of the Baptist picture, than that they were altar-pieces from chapels severally dedicated to the respective saints, the incidents of whose lives they depict. In reference to the Baptist subject we know quite well that if it be not Dutch, or Flemish, at least it is of foreign origin, and from a source from whence such church furniture paintings were constantly supplied, not only on the Continent, but imported into this country before the Reformation in considerable quantities. The dissolution of the monasteries and consequent iconoclasm scattered these things, and it is not impossible that this John the Baptist picture was a derelict, and made use of as we see it now. I take it that the date upon the picture, 1522, preceding the epoch I have mentioned, in no wise indicates its deposition in the Oxenbridge chapel.[1]

We will now examine the chief characteristics of these works. Beginning with the Hastings chapel the first incident in the St. Stephen subject is the preaching (pl. XIV). Here, in a pulpit erected in an open landscape, St. Stephen, robed in an apparelled amice and albe and a dalmatic fringed along the edges, and somewhat strongly diapered with a red pattern, is holding a roll in his right hand and discoursing to a rather motley crowd of persons of both sexes, amongst them a woman wearing a head-dress of Richard III's time. These give evidence of their interest or edification by sufficiently dramatic attitudes and gestures; it may be noticed that, for some apparently necessary conceit, artistic propriety has been frankly sacrificed by making two of the onlookers much larger, especially as regards their heads, than those in the foreground. I think we may take it that this exigency arises from the fact that these two persons so emphasized are the donors of the painting, and this is not without value as a further argument as to its adventitious position in the chapel. The white blotches on the robe of the figure immediately below St. Stephen indicate the damage to this part of the work consequent on the flaking off of the paint. It is to be regretted that the photograph conveys little idea of the colour scheme further than the relative tones obtainable by careful isochromatic process. The colouring is very pleasant, however, essentially decorative, and continuity is preserved by the occurrence of trees through three of the backgrounds. The method of painting is very direct and careful of the preservation of a distinct outline.

[1] In the Hastings picture, the continuation of the panel behind the pendentives leaves a doubt that though not painted *in situ*, it may have been designed and painted for its place, an inference apparently justified by the inclined position of the crowned Almighty to adapt the figure to the arch.

The second subject represents Stephen brought before King Herod (curiously not the High Priest and council) (pl. XV).[1] Stephen, who is represented of cheerful countenance, still wears the dalmatic. A written charge is either being preferred against him or a warrant handed in by a man on his knees with, for his stature, an abnormally large head. He carries a mace of English type and hands the warrant to an officer of the court, vested in a long gown. Justice seems typified by a solemn person in a turn-up hat, the sword-bearer; he stands to the right hand of a throne on which is seated Herod. It will be observed that the king wears a crown, from the cap of which arises a dragon or demon crest. Above the canopy of the throne waves a banner or flag, bearing however no traces of ensign. The third panel is devoted to the subject of the saint's martyrdom (pl. XVI). The traditional treatment and types are fully maintained. The witnesses are represented as having laid down their clothes at the feet of the young man Saul, while others are with evident vigour and enjoyment proceeding with Stephen's lapidation;[2] the king, as before bearing the portentous crest, significantly affects to justify his condemnation of Stephen by pointing to the sword. One cannot pass over this subject without reference to the facial expressions of Stephen's persecutors, and the evident enjoyment of the painter, who depicted so impartially their divers malevolent characteristics. This is especially noteworthy in contradistinction to the indication of doubt and pitying interest arising in Saul. And here, if I may venture to go beyond the scope of a bald archaeological description, I think the treatment of the subject we are contemplating affords a remarkable opportunity for reflecting for a moment upon the *ad captandum vulgus* aspect of this as of many other mediaeval works of art. The directness of treatment of the story without words, when art in painting or sculpture was the popular means of instruction to unlettered folk, became almost stereotyped, so to speak, and while locally, of course, it is entirely pre-aesthetic, it is often pervaded by a grim humour, the sense of which is so strongly marked in the instance before us. The humour, however, cannot be taken as militating at all against the seriousness of the subject or the earnestness of the artist; with no room for aestheticism there cannot be any question of faith, and one may not without reason go so far as to say that the evidence of faith is as much in the direct ratio of the humorous inspiration as that of the school boy with a modern Guy Fawkes.

But to return to our painting; the small panel to the extreme right is occupied by the death and reception into heaven by the Almighty of the martyr's soul (pl. XVII). The unities are still preserved by the garb of Stephen, who

[1] See inscription in Latin hexameters beneath the painting.

