

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE MEDIEVAL CARVER

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Frontispiece



Phillips, Wells

pages 50–52

West front. Wells cathedral.
Christ in Majesty.
The twelve Apostles.
The nine Orders of Angels.
Resurrection of the Dead.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE MEDIEVAL CARVER

by

M. D. ANDERSON

With a Preface by

W. G. CONSTABLE

Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art
Slade Professor of Fine Art in the
University of Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1935

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521180627

© Cambridge University Press 1935

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1935
First paperback edition 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-18062-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
 M. D. Anderson
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i> by PROFESSOR W. G. CONSTABLE	<i>page</i> xiii
<i>Chap. I.</i> INTRODUCTION	i
II. THE MASONS	5
III. CONTEMPORARY SCENES	24
IV. THE BIBLE	46
V. LIFE OF THE VIRGIN; SAINTS AND ANGELS	67
VI. ALLEGORY, ROMANCE AND SATIRE	87
VII. BESTIARIES AND BEASTS	116
VIII. FOLIAGE SCULPTURE	149
<i>Conclusion</i>	158
<i>Bibliography</i>	159
<i>Appendices</i>	
(A) Costume and Armour	163
(B) Materials	170
<i>Index of Place-names by Counties</i>	175
<i>General Index</i>	179

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
 M. D. Anderson
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

West front of Wells cathedral	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Photo by Phillips, Wells	
<i>Plate</i>	<i>facing p.</i>
I. A. "Noah building the Ark." Wells cathedral	28
Photo by Phillips, Wells	
B. "Carver at work." Victoria and Albert Museum	
By permission of the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum	
II. A. "The draughts player." Winchester cathedral	29
By permission of the Courtauld Institute	
B. "Ship." Tiverton	
By permission of Mrs Dobson	
C. "Windmill." Bishop's Lydeard	
By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
D. "Fuller." Spaxton	
By permission of Mr R. G. V. Dymock	
III. A. "Hare-hunting." Ely cathedral	34
Photo by Starr and Rignall, Ely	
B. "Football." Gloucester cathedral	
Photo by W. A. Call, Monmouth	
C. "Wrestling." Norwich cathedral	
By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	
IV. A. "The meeting at Picquigny." St George's Chapel, Windsor	35
By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	
B. "The Joust." Worcester cathedral	
Photo by W. A. Call, Monmouth	
C. "The quintain." Bristol cathedral	
By permission of Mr R. G. V. Dymock	

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
 M. D. Anderson
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	<i>Illustrations</i>	<i>facing p.</i>
<i>Plate</i>		
V. A. "Lead font." Brookland		40
	By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	
B. "Stone font." Burnham-Deepdale		
	By permission of the Courtauld Institute	
VI. A. "Sowing and harrowing." Ripple		41
	Photo by M. D. Anderson	
B. "Gathering grapes." Gloucester cathedral		
	Photo by W. A. Call, Monmouth	
C. "Threshing." Victoria and Albert Museum		
	By permission of the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum	
VII. A. "Winter." Worcester cathedral		44
	Photo by W. A. Call, Monmouth	
B. "Rogation-tide." Ripple		
	Photo by M. D. Anderson	
C. "The marauding fox." Ely cathedral		
	Photo by Starr and Rignall, Ely	
VIII. A. "A queen with her dogs." Lincoln cathedral		45
	Photo by S. Smith, Lincoln	
B. "The Angel of the Expulsion." Lincoln cathedral		
	Photo by S. Smith, Lincoln	
IX. A. "Noah in the Ark." Ely cathedral		58
	Photo by Starr and Rignall, Ely	
B. "Abraham serving the angels, and the fall of Sodom." Salisbury cathedral		
	Photo by W. A. Call, Monmouth	
C. "Jonah cast into the sea." Ripon cathedral		
	Photo by Cox, Ripon	

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
 M. D. Anderson
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

