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## **Hailes Church**

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## HAILES CHURCH

Hailes Church in Gloucestershire, with no known dedication, is of great interest, but has often been overlooked because of its closeness to the Cistercian Abbey of Hailes, founded in 1246. Because of its unusual plan and quality it has often been regarded as one of the dependent chapels of the Abbey, either as the church used by pilgrims on other days than festivals, or as the infirmary Chapel. The fact that it is certainly older than the foundation of the Abbey would seem to invalidate these hypotheses.

It is built of stone and has a 12th-century chancel arch, notable mural paintings, good floor tiles and 'the uncommon plan of nave and chancel being of the same width, the latter being also of greater length than was usual in small Norman churches. . . . The fittings include a 13th-century font, an excellent 15th-century rood screen; some pre-Reformation seating, and a 17th-century pulpit in the nave and seating in the chancel, originally placed round the east end for communicants (as at Winchcombe, Deerhurst and elsewhere) but now arranged as choir seats'.<sup>1</sup>

Hailes is situated in a secluded position approximately halfway up the slope of a spur of the Cotswolds near Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. A stream rises to the southward in a combe between Farmcote and Little Farmcote and flows northwestward past Hailes (where the Abbey had a fishpond) on its way to discharge into the River Isbourne. The ground in the neighbourhood of Hailes is Lower Lias Clay, but a scatter of angular Inferior Oolite rock débris appears on its surface near the village. When traced towards the river this is found to increase in width and locally in thickness. The bulk of this rock-débris was detached from its parent mass during Glacial times and worked down the hill-slope.

The Lower Lias Clay is very sporadically and thinly covered by this rock-débris in the neighbourhood of the church. Damp, in the absence of a damp-course is prone to spread upwards in Cotswold building stone, and alternating wetting and drying of a clay is a usual cause of expansion and shrinkage of the same with consequent cracking of the ground and often of superincumbent walls. In 1961 it was necessary to undertake large-scale repairs to the church, under the supervision of Mr E. A. Roiser of Cheltenham, when the floor of the chancel was lifted and the general level lowered. The stone slab in the north side of the chancel floor, dating *c.* 1380, was uncovered. Mr

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. BGAS*, vol. 52, p. 8.