[2] Flint stones are shown as being used, but although these are local it does not prove that this picture was painted for its present position.

OXENBRIDGE CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL II. DECOLLATION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST

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prayerfully kneels with the blood streaming down his face and some of the missiles of his adversaries adhering to his head. Above him are two winged figures, angels who are bearing the saint's soul to heaven, and, as is not unusual, the soul is shown as a pure and naked infant. God the Father, wearing, it should be observed, a triple crown, holds in His left hand the orb of power, surmounted by the cross which He touches in benediction. The triple crown is noticeable for an extraneous significance, while the infantile embodiment of the soul is comparable with other representations. A notable instance, for drawing my attention to which I am indebted to M. Salomon Reinach, occurs in a miniature of the Crucifixion from a missal in the library at Heidelberg. Here we see the souls of the two thieves escaping from their mouths. M. Reinach describes the incident in these words in his *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1884, 'De la bouche de chaque larron sort un petit personnage nu, figuration de l'âme qui s'échappe du corps. L'esprit du bon larron, à droite du Christ, pose son bras droit sur le doigt d'un Chérubin, qui semble l'attirer à lui. Celui de gauche ne reçoit aucun appui, mais il n'est pas, comme dans d'autres représentations analogues, enlevé par un démon.'[1]

I have said that I take this picture of the life and death of St. Stephen to be English, but I am quite prepared to admit that, like so much of our mediaeval work, it bears marked evidences of continental influence. Apropos of this the article on the Heidelberg illustration has a footnote, 'La figuration des âmes des mourants sous l'aspect des petits génies nus sans sexe paraît d'origine orientale (Syriaque et Byzantine); on en a des exemples dans les manuscrits dès le XI[e] siècle (d'Agincourt, pl. 82), mais en Italie plutôt qu'au nord des Alpes.'[2]

It may be reasonable to presume that the choice of the St. Stephen subjects had relation to the judicial murder by Richard, duke of Gloucester, of William lord Hastings.

The painting in the Oxenbridge chantry chapel, if not so ancient as that just described, is with more pretensions to artistry almost as naïve and quite as interesting. While the heads are disproportionate and the faces for the most part ugly, they possess intensity of expression, if somewhat exaggerated, suitable to the scenes enacted. They moreover escape, in however slight a degree, the characteristic of the earlier work, which we have designated 'bogey'. This work, not visibly signed, bears the date 1522 upon the margin, or rather the riser of a step of the middle panel, apparently an afterthought. Whether this refers to the completion of the painting or the completion of the chapel by its intro-