<i>Illustrations</i>		ix
<i>Plate</i>		<i>facing p.</i>
X. A.	“Annunciation and Deliverance from Hell.” Oakham By permission of the Courtauld Institute	59
B.	“St Etheldreda’s dream.” Ely cathedral By permission of Mr H. W. Fincham	
XI. A.	“St George at Antioch.” Fordington Photo by Brian Clayton, reproduced by permission of Messrs B. T. Batsford, Ltd. and Mr Will F. Taylor	72
B.	“Judgment Porch.” Lincoln cathedral Photo by S. Smith, Lincoln	
XII. A.	“Psychomachia font.” Stanton Fitzwarren Photo by M. D. Anderson	73
B.	“Empress healing a sick man.” Norwich cathedral By permission of Mr C. J. P. Cave, F.S.A.	
C.	“Sleeping soldiers.” Hawton By permission of the Courtauld Institute	
D.	“Hypocrisy.” Blythburgh Photo by F. Jenkins, Southwold	
XIII. A.	“Aristotle.” Exeter cathedral By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	104
B.	“Sciapod.” Dennington By permission of the Courtauld Institute	
C.	“Chevalier au Cygne.” Exeter cathedral By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	
XIV. A.	“Flight of Alexander.” Wells cathedral By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	105
B.	“Tristram and Isolt.” Chester cathedral By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
C.	“Sir Yvain.” Lincoln cathedral Photo by S. Smith, Lincoln	

x	<i>Illustrations</i>	
<i>Plate</i>		<i>facing p.</i>
XV. A.	"Tybert caught in the gin." Bristol cathedral By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	114
B.	"Reynardine preaching to the geese." Den- bigh By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
C.	"Execution of Reynard the Fox." Beverley Minster By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
XVI. A.	"Capture of the Unicorn." Chester cathedral By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	115
B.	"Basilisk." Malvern Photo by M. D. Anderson	
C.	"The Tigress deceived." Chester cathedral By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
XVII. A.	"Owl mobbed by small birds." Norwich cathedral By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	134
B.	"Pelican." Wells cathedral By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
C.	"Swan." St George's Chapel, Windsor By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	
XVIII.	Details of Bestiary Doorway. Alne By permission of the Rev. A. H. Collins	135
XIX. A.	"Hippopotamus." St George's Chapel, Windsor By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	148
B.	"Elephant." Exeter cathedral By permission of Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.	
C.	"Bear." Lincoln cathedral Photo by S. Smith, Lincoln	

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
 M. D. Anderson
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Illustrations

xi

<i>Plate</i>	<i>facing p.</i>
XX. A. Stiff-leaf capital. Ivinghoe By permission of the Courtauld Institute	149
B. Stiff-leaf capital. Wells cathedral Photo by Phillips, Wells	
C. Naturalistic capital. Southwell Minster By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	
D. Decorated capital. Beverley Minster By permission of Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude my indebtedness to the many people whose kindness has made it possible for me to write this book. Taking these kindnesses in chronological order, I wish first to thank Miss Winifred Mudie for introducing me to the subject, when I was hardly more than a child, by giving me one of Émile Mâle's books. To the Director of the Courtauld Institute my thanks are due, not only for allowing me to work on the unique collection of photographs of English architecture contained in the Conway Library and for writing the preface to this book, but for the help, advice and encouragement which he has found time to give me in spite of the innumerable claims upon his leisure. I wish to thank Miss Margaret Whinney for reading an untidy manuscript and making many most helpful suggestions, and Mr Trenchard Cox for his most valuable help in reading the proofs.