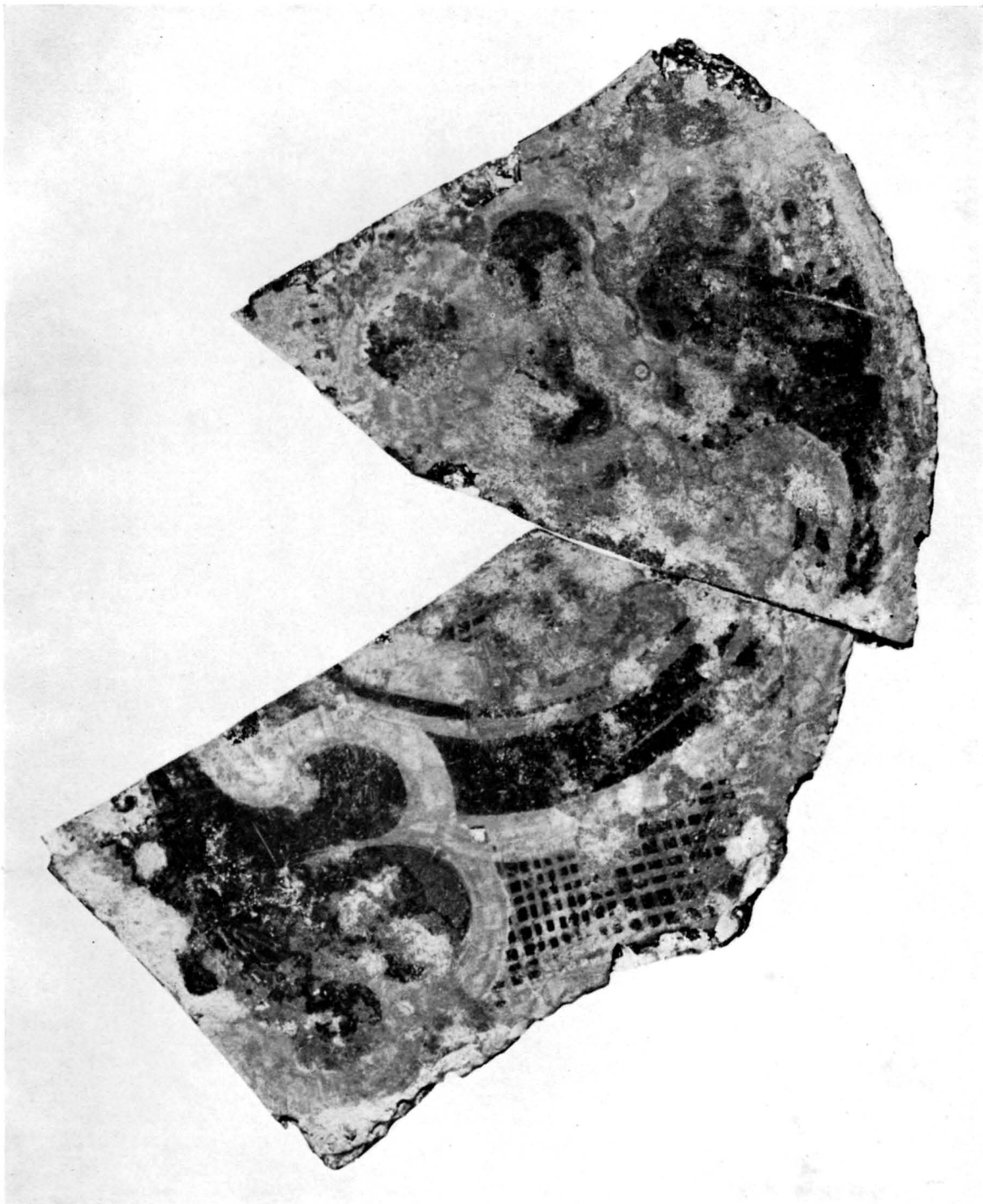


PLATE IX

*Photo. Walwin, Gloucester*

Coloured glass, 'A'. 13th or at latest 14th century, with trefoil pattern and cross hatching

*facing p. 208*

Roiser carefully watched the excavated material and fortunately noticed some pieces of ancient glass. He kindly invited the writer to meet him there when the exposed foundation material of the floor was further examined and more objects recovered which are described below.

The *Glass* has been kindly examined by Mr E. W. Ganderton, F.S.A., Mr C. R. Cuncer, F.S.A., and Mr Arthur Lane, Head of the Ceramic and Stained Glass Department, Victoria and Albert Museum. They report as follows:

- A. Coloured Glass. 13th century or at latest early 14th century with trefoil pattern and cross-hatching. Two pieces join.
- B. Greenish glass. Thickish, tint quite deep, as early as the 17th century or even a little earlier.
- C. Greenish Glass. This piece might be of any date from the 16th century to the early 19th century.
- D. Probably Victorian, but could have come from anywhere.

A reckoning counter by Hans Kranwinckel of Nuremberg, dated from 1588 to 1611 and probably later.

A tobacco pipe, *c.* 1660, manufactured by William Cissol, who was made a Freeman of Bristol on 19 February 1660/61 as son of Thomas Cissol. It is well known that tobacco was grown extensively in the Winchcombe area in the early 17th century and a field near to the Abbey ruins is still known as 'Tobacco piece'<sup>1</sup> and a great many pipes of this century were discovered when investigations took place there in 1899.

It is evident that in the 17th century the floor of the chancel was raised and it may have been then that the outside of the church was plastered. This in all probability was thought necessary because of dampness, which must always have been a problem because of the geology and the geography of the area.

Thanks are due to Mr E. A. Roiser for facilities for examining the site, to Mr L. Richardson for geological notes, to Mr E. W. Ganderton, Mr C. R. Cuncer and Mr Arthur Lane for examining the glass, to Mr Owen F. Parsons for identifying the token and Mr K. W. Reed for examining the tobacco pipe.

E. M. CLIFFORD.

<sup>1</sup> Baddeley, 'A Cotswold Shrine', p. 146.