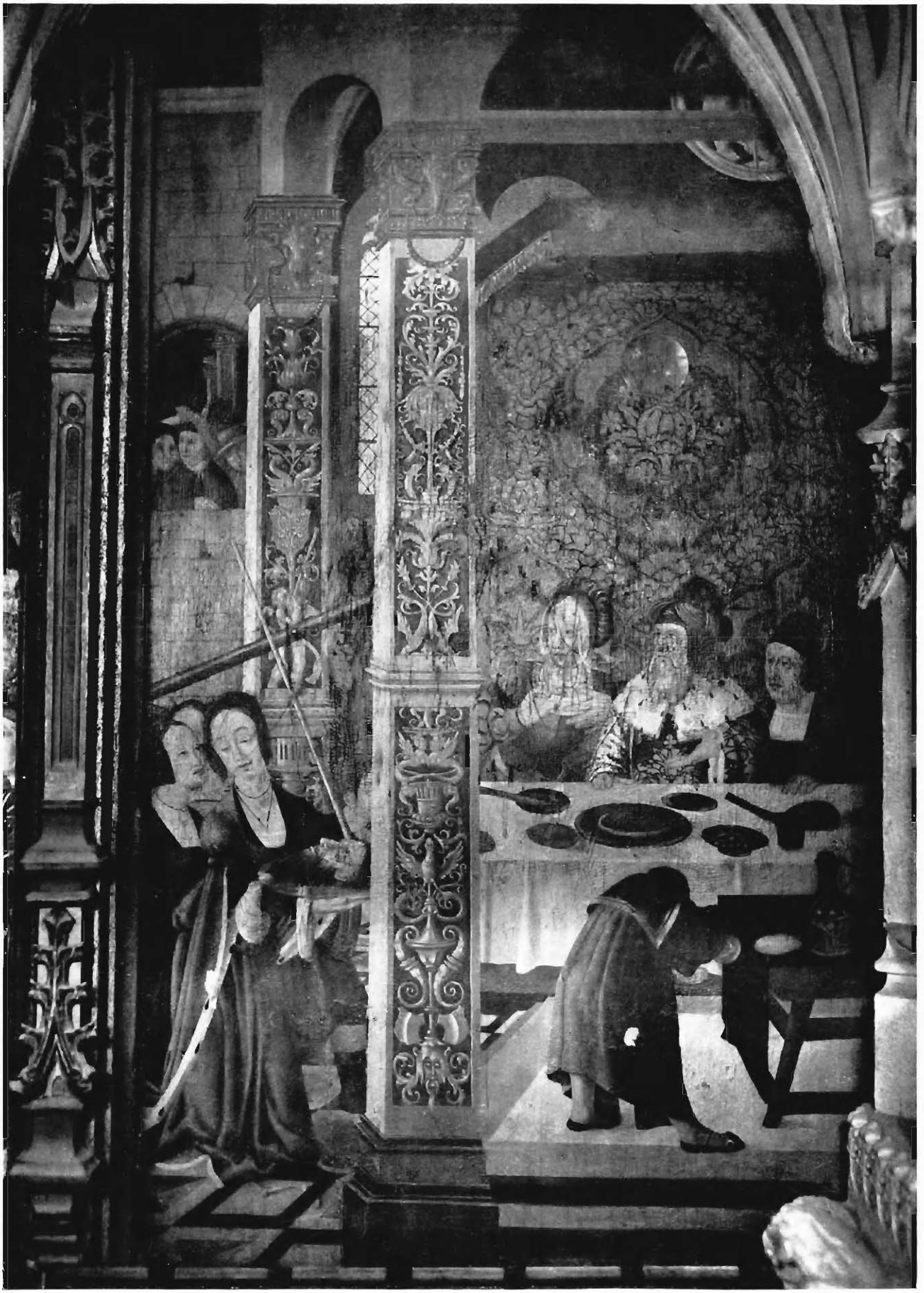
[1] Mr. Hope reminds me that instances of the figuration of the souls of the dying occurred in several of the alabaster carvings recently exhibited by this Society.

[2] Extract from article by M. A. Maury, *Revue Archéologique*, 1844, p. 507, &c.

duction we are left in doubt, although the label of date is represented affectedly as having been applied by means of seals or wafers. The subject of this picture is the preaching and death of St. John the Baptist. The first panel shows the subject of the preaching before Herod and his court (pl. XVIII). St. John, traditionally clad, occupies a rostrum or pulpit similarly to St. Stephen's in the Hastings painting, and the logical nature of his discourse is sufficiently indicated by the position of the hands, especially noteworthy being the position of the thumb of the left hand and the forefinger of the right. The old and turbaned tetrarch, further habited in a gown bearing a handsome fifteenth-century pattern or diaper enriched with gold, sits on a throne or chair beneath a canopy duly tasselled and patterned of a like period. The grey-beard inclines his head to his left over his ermine collar in manifest annoyance and disgust at the words he hears; feelings not minimized by the proximity of the querulous lady to whom he is pointing with his left hand, while the hopelessness of the situation is naïvely suggested by the reversed sceptre which falls from his right. The anxiety of Herodias is too definitely expressed to admit of doubt, and she seems almost to be peremptorily demanding of the governor what he proposes to do. The courtiers and attendants witness this painful scene with forcefully depicted expressions of trouble, not to say of interest and sympathy as affecting themselves. The marble pavement and columns and other architectural features and enrichments contribute to the dignity of a scene which, however admirable in design and general colour, fills us with regret at its technical shortcomings.

The next panel (the middle one in the composition) is, by its attempt at realism, of most painful and uncompromising character, in marked contrast to the contemplative, if disturbed, nature of the first (pl. XIX). Here from the hands of a most truculent executioner, habited as a lansquenet, Salome receives in her charger, or dish, the decapitated head of St. John. The inconvenient and martyred forerunner lies upon the pavement between the princess and the soldier, blood pouring in dreadful evidence from the instant wound inflicted by the long-handled sword. Only the neck, arms, and back of St. John are visible, and the naked arms are bound by cords at the wrists. Salome wears a dress of a dark colour lined with ermine, the ample sleeves and train being borne by one of her numerous female attendants; the under dress is visible as to the sleeves, which are slashed, or banded, and enriched with gold. Salome's face seems to indicate not irresolution, but some doubt as to the wisdom of the proceedings. A conspicuous turbaned figure in an ermine collar, but showing only his back, looks on at the scene with other male attendants, and immediately above him and behind the executioner is an elderly female figure, whose identity it is difficult to verify. The architectural surroundings of this scene are consistent with those of that preceding, but of varied richness. A drawf or jester has one foot raised on to

dwarf



OXENBRIDGE CHANTRY CHAPEL: PANEL III. SALOME BEARING ST. JOHN'S HEAD IN THE CHARGER

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the step on which the date appears, and has perhaps in his charge in the foreground a seated white dog which seems to take, fortunately, no interest whatever in the recent bloodshed.

In the third and last scene of all (pl. XX) Herod and his consort are seated at table, at which a guest is present, a male friend or 'high captain', enjoying the confidence of the tetrarch. We are evidently present at Herod's birthday supper. A bowed figure of small size, the server by his attitude, may be opening vessels of wine, as he has a flagon on a table to his right hand. On the further side of the table also rises a column particularly rich in arabesque decoration of Italian character. This column is accompanied by another, and with the tapestry screen behind the royal party gives great distinction to the chamber. A group of persons occupying a kind of gallery at the back seem to connect this subject with the centre panel, an effect contributed to by a barrier or pole, which is otherwise unexplained. Approaching the King and Herodias, but beyond the front column, is seen Salome again, now bearing to her mother the dreadful proof of the Baptist's death. Salome also carries a wand in her left hand, and is accompanied by two other ladies. The pavilion in which the banquet is served is arched from the arabesqued columns and raised two steps above the tessellated pavement on which the bases of the columns stand. The heads of Herod, his consort, and his guest are particularly well rendered, making it the more surprising that the same care has not been bestowed on that of Salome, which appears quite unnecessarily large and disproportionate.

There remains one feature in this last composition yet to be described. This is not very noticeable at first, but on the eye getting accustomed to the gloom of the upper part of the background, a crystal globe can be seen. This is not suspended, nor does it form any portion of the architectural decoration, but it appears to be floating in the air a few feet above the tetrarch's head. It is perhaps needless to call attention to the prevailing belief in crystallomancy at about the period of this painting. Instances will be remembered of the introduction of the crystal sphere in various works of art, such as Quintin Matsys' figure (half length) of our Lord, where He bears a crystal orb surmounted by a jewelled cross, and, more immediately to the point, the crystal sphere in Holbein's picture of the two ambassadors. I have not been able to trace that Herod had a superstitious regard for a crystal sphere, but that he was superstitious there is no doubt, and being so, not improbably indulged in a form of divination common in his age, viz. as regarding mirrors and cups of silver; assuming this to be the case, the crystal sphere represented in this painting is as entirely consistent to the period as the costumes in which the mediaeval painter has vested his characters.

I have alluded to certain disproportions in the figures in these paintings; it should be observed, however, from certain standpoints this is not necessarily

regarded as a fault. The painter or sculptor of former times concerned himself far more with the telling and emphasis of his story than with rules of proportion; the expression of a face is more easily discerned if the head be large, too large, we should say, in much mediaeval work. The Greek canons of the period of Pheidias, as also the rules of proportion of Leonardo da Vinci, are the natural outcome of periods of intellectual growth when art was ceasing to teach and becoming a luxury; so when the head becomes unduly small we recognize the art manifestation not only of luxury but of decadence. My remarks as applied to the Baptist subject we are discussing point to inconsistency or at least indications of transition.

At the outset of this paper I remarked that I should refer to the condition of the paintings I have endeavoured to describe. Damp from condensation and insufficient ventilation of St. George's chapel, coupled with over-heating, have affected them seriously; areas of painted surface are loose and non-adherent where the paint has not absolutely flaked off. The removal of the pictures and treatment of the backs with the view of restoring adhesion was recommended by myself before the discovery that removal was impossible without extension of damage. This being the case, I have not hesitated to recommend careful application of adhesives to the fronts, especially injection in the neighbourhood of detached pigment. If absolute restoration cannot be obtained, at least rapid decay would be arrested. The dean and chapter are aware of their responsibility in the matter, and I presume do not require urging to take early and necessary steps for the preservation of these works.

I should like in this paper to give expression to my thanks and my great indebtedness to the Rev. Canon Dalton for many facilities and much information in regard to the chapels; also to Mr. St. John Hope for valuable information, especially in regard to the English character of the St. Stephen picture; to M. Salomon Reinach and Mynheer Jan Six as already mentioned, and to Mr. W. Paley Baildon.