For their kindness in allowing me to reproduce their photographs I am indebted to Mr C. J. P. Cave, F.S.A.; Rev. A. H. Collins; Mr F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.; Mrs Dobson; Mr G. C. Druce, F.S.A.; Mr R. G. V. Dymock and Mr H. W. Fincham and also to Messrs B. J. Batsford, Ltd. and Mr Will F. Taylor for their permission to reproduce the Brian Clayton photograph (Plate XI, A). The photographs belonging to the Courtauld Institute which I have reproduced are from the collection bequeathed by the late Mr Granville Buckley.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

Miss Anderson's book possesses the unusual characteristic of having been conceived and carried out to meet a definite need. The work of classifying and describing a rapidly growing collection of reproductions of English medieval architecture and sculpture, and the demands of students using that collection, have made increasingly clear the want of some systematic account of the ideas which inspired the medieval masons and builders of England, and the forms in which those ideas found expression. For France, the three volumes of Emile Mâle's great work on *L'Art Religieux en France* have become the standard and indispensable authority on the subject, even though some of its conclusions have been disputed. For England, the work of Dr M. R. James and many others has laid a firm foundation; but much of that work is concerned with particular buildings or particular aspects of the subject, and lies buried in learned journals not readily accessible. So Miss Anderson has set herself to bring within one pair of covers some part of this scattered wisdom, reinforced and coordinated by her own observation and knowledge. She herself disclaims any intention of writing for professed scholars; her book is limited to the work of the sculptor, and leaves aside that of the illuminator, the painter, the maker of stained and painted glass, and of the embroiderer; and she has

A

b

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xiv

Preface

described and arranged rather than sought for deep-laid influences. But I venture to think that there is no one for whom the art of the Middle Ages has any significance, from the casual visitor to church and cathedral to the systematic student, but will be more than grateful for what she has done. Joined to such a work as J. C. Cox's *English Parish Church*, the traveller in medieval England has in her book an invaluable aid to understanding, and a satisfying stimulus to further study.

One particularly interesting result which emerges from Miss Anderson's study is an important difference between Gothic art in England and France. In England the work of the builders and sculptors on any given building was less fully organised, less completely dominated by a conscious doctrinal and didactic purpose. Even in the cathedrals and greater abbeys of England, where ecclesiastical direction was most vigorous and sustained, there is not that similarity in the disposition of sculpture, glass and painting, which runs throughout the cathedrals of Northern France. There is not in England the same obedience to the "rules of a kind of sacred mathematics", as M. Mâle calls it, in which the north is devoted to the Old Testament, the south to the New, and the western façade to the Last Judgment; while within that ordering a rigid hierarchical system governs the disposition of individual figures or scenes. At Westminster, Lincoln, Wells a planned disposition of themes is clear; but each has its own character and basic idea. Every-

Preface

xv

where, it is true, certain themes appear common to the whole of Christendom, or to the English part of it. But however well worn in their treatment, or standardised in their workmanship, their use and disposition has a local character; and by their side are introduced motives or incidents which reflect an individual outlook. The explanation seems to be in the nature of English ecclesiastical organisation in the Middle Ages. From early times, centralisation was less marked than in Northern France; and so even the greater ecclesiastical centres were less ready to conform to any predetermined scheme either of building or decoration. A contributory cause, or perhaps a consequence, is that in England there was apparently little or no use of such compilations as the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Honorius of Autun, the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* of Durandus, and the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent of Beauvais, which provided the French ecclesiastical authorities with textbooks of ordered arrangement and symbolic meaning.

In the parish churches this element of self-determination was even more marked. Far less than in France were they dominated by great cathedrals and abbeys; and far more were they centres of communal life, serving not only as places of worship but as meeting-places for the transaction of parish business, and the administration of parochial funds. The great proportion of the population learned from hearing, rather than reading; and diversity of teaching among the secular clergy helped to accentuate local differences in ideas. Thus the parish church provided a field for an

b 2

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xvi

Preface

art which was essentially popular in inspiration and appeal, and not markedly ecclesiastical in conception. So, as Miss Anderson's book clearly shows, the English instinct for and enjoyment of the grotesque and the humorous found a ready outlet. While the more important parts of the church were devoted by long prescribed custom to the exposition of certain stock subjects, in the corbels, the misereres, the bench-ends, the capitals, and so on, a license was allowed, wherein a true folk art could find expression.

Thus, Miss Anderson's book, with its examples drawn from the length and breadth of England, helps to put us in touch with the minds not only of the medieval churchman but of the merchants, the tradesmen, the craftsmen and labourers of medieval England. The writings of the Middle Ages are no sure guide to its thought and feelings. A welter of documents survives; but in an illiterate age the mind of the vast mass of people must be sought largely in its monuments. Moreover, art in the Middle Ages was more closely woven into the texture of life than it is to-day, and so gives fuller expression to the thoughts, hopes and fears of the world in which it was created. This world was a very different one from that vision of a Golden Age in which the nineteenth century sought refuge from the horrors of industrialism. In fact it was a world more akin to that of Victorian England than to that of any intervening period. Both were ages of faith, one in a Christian, the other in an Imperial destiny; both were ages of certainty in outlook and belief in a settled order,

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

xvii

whence issued a passion for the codifying and ordering of knowledge, so that both became ages of encyclopedias; both were periods of high ideals and mighty achievement; yet in both there was a persistent gulf between those ideals and the actual conduct of life. But in the Middle Ages contrasts were more strident, light and shade more intense. The medieval man lived in a world of extravagant logic. This earth was a microcosm of an ordered universe, with God at its centre; and acceptance of a complete and divinely inspired organisation implied recognition of the reality of evil and the omnipresence of its ministers, who take their place as part of the divine machinery for the punishment of sin. Thus devil-dodging was an everyday occupation of the Middle Ages, in which the aid of the Virgin and saints, through prayer and the sacraments, was continuously invoked. Moreover, the thought of the Middle Ages was dominated by a form of Platonic idealism, involving a conception of the pre-existence of ideas, which led to the use of allegory and symbolism to give those ideas concrete form. So the inextricable linking in art of personifications of the divine and diabolic is a direct and vivid reflection of the medieval mind.

Such a view of the world also coloured men's attitude towards nature. In a universe divinely ordered, everything was *ex hypothesi* capable of explanation; and that explanation was to be found through *a priori* reasoning, rather than empirical investigation. Thus was born a whole race of fabulous monsters,

which play so important a part in medieval art, each giving in generalised form external reality to some natural phenomenon. Too often the medieval craftsman has been acclaimed as the supreme exponent of naturalism in art, humbly submitting himself to the guidance of nature. But such a view is superficial. On occasion, as in the chapter-house at Southwell, the sculptor threw himself into transcribing natural forms, with a virtuosity comparable to that of Monet in his transcription of light. But more often, the expression of an idea or the telling of a story by means of accepted conventions was his aim; and the inspiration came from the written or more usually the spoken word, rather than the thing. The Middle Ages, too, are often extolled as the period of patient, sterling craftsmanship, unalloyed by thoughts of self-glorification or of financial gain. Yet the same contrast between the ideals of the medieval church and the practice of its clergy, and between the ideals of chivalry and the conduct of the feudal lords, is found in medieval art. From an early period, craftsmen were organised in workshops on a commercial basis; the medieval guild laid down standards of workmanship and of material, but was primarily organised for the benefit of its members; strikes were by no means uncommon, also lock-outs; and jerry-building or worse was frequent. Time has concealed some of the worst crimes of the medieval builder; but there is plenty of evidence surviving that he could be both lazy and dishonest.

Thus to tear the halo from the medieval artist and his

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-18062-7 - The Medieval Carver
M. D. Anderson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

xix

times is not to diminish his stature, or to belittle his work. Rather it gives a feeling of a reality, of substance, which enables the greatness of his achievement to be more fully realised. With the aid of such books as Miss Anderson's, the student can hope better to see the art of medieval England not as in a glass darkly, but face to face; and so to realise the force of imagination and vigour of craftsmanship which brought it into being.

W. G. CONSTABLE

January 